GODS PROVIDENCE
NO. 3114

A SERMON
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AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was, as it were, a wheel in the middle of a wheel. Where they went, they went upon their four sides: and they turned not when they went. As for their rims, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rims were full of eyes round about them four. And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them, and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up.
Ezekiel 1:15-19.

IN my preaching, I am constantly talking about Providence, so I thought it would be well to devote a whole sermon to explaining what I believe are Gods great wonder-working processes which we call, Providence. In looking for a suitable text, I found this one. These wheels signify Divine Providence and I trust, while explaining them, I may be so assisted by Gods Spirit that I may say many things to you concerning Gods Government which may lift up any who are despondent and lift up the souls of many who are distressed.

I. Going at once to my divisions, my first remark will be that PROVIDENCE IS HERE COMPARED TO A WHEEL.
When the Prophet had beheld the living creatures, which I take it were angels, he opened his eyes again and he saw a wonderful illustration of Divine Providenceand this exhibition was in the figure of a wheel. You must know that this is not the only place where this comparison is to be found, for the Romans and Greeks were accustomed to compare the wondrous working of God in Providence to the revolutions of a wheel. The story goes that a certain king, being taken prisoner, was bound in chains and dragged along at the chariot wheels of his conqueror. As he went along, he kept looking at the wheel and shedding tears, and then looking at the wheel, again, and lifting up his eyes and smiling. The conqueror turned and said, Why are you looking at that wheel? He said, I was thinking, such is the lot of manjust now I was here, now I am therebut soon I may be here again at the top of the wheel, and you may be grinding the dust. This was well for a heathen. The Prophet had the very same ideahe was permitted by God to see that the wheel is a very beautiful figure of Divine Providence. Let me show you that it is so.
I have just hinted at one reason why Providence is like a wheel *because sometimes one part of the wheel is at the top and then it is at the bottom.* Sometimes this part is exalted and soon it sinks down to the dust. Then it is lifted into the air and then again, by a single revolution, it is brought down again to the earth. So is it with our life. Sometimes we are in humble poverty and hardly know what we shall do for bread. Soon the wheel revolves and we are brought into the comfort of wealthour feet stand in a spacious room, we are fed with corn and winewe drink of a cup overflowing its brim. Again we are brought low through affliction and famine. A little while and another page is turnedand we are exalted to the heavens and can sing and rejoice in the Lord our God! I have no doubt many of you here have experienced a far more checkered life than I have and, therefore, you can feel that your life has been as a wheel. Ah, Man! You are strong, great and rich! You may now stand at the uppermost part of it, but it is a wheel and you may yet be brought low. And you poor who are depressed and downcastwho are weeping because you know not where you shall lay your headsthat wheel may revolve and you may be lifted up! Our own experience is never a stale thing. It is always changing, always turning round. The fly that sits now on the edge of the wheel may be crushed by its next revolution. The world may cry, Hosanna, to its minister, today, and the next day may say, Crucify him, crucify him. Such is the state of man. Providence is like a wheel!
You know that *in a wheel there is one portion that never turns round and that is the axle.* So, in Gods Providence, there is an axle which never moves. Christian, here is a sweet thought for you! Your state is always changingsometimes you are exalted and sometimes depressedyet there *is* an unmoving point in your state. What is this axle? What is the pivot upon which all the machinery revolves? It is the axle of Gods everlasting love towards His covenant people. The exterior of the wheel is changing, but the center stands forever fixed. Other things may move, but Gods love never movesit is the axle of the wheel! This is another reason why Providence should be compared to a wheel.
Yet more. You observe *when the wheel moves very rapidly, you can discern nothing but the exterior circle.* So, if you look back to history and read the story of a thousand years, you set the wheel of Providence revolving rapidly and you lose sight of all the little things that are within the circle. You see only one great thing and that is that God is working out in the world His everlasting purposes. You sit down and take a book of historysay the History of Englandand you will say of one event, Now that seems to be out of place. You say of another, That seems to be out of time. Another, That seems to be adverse to the cause of liberty. But look through a thousand years and those things which seemed as if they would crush liberty in her germthose things which seemed as if they would destroy this, our commonwealth, in our very rising, have been those which have caused the sturdy oak of liberty to take deeper root! Take the whole together, instead of taking the events one by onelook at a thousand years and you will see nothing but one round ring of symmetry teaching you that God is wise and God is just. So let it be with you in your lives. Here you are fretting about troubles today. Think also of the pastput all your troubles together and they are not troubles at all! You will see that one counteracts the other. If you take your lifenot today, alone, but look back on 40 years of ityou will be obliged, instead of lamenting and mourning, to bless God for His mercies towards you. Let the wheel go round and you will see nothing but a ring of everlasting wisdom revolving!
I trust I have made the first part of my subject intelligiblethat the Providence of God is here compared to a wheel.
II. My second thought is that THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD IS, IN SOME MYSTERIOUS WAY, CONNECTED WITH ANGELS.
Look at verse 15. Now as I beheld the living creatures. Then turn to the 19th verse. And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. These living creatures I believe to be angels. And the text teaches us that there is a connection between Providence and angelic agency. I do not know how to explain it. I cannot tell how it is, but I believe angels have a great deal to do with the affairs of this world. An angel cut off the hosts of Sennacherib and it is still my firm belief that angels are sent forth, somehow or other, to accomplish the everlasting purpose of God. The great wheel of Providence is still turned by an angel. When there is some trouble which seems to stop that wheel, some mighty cherub puts his shoulder to it and hurls it roundand makes the chariot of Gods Providence go on still. Angels have much more to do with us than we imagine. I do not know but that spirits sometimes come down and whisper thoughts into our ears. I have strange thoughts, sometimes, that seem to come from a land of dreamsand fiery visions that make my soul hot within me. Sometimes I have thoughts which I know come from Gods Spiritsome which are glorious and some that are not so good, but still holy thoughtsand I often attribute them to angels. I have sometimes a thought which cheers me in distressand was not an angel sent to strengthen Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane? How do you think the angel strengthened Him? Why, by putting thoughts into Christs mind! He could not do it in any other wayhe could not strengthen Him by a plaster, or by any physical means, but by injecting holy thoughts! So is it with us. There was a temptation which might have led you astray, but God said, Gabriel, fly! There is one of My people in perilgo and put such a thought into his soul that when the danger comes, he will say, Get you behind me, Satan, I will have nothing to do with sin.
We have, each of us, a guardian angel to attend us. The meaning of the passage, In Heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in Heaven, surely is that every Christian has a guardian angel who flies about him and holds the shield of God over his brow, keeps his feet lest he should dash them against a stone, guards him, controls him, manages him, injects thoughts into his mind, restrains his evil desires and is the minister and servant of the Holy Spirit to keep him from sin and lead him to righteousness. Whether I am right or wrong, I leave you to judge, but perhaps I have more angelology in me than most people have. I know my imagination has sometimes been so powerful that when I have been alone at night, I could almost fancy that I saw an angel fly by me when I have been out preaching the Word. However, I take it that the text teaches us that angels have very much to do with Gods Providence, for it says, And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them, and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. Let us bless God that He has made angels ministering spirits to minister unto them that are heirs of salvation!
III. My third remark shall be that PROVIDENCE IS UNIVERSAL.
That you will see by the text. Behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces. The wheel had four faces. I think that means one face to the North, another to the South, another to the East and another to the Westthere is a face to every quarterteaching us that Providence is universal, looking to every quarter of the globe. Have you ever been in a house where there was an old picture hanging? I have sometimes stood in a picture gallery and there has been a painting of some old warriorand he has looked straight at me. If I have gone to the other end of the room, he has still looked at me. Wherever you are in the room, a well-painted portrait will be looking at you. Such is the Providence of Godwherever you are, the eyes of God will be upon you as much upon you as if there were not another person in the whole world! If there were only one, you may imagine how much God would look upon that one, but He looks on each one of us as if there were no other created being and nothing else in the whole world! His eyes are fixed upon us at every hour and at every moment. Wherever we may be, we shall have one face of the wheel turned upon us.

You cannot banish me from my Lord. Send me to the snows of Siberia or Lapland, I shall have the eyes of God there. Send me to Australia and let me toil at the gold diggings, there will He visit me. If you send me to the utmost verge of the round globe, I shall still have the eyes of God upon me. Put me in the desert where there is not one single blade of grass growing and His Presence shall cheer me. Or let me go to sea, amidst the howls of the tempest and the shrieking of the wind where the mad waves lift up their hands to the skies as if they would pluck the stars from their cloudy thronesand I shall have the eyes of God upon me there! Let me sink and let my gurgling voice be heard among the waveslet my body lie down in the caverns of the sea and the eyes of God shall be on every bone! And in the day of the Resurrection shall my every atom be tracked in its wanderings! Yes, the eyes of God are everywhereProvidence is universal.
There may be some persons here who have friends far awaylet me comfort them. The eyes of God are looking on them. There may be some here who are about to part with loved ones who are going to distant countries. Wherever they are, they will be as much in the keeping of God as though they were here. If one part of the world is not as near to the suns light as another, yet they are all equally near the eyes of our God. Transport me where you please, wherever the cloudy pillar of Providence shall guide meand I shall have God with me! That thought comforted the great traveler, Mungo Park, when he was in the desert of Sahara. He had been robbed and stripped of everything and was left naked. He suddenly saw a little piece of moss and, taking it up, he saw how beautiful it was. He said, Then the hand of God is here, for here is one of His works! Though I call loudly, no man can hear me, for there is nothing but the prowling lion and the howling jackalyet God is here. That thought comforted him and wherever you may be, whatever may be your case, God will be with you! Whatever period of your life you may now be in, God is with you! His eyes are at the bridal and at the funeral, at the cradle and at the grave. In the battle, Gods eyes are looking through the smoke. In the rebellion, there are Gods hands managing the masses of men who have broken loose from their rulers. In the earthquake, there is Jehovah manifest. In the tempest, there are Gods hands tossing the boat, dashing it against the rocks, or saving it from the boisterous waves. In all seasons, at all times, in all dangers and in all climes, there are the hands of God!
IV. My next remark is that PROVIDENCE IS UNIFORM.
It is only one Providence and always one. Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel was on the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of a beryl: and they four had one likeness. There were four wheels and four faces, yet one likeness. There was but one piece of machinery and thus we are taught that Providence is all one. Sometimes Providences seem to cross each other. One thing that God does seems to contradict another thing that He doesbut it never really does so.
It is a great Truth of God, though hard for us to grasp, that Providence is one. Just look at the case of Joseph. God has it in His mind that Joseph shall be governor over all the land of Egypt. How is that to be accomplished? The first thing to be done is that Josephs brothers must hate him. Oh, you say, that is a step backward. Next, Josephs brothers must put him in the pit. That is another step backward, you say. No, it is not. Wait a little while. Josephs brothers must sell him that is another step backward, is it not? Oh, no! Providence is one and you must not look at its separate parts. He is soldhe becomes a favorite. So far, so good. That is a step onward! Soon he is put in a dungeon. Wait and see the endall the different parts of the machinery are one. They appear to clash, but they never do. Put them all together. If Joseph had not been put in the pit, he never would have been the servant of Potiphar. If he had never been put in the prison, he would never have interpreted his fellow prisoners dreams. And if the king had never dreamed, he would not have been called to go to the palace. There were a thousand chances, as the world has it, working together to produce the exaltation of Joseph! Providence is oneit never clashes.
Oh, says one, I cannot understand that. Providence seems to be very adverse to me. I think it is Mrs. Hannah More who says that she went into a place where they were manufacturing a carpet. See said, There is no beauty there. The man said, It is one of the most beautiful carpets you ever saw. Why, here is a piece hanging out and it is all in disorder. Do you know why, Maam? You are looking at the wrong side of the carpet. So it is very often with us. You and I think Providence is adverse to us because we are looking at the wrong side! We look at the wrong side while we are here, but when we get to Heaven, we shall see the right side of Gods dealingsand when we do, we shall say, O Lord, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom have You made them all. You have sometimes been puzzled to think why that friend was brought into the grave, or you have said, Why was I made sick at such-and-such a time? Why did that trouble and that calamity fall upon me? That is no business of yoursyou are to believe that all things work together for one great purpose and that one thing never crosses another! But you must not expect to see it so just yet. Here, on earth, the machine appears broken to pieces and we can only see it in confusion. But in Heaven we shall see it all put together. Suppose I go into a place where some great engineer is manufacturing a machine and say to him, Do you mean to tell me that *this* is a machine? Yes, and an exquisite one it will be. It does not look like it. I could not put it together. Oh, no, Sir, you could not, but I can! Come and see it when I have put it together and you shall see that each part fits into its proper place, that each cog on the wheel will work on the cog of another wheel, and all the spokes will move together when I adjust them. Do not find fault with it and say, One is too small, and another too large, because you know nothing at all about it. So, dear Friends, you and I can never see more than parts of Gods ways. We only see here a wheel, and there a wheelwe must wait till we get to Heaventhen we shall see the right side of the carpet and then we shall see that it was one piece of machinery, with one end, one aim and one objective!
V. My next thought is that, in this text PROVIDENCE IS COMPARED TO THE SEA.

Look at the 16th verse. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of a beryl. The word beryl is commonly used in Scripture to denote the ocean, because the beryl bears the greatest likeness to that deep green you sometimes see in the ocean and, at other times the blue appearance of the sea. Let us transport ourselves for a moment to the top of some high cliff and look down on the noisy ocean. It has been the theme of a thousand songs. It has borne myriads of fleets on its mighty breast yet there it is, still rolling on! If you begin to think about the ocean, though it is one of the minor parts of Gods works compared with the constellations in the heavens, and the globes which He has hung on high, you begin to be lost in the vastness of your conceptions concerning the greatness of Gods works. And so it is with Providence!

It is like the ocean for another reason. *The sea is never still*both day and night it is always moving. In the day, when the sun shines upon it, its waves march up in marshaled order as if about to capture the whole land and drown all the solid earth. Then again they march back as if each one is reluctant to yield up its prey. It is always movingthe moon shines upon it and the stars light it upstill it moves. Or darkness falls so that nothing can be seenstill it moves. By night and day the restless billows chant a boisterous hymn of glory, or murmur the solemn dirge of mariners wrecked far out in the depths. Such is Providenceby night and by day Providence is always going on. The farmer sleeps, but his wheat is growing. The mariner on the sea sleeps, but the wind and the waves are carrying on his boat. Providence, you never stop! Your mighty wheels never stay their everlasting circles! As the blue ocean has rolled on impetuously for ages, so shall Providence roll on until He who first set it in motion, shall bid it stopand then its wheel shall cease, forever fixed by the eternal decree of the Almighty God!

Again, you will see another reason why the sea is like Providence. *Man cannot manage it.* Who can rule or govern the sea? Men cannot. Xerxes made chains for the Hellespont and lashed the sea with whips because it washed away his boats, but what cared the sea about that? It laughed at him and if he had not been too great a coward to put himself on its bosom, it might have swallowed him. Canute put his chair on the beach and bade the waves retire. What cared they for him? They came and would have washed him and his chair away if he had not moved backward. The sea is not to be governed by man! A whole fleet sails over it and it is only like a feather blown by the wind across the surface of a brook! All we ever put on the sea is as nothing. It can never be restrained, nor chained, nor managed by man. Greedy man has carved the land, but the sea has no landmark. It is impetuous! It follows its own will. So does Providence. It will not be managed by man. Napoleon once heard it said that man proposes and God disposes. Ah, said Napoleon, but I propose and dispose, too. How do you think he proposed and disposed? He proposed to go and take Russia. He proposed to destroy that powerbut how did he come back again? He came back solitary and alone, his mighty army perished and wasted, having well-near eaten and devoured one another through hunger! Man proposes and God disposes. Providence, like the sea, cannot be directed by manit can only be controlled by God. Let man try to stand against Gods Providence and Providence will grind and crush him!

VI. Again, GODS PROVIDENCE IS INTRICATE.

That you will also find in the textThe appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was, as it were, a wheel in the middle of a wheel. I have just said that Providence is *intricate.* When Joseph brought his two sons up to Jacobs deathbed and Jacob was about to bless them, Jacob guided his hands wittinglyand he put his right hand on the head of the younger son, and his left hand on the head of the elder one. Joseph said, Not so, my Father, for this is the firstborn. And Jacob said, I know it, my son, I know itand he would not give the blessing in any other way but with his hands crossedand God usually blesses His children by crossing His hands. We say, Do not deal so with me, but God says, It must be even so, My child. There is a blessing on your head. Do not say, Uncross Your hands, for that is the way to bless you most of all. I wish to put the greatest blessing upon you and, therefore, I have crossed My hands. Providence is wonderfully intricate! You want always to see through Providence, do you not? You never will, I can assure you! You have not eyes good enough. You want to see what good that affliction was to you? You must believe it! You want to see how it can bring good to the soul? You may be enabled to do so in a little time, but you cannot see it nowyou must believe it! Honor God by trusting Him! God has many Gordian knots which wicked men may cut and which righteous men may try to unravel, but which God alone can untie! We see the wicked prosper. They flourish and great is their power, while the righteous are cast down. We say, Why is this? There are wheels within wheels. Do not fret yourselves because evil-doers are more prosperous than the godly. There may be a nation that seems to have right on its sidethat nation may be crushed and another nation, which is tyrannical, may get the victory. Do not ask, Why is this? You shall know the reason when you get up yonder! Do not attempt to do what Gabriel never dares to doto ask the reason why, for God will never give it.

VII. Next, PROVIDENCE IS ALWAYS CORRECT.

I shall not detain you long on this point. The Prophet saw the wheels and he well said, they turned not when they went. They always went straightthey never turned to the right or to the left. Such is Gods Providence. Man marks out plans. He says, I shall build this tower. He gets it half up and he finds he has not enough to finish it withhe has to pull it down, lay a smaller foundation, and build again. God never does soHe has a plan when He begins and He carries that plan out. He lays the foundation and He also lays the tombstone. There are some persons who talk about God changing His purposesuch people do not know what God is at all. How could God change!? God must either change from a better to a worse, or from a worse to a better. If He could change from a worse to a better, He is not perfect now. And if He could change from what He is to something worse, He would not be perfect thenand He would not be God! He cannot change. It is not possible that God should ever change or shift in any of His purposes. Can He change because He has not power? Why, Sirs, He could girdle this globe with mountains, or move the hills into the sea! Can He change because He has not patience enough? What? He who from His purpose never swerves? Shall He change because He has made a mistake? Shall the Most High Jehovah ever harbor an error in His Almighty Mind? To err is human. With the Divine Being, the whole plan goes on to completion and what He has ordained shall be! On the iron rock of Destiny it is written and it cannot be altered. God moves the wheel and the wheel goes onand though a thousand armies stand in the way to stop it, it still goes on. They turned not when they went.

I cannot make out what some of you do with your comfortless Gospelbelieving that God loves you today and hates you tomorrow. That you are a child of God one day, and a child of the devil the next. I could not believe a Gospel like that! If I were a heathen, I could believe it at once because I could manufacture a god of mud that I could alter with my fingers, and change to any fashion. But if I once believe in the God who Was and Is, and is to come, I know that He cannot change and I feel a constancy of faith and a firmness of hope which the cares and trials of this mortal life cannot destroy. He will not cast off His people whom He has chosen.

VIII. Another thought is, that PROVIDENCE IS AMAZING.

I shall not dwell on this point, but just remind you that the text says it is so. As for their rims, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rims were full of eyes round about them four. Even the man who knows that every wave that dashes against the ship is washing him nearer homethat every breath of wind that rises comes to his sail and fills it and sends it to the white cliffs of his native Albioneven the man who feels that everything is working for himeven *he* must say that Providence is amazing! Oh, that thoughtit staggers thought! It is an idea that overwhelms methat God is working in all that happens! The sins of man, the wickedness of our race, the crimes of nations, the iniquities of kings, the cruelties of wars, the terrific scourge of pestilenceall these things are, in some mysterious way, working the will of God! I cannot explain this. I cannot tell you where human will and free agency unite with Gods Sovereignty and with His unfailing decrees. This has been the place where intellectual gladiators have fought with each other since the time of Adam. Some have said, Man does as he likes and others have said, God does as He pleases. In one sense they are both true, but there is no man who has brains or understanding enough to show where they meet. We cannot tell how it is that I do just as I please as to which street I shall go home by and yet I cannot go home except through a certain road. John Newton used to say that there were two streets by which he could go to St. Mary Woolnothbut Providence directed him as to which he should use. Last Sabbath I came down a certain streetI do not know whyand there was a young man who wished to speak to me. I say that was Gods Providence that I might meet that young man. Here was Providence, and yet there was my choicehow, I cannot tell. I cannot comprehend it. I believe that every particle of dust that dances in the sunbeam does not move an atom more or less than God wishesthat every particle of spray that dashes against the steamboat has its orbit as well as the sun in the heavensthat the chaff from the hand of the winnower is steered as surely as the stars in their coursesthat the chirping of an aphid over a rosebud is as much fixed as the march of the devastating pestilence, and the fall of sere leaves from the poplar is as fully ordained as the tumbling of an avalanche. He who believes in God must believe this Truth of His. There is no standing point between this and atheism. There is no half way between an almighty God who works all things according to the good pleasure of His own will and no god at all. A god who cannot do as He pleasesa god whose will is frustratedis not a God and cannot be a God! I could not believe in such a god as that.

IX. My closing idea is that PROVIDENCE IS FULL OF WISDOM.

You will see this by the last part of the 18th verse. And their rims were full of eyes round about them four. You will say, this morning, Our minister is a fatalist. Your minister is no such thing! Some will say, Ah, he believes in fate. He does not believe in fate at all! What is fate? Fate is this*Whatever is must be.* But there is a difference between that and Providence. Providence says, *Whatever God ordains must be.* But the wisdom of God never ordains anything without a purpose. Everything in this world is working for some one great end. Fate does not say that. Fate simply says that the thing must be. Providence says that God moves the wheels along and there they are. If anything would go wrong, God puts it right and if there is anything that would move awry, He puts forth His hand and alters it. It comes to the same thingbut there is a difference as to the objective. There is all the difference between fate and Providence that there is between a man with good eyes and a blind man. Fate is a blind thingit is the avalanche crushing the villages down below the mountain and destroying thousands of lives. Providence is not an avalanche, it is a rolling river, rippling at the first like a rill down the sides of the mountain, followed by minor streams, then it rolls in the broad ocean of everlasting love, working for the good of the human race. The Doctrine of Providence is not that *what is, must be*but that, what is, works together for the good of our race and especially for the good of the chosen people of God. The wheels were full of eyesthey were not blind wheels!

Let us close with the thought that there is the greatest wisdom in the workings of Providence. You were recently in great distress and you could not see why it was so with you. The next time you are in distress, you must say, The wheels of Providence are full of eyesI have but two eyes, but Gods wheels are full of eyes. God can see everything. I can only see one thing at a time. I see it looks good for me now. I do not know what it will be tomorrow. I see what the plant is now. I do not know what it will be tomorrow. I know not what kind of flower that herb will yield. This affliction is a cassava root, full of poison and would soon destroy me, but God can put that in the oven so that all the poison shall evaporate and it shall become food for me to live upon. This trouble of mine seems to me to be destructive, but God can take all the destroying power out of it and so it shall be made into food for my soul. Now, you tried one, groaning down in the valley, up with your heart! Away with your tears! Put your hand on your breast and make your heart stop its hard beating. Poor Soul, dash the cup of misery from your handyou are not condemned you are a pardoned Christian! Remember that God has said, All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose. Oh, how I would like to make your hearts like flint and steel against trouble! We cannot bear the winds of troublewe are soon cast down and brokenhearted. When we are in prosperity, we are giantswe think we can do like Samson didthat we can take hold of the two pillars of trouble and distress and pull them down! But once tell us that the Philistines are upon us and we have no power.

He who has faith is better than the stoic. The stoical philosopher bore trial because he believed it must be. The Christian bears it because he believes it is working for his good. The next time that trouble comes, or disease comes, or pestilence comes, smile at it and say

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.

Let this be your shield to keep off the thrusts of distress and this be your high rock against all the winds of sorrow! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *PSALM 103.*

Verse 1. *Bless the LORD, O my Soul: and all that is within me, bless*

His holy name. [See Sermons #1077, Volume 18THE LORD BLESSING HIS SAINTS; #1078, Volume 18THE SAINTS BLESSING THE LORD and #2121, Volume 36THE KEYNOTE OF THE YEARRead/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

Come, my Heart, be down in the dumps no longer! Take your harp from the willows, tune its strings and begin to pour forth its music to the praise of Divine Love!

2-4. *Bless the LORD, O my Soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases; who redeems your life from destruction; who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies.* This is a better crown than any emperor ever wore, unless he, also, was a child of God. Priceless and rare gems and jewels adorn this wondrous coronetwho crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies.

5-9. *Who satisfies your mouth with good things; so that your youth is renewed like the eagles. The LORD executes righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide.* [See Sermon #1171, Volume 20THE LORD CHIDING HIS PEOPLERead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Are you suffering His chiding just now? They are good for you, but they will not last forever. He will not always chide.

9, 10. *Neither will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us after our sins.* It is all of the Lords mercies that we are not consumed. He has not dealt with us after our sins.

10-12. *Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the Heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.* [See Sermon #1108, Volume 19PLENARY ABSOLUTION Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Then surely

He will also remove our troubles from us! But if not, as He has removed our transgressions so far away that they can never be brought back again, we have real cause for joy whatever happens to us here.

13. *Like as a father pities his children, so the LORD pities them that*

fear Him. [See Sermons #941, Volume 16THE TENDER PITY OF THE LORD; #1650, Volume 28 GODS FATHERLY PITY and #2639, Volume 45OUR HEAVENLY FATHERS PITYRead/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] The very best of them are only objects of pity. Though they are the best, they need that He should look down upon them with Infinite Compassion.

14-19. *For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto childrens children; to such as keep His Covenant, and to those that remember His Commandments to do them. The LORD has prepared His Throne in the Heavens and His Kingdom rules over all.* What a comfort this is for us! Over the great as well as over the little, over all parts of the earth, as well where war rages as where peace reigns, His Kingdom rules over all. Nothing happens without His permission! Even the little things of life are ordered by Him! The foreknown station of a rush by the riverside is as fixed as the place of a kingand the chaff from the hand of the winnower is steered as surely as the stars in their courses, for to God nothing is little and nothing is great.

20, 21. *Bless the LORD, you His angels that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word. Bless you the LORD, all you His hosts.* Let all the armies of Heaven break forth into one songBless you the LORD, all you His hosts.

21, 22. *You ministers of His, that do His pleasure. Bless the LORD, all His works in all places of His dominion: bless the LORD, O my Soul.*

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1431 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS MOUTH
NO. 1431

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 1, 1878, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Son of man I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel: therefore hear the word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me. Ezekiel 3:17.

IN most places the seasons in the Church are the reverse of those of Nature. Our wintry season generally comes when our hearers are busy in the fields, or resting in their summer retreats. And our harvest time for the ingathering of souls comes to us in the winter when, during the long evenings, the people can come together and special meetings for prayer and exhortation can be held. Just now, as the damp of autumn begins to fall and the days are sensibly shortening, we ought to take note of the signs of the times and begin sharpening our sickles for a plenteous harvest. The time when kings go forth to battle is coming on and we must muster the host. The season when we can, with special ease, gather the people and hopefully labor for their conversion is now at our doors and it is well that we gird up our loins for it!

I feel deeply anxious, dear Friends, that every time these seasons come round, all Christians should be fully prepared for them! I feel that we should make the best of every opportunity and use with thoroughheartedness, every hopeful occasion if, by any means, we may save some! *Now* is our time to use all our powers that we may be the means of bringing glory to our Lord Jesus Christ and of setting Him on high in hearts conquered by His love! We should all desire to take some part in this gracious work! Of course there are and always will be, in the Christian Church, special watchmenchosen men who are set apart by God for the warning of the peoplewhose *one* business it is to cry aloud and spare not, whether men will hear or whether they will not!

Let us be thankful that the Lord gives us such men and let us beseech Him to multiply their number. We prayerfully expect to have our Ezekiels to whom the Lord shall say, Son of man, I have made you a watchman. But still, Beloved, when the camp is in imminent danger, every man should turn watchman! And though the special sentinels must keep their posts, walk their beats and must with double vigilance act as if everything depended upon themyet all the rest of the host must also mount guard and aid in keeping the watches both by day and night. It seems to me, Brother, that if the Lord has opened your eyes, you have become a Seer. And when you have become a Seer and can see, you should also become a watchman and watch for the good of the Church of God and for the salvation of souls!

If this country were invaded, which may God grant it never may be, we could not confine the defense to our professional soldiers. No, every man would grasp such a weapon as he could reach and use it vigorously to drive the intruder over our white cliffs! I might even venture to say every

woman would do the sameand matrons would become Amazons! Dear are our hearths and homes and none of us would ask to be excused in the defense of our beloved isle! Even so in the work of the salvation of souls, every saved one longs to have a share! Can we let sinners perish? Can we permit our own kinsmen to go down into the Pit? No, not if our prayers, tears and earnest teaching can rescue them!

Jesus Christ, in mighty love has died to save sinners and He must be honored for His glorious deed of Gracecan we suffer His name to be trailed in the mire? Shall He still be despised and rejected by human hearts? Shall even the members of our own family refuse His gentle sway? No, not if our testimony may help to honor Him, nor if our earnest pleading may gain Him a throne in some human heart! We feel glad to think that Christs battles are not such as require strength of muscle and bone, nor do they need great mental capacity. Even the appointed watchman is set only to *warn* the peoplehe has not to charm them with eloquence, nor to electrify them with novelties of oratory! He is simply to warn them and the most plain language may suffice for that!

Surely it is a grave mistake of the present period that men think their preachers are bound to be oratorical and poetical. Why is such startling ability to be flaunted if the object is to warn a sinner to flee from the wrath to come? I fear that my Brothers are forgetting their real errand and are laboring to *dazzle* those whom the Lord sent them to warn! If a man is asleep and I have to wake him, I need not cultivate a fine tenor voice with which to sing him out of his slumbers! I have but to call with sufficient loudness and distinctness until he is startled. I am glad that you Christian people can all take a share in the service of your Master since that service is the *warning* of those around you! You will never deliver sensational discourses and I am sure you need not regret the inability! But you *can* give men warning from God. You can warn children, your own children to begin with. You can warn your neighbors. You can warn those of your own rank and age. You can warn all who come in your path, for that is simply to tell of danger and to recommend the way of escape. Brothers and Sisters, with but slender knowledge and stammering utterance, we can warn and we will!

I am going to address you, this morning, upon the supposition that all of you who are believers in Christ are panting to take a share in the necessary and earnest work of warning men, lest they come to destruction. May I not hope that this is the case? To me it seems as if there is nothing else worth living for! It cannot be worthwhile to linger in this land of sorrow and of toil unless God is to be glorified by us! Nothing but the accomplishment of His gracious purposes can compensate us for our exile from Heaven. No merely earthly object is worthy of an immortal spirit. If we could win the Indieswhat is wealth? If we could compel the trumpet of fame to engross itself with our exploitswhat is honor? There is nothing beneath the sun worth a mans lifting his hand for except the glory of God! And God is best glorified by the conversion of men.

You believe that, my Brothers and Sisters, and therefore you mean to have a share in it, if it is but the bringing of one poor child to Christ! Therefore to you I speak with confidence, hoping that God may bless my words so that we may begin a new campaign right well prepared for it and so may achieve a greater success than any we have gained up to now! What are the qualifications for serving God by warning men? Ezekiel had them. What can we learn from the Lords words to Ezekiel by which we may better serve our Lord and act as watchmen to those around us? Three things I shall speak of this morning. First, the ears to be disciplined. Secondly, the tongue to be educated. Thirdly, a lesson in the text to be practiced. May the Holy Spirit bless the whole subject to us!

I. If we would be found really useful and serviceable for our Lord and Master, THE EARS ARE TO BE DISCIPLINED. Read the text. Son of man, I have made you a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore *hear* the word from My mouth. To train the *tongue* you must begin with the *ear*. It is well known that no man is fit to command who has not first learned to *obey*and assuredly no man is qualified to teach who has not, first of all, found pleasure in *learning*. You must be a disciple and sit at the Masters feet before you can become an Apostle and go forth to speak in the Masters name. To acquire eloquence we must train the ears and especially to warn our fellow men we must, ourselves, hear the voice of warning.

The text says, Hear the word from My mouth. What does this mean? I take it, first, that if we wish to be useful, our ears must be disciplined to hear only Gods Word. We must receive the Gospel as Gods own Word and go forth to proclaim it as such. I have lately met pretty frequently with the following sentimentit is one of the fungi of this enlightened age of advanced thoughtThe call is every day more loud for teaching which shall not appeal to the authority of the Bible but to the decision of the hearts and consciences of men! Our religious teachers should fall back upon the truth which men have gathered from their inner consciousness and should support their instructions by arguments fetched from the experience of the thoughtful and philosophical. It is too late in the day to be always referring to a book and attempting to prove certain statements by the stereotyped utterances of an antiquated volume.

That is the favorite notion and those who believe in it may go on and dote and dream as much as they please! And those who think their statements worth listening to may listen to themthey will, no doubt, greatly please themselves and they will, for awhile, amuse the little coteries who look up to them as little popes of a little party! They may even worship them as little gods, for surely the creator and maker of truth within himself falls not very short of deity! Brothers and Sisters, we can afford to let this plague of flies pass awaythe nuisance is great, but it will not long endure! There will come an end of all this trifling. Mans imaginations and reasoning are wood, hay and stubbleand the Day comes which will consume them!

Vainglorious mortals would supplant the Eternal Testimony with their maunderings, but this their way is their folly! Our assurance is that the teaching which is needed for this age must come more and more distinctly *from* the Bible and must court daily testing *by* the Bible! Teachers, if they are to have power, must sustain everything with, Thus says the Lord. Ours it is to stand or fall by Revelation and to declare, We do not care one single farthing about your imaginary consciousness and the manufacturing of your dreams, your fancies and your whims! We declare to you that God has spoken and that what He has said, you are bound to receive because the Lord has said it! This stands instead of all argumentsThe Lord has said it.

Believe Him, for He cannot lie. We come to tell you of what we, ourselves, have received upon Divine authority and we demand that you receive our testimony, not because it is ours, but because it is supported by Divine authority and is, in fact, the echo of the Divine Word! Only by this mode of utterance can we hope to succeed! On any other footing we court failure and deserve it. Brother, do you say, I desire to spread my religion because it is my own opinion? You will never win anyone on such terms! How can you expect it? Your warning of another man, apart from Gods Truth, will be of no use to him, for your opinion is as good as his and his opinion is as good as yours! And neither is worth much!

Brother, do you say, I regard my religion as my own views of things? Ah, then your views of things and my views of things and everybody elses views of things are worth little enoughand there is no use in making a stir about them! Any opinion which bears your name at the bottom, or mine, might just as well not be written! What are our names? What are our views? No, Brother, if you would speak as to affect the heart and conscience and destiny of men, you *must* repeat what you have received from Gods own mouth as Gods own Wordthere is a value about that, a permanence, a certainty and it goes forth with a supreme majesty, involving woe upon any who dare reject it! It is power!

If it is, indeed, the Word of God, woe unto you if you do not speak it faithfully! And woe unto your hearers if they receive it not reverently! The very first thing, then, for us to remember, if we would be useful in warning men and saving souls, is that we feel the full conviction and impression that what we try to teach is Gods own Word. You shall hear the word from My mouth. We must feel it to be clothed with the imperial robe of Divine authority! We are not going to speak it because it is the doctrine authorized by the creed, nor because it is the doctrine of the community to which we belong, but because it is the sure Word of the living God! Here is powerpower which hard hearts are forced to feel! Here is power before which even devils tremble! I guarantee you if you put Gods Word down among 50,000 words of men, it shall be like a lion among a flock of sheep, tearing them in pieces and it will prove by its own natural force from where it comes and where it goes!

Secondly, if we would have our ears educated, we must not only receive the Word as Divine authority, but to know what Gods Word is. Beloved, there are many who are willing to begin winning souls who had better first commence learning Christ. Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature was spoken to men who had been, for some time, with Jesus and had learned of Him. For others who were to be called it was provided that after Baptism they should be *taught*that in due season they, also, might go forth to instruct the nations. I like not that a man should become so much a learner that he never wishes to speak and to teach others. But I like as little that a man should be so anxious to be a teacher that he runs before he is sent and tries to bring others to a Savior of whom he knows next to nothing!

Fill yourself, Brother, before you ask to be poured out, else there will not much come of your being poured out. Receive the bread and the fish from the Master, else you will have very little to distribute among the crowd. First of all get to know what it is you have to say, or else how can you speak for God? If a messenger runs swiftly and is out of breath at the end of his journey and then says, I have something to say for my master, but I know not what it is, he will be laughed at for his pains. His swift running is of little consequence, seeing he had nothing to carry. He should have waited till he knew the tidings which he had to bring. Brother, hear the Word from Gods mouth and then deliver it in Gods name!

What, then, shall we do? Let us study the Bible with diligence. Go to that fountain of the Truths of God, I pray you, and never be satisfied with a secondhand version of it. Go to the fountainhead and drink where the streams have not been muddied by human blundering. We desire to keep the Word of God pure, but we are conscious of infirmitygo to the undefiled well where there is no mixture of human error! Search the Inspired Book and desire to know everything which it teaches, for a little error may do much mischief to good teaching, like a fly in the pot of ointment. Even the omission of a Truth of God may injure a mans usefulness to a very great extent.

The Lord does not bless some Churches as we would expect them to be blessed because they are in grievous error upon certain points and, though He will bless that part of the testimony which is true, yet the other portion hinders. Probably one reason why Christianity does not spread so rapidly just now as it once did is thisthat it is so mixed up in most denominations with human tradition and opinionand because, also, there is so little willingness to examine doubtful points to see whether or not they are according to the mind of God. The Church would be one with itself if it were one with the Truth of God. It would be impossible that there should be so many divisions if we all held to the one Lord, one faith, one Baptismbut there are sad mixtures which are allowed to go on from year to year unchallengedand if any man is honest enough to speak out, he is straightway charged with bigotry and uncharitableness! While these things are so, the blessing will be restrained.

My dear Brother, if you would be eminently useful, let your mind bow before the doctrines of the Scripture! Seek to know all that the Bible teaches, especially upon the main points of salvation, and yield yourself to the mind of Christ in all things. Desire to tell your fellow men just what the Lord tells you, no more and no less! And endeavor throughout your whole life to follow after the revealed Truth of God in its purity, rather than the dogmas of the fathers or the decrees of the sects. The Truth of God as it is in Jesus, pure and simple as we find it in the Word of God, should be our rule and guide. This will greatly help us towards success. It does not seem a very practical remark, but it is so.

The Holy Spirit first gives the Truth of God to our understanding and then gives us Grace to impart it to others. Get your ears cleansed, thoroughly cleansed, to hear Gods Word *as* Gods Word and be determined to

know thoroughly what Gods Word has really taught and thus shall you be instructed to speak as Gods mouth to men. The great thing, I believe, with a successful winner of souls is to hear Gods Truth from Gods own mouth. What do I mean by this? I mean that a second-hand message is sure to be weakly delivered. A Brother repeats a story which somebody else has told to him! How cold it gets in passing from hand to handhe who first saw the fact told it with far more life and energy!

What you need to do, Brother, is to tell the message as God, Himself, has told it to you by His Holy Spirit. Look how Ezekiel was prepared to prophesy! He says, The hand of the Lord was there upon me and He said unto me, Arise, go forth into the plain, and I will there talk with you. Yes, we must get alone with God and hear what He will speak, for only can we fitly be His mouth to others! Do you want to know Christs way of making men useful? Turn to Mark 3:13-15 and read, He went up into a mountain and called unto him whom He would and they came unto Him. And He ordained 12, that they should be with Him and that He might send them forth to preach and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out devils.

Do you see the order? He calls them to Himyou must not dream of winning souls till you first *come* to Christ, yourself. Next we read, That they might be with Himyou cannot go and teach Christ, or bring others to Him unless you have first been *with* Him. Communion with Jesus is training for service! To abide with your Lord must be your college and your preparation class for teaching others. After the fellowship comes the workThat He might *send* them forth to preach and to have power. The process requires that the man who is to have power for Christ must first be with Christ. He cannot work miracles till He has dwelt with the great Miracle-Worker. You shall hear the word from My mouth.

There lies the word in the Book. What infinite majesty is there! As I read each letter in that Book of God, I worship the eternal mind which dictated it! But oh, when a passage of Scripture leaps out of the Book and enters into my soul by the Divine flame of the Holy Spirit, how much more mighty it appears! When my inner ears hears God speak the text, what energy there is about it! Sitting down with the Bible on my knee, I say to myself, This is no common book which lies before methere is Inspiration here, not the inspiration of Milton or of Shakespeare, but Divine Inspirationthis is the language of the Eternal as truly so as though I now saw Sinai on a blaze and heard out of the thick darkness these accents ringing with trumpet tones and with the deep thunder of, Thus says the Lord.

When we thus consider, we are in a right mood to hear the Lords Word and to speak it to others. We must acknowledge and feel the majesty of the Gospel and be conscious of its power, or we shall not rightly warn men. Brothers, since this Book is Gods Word to your own souls, take care that you deliver it in deep reverence and holy awe to those whom you aim to instruct! Is it not the voice of God to you? When it speaks home to your heart, does it not move you as nothing else can do? I confess that the words of Scripture thrill my soul as nothing else ever canthey bear me aloft or dash me down! They tear me in pieces or they build me up after an unrivalled fashion! The Words of God have more power over me than ever Davids fingers had over his harp! Is it not so with you? Well, you will speak to others with power in proportion as you continually feel the power of the Word of God over your own heart and conscience.

This is very wonderful, this hearing the Truth of God newly spoken from the Lords mouth. Some will not know what I mean, but others of you will. The Holy Spirit has a way of showing unto us the old texts in a new light and applying them with new forceand this is what we greatly need. You shall hear the word from My mouth. I would like you teachers, this afternoon, before you go to your classes, to go upstairs and say, Good Master, let us hear what we have to tell the children. Let us hear it in our souls as from Yourself. We are going to warn and instruct and invite thembe pleased to show us how. Master, say the words to us! Make us hear Your voice and when we have heard Your message from Your own lips, we shall talk to the children in quite another style from that which is usual to us. Brothers and Sisters, in Spirit maintain your fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, and so will you warn souls with warm, loving admonitions which God will bless! Let us have done with second-hand messages! Speak as the oracles of God!

Once more, to have our ears well tutored, we must feel the force of the Truth of God that we deliver. Ezekiel had to eat the roll. It must enter into himself before he could reveal its contents to the people. So we must feel the force and power of the Gospel before we can effectually declare it. Sinare you going to talk about the evil of it? Do you know the evil of it, yourself? Get back to the place of repentance where you once wet the earth with your tears and talk to children or grown-up people about sin in that spirit! Pardonare you going to speak about that? Do you know the sweetness of it? Go to the place where you first saw the flowing of the ever precious blood and feel, again, your load of guilt removed and you will speak of it most sweetly!

The power of the Holy Spiritare you going to speak about that? Have you felt His quickening, enlightening, comforting and sanctifying influence? Then according as you have felt, you will be able to speak with effectiveness! It is poor work to preach a Christ you never knew! It is terrible to talk of bread you have never tasted; of living water you never drank and of joys you never felt! The farmer that labors must first be a partaker of the fruits. Go home and ask the Lord to teach you, but do not go on His errands till first you have sat at His feet, for unto those whom He has not taught, God says, What have *you* to do that you should declare My statutes? First come and hear the word from My mouth and then give the people warning from Me.

I think I have said enough to show how the ears are to be disciplined. **II.** Secondly, THE TONGUE IS TO BE EDUCATED. That is, indeed, the aim of the discipline of the ears. And to what end is the tongue educated? I answer, first, to be able to deliver an unpleasant message. Any mans tongue is swift in telling *good* things, at least it ought to be, or where else is humanity? We are glad enough to tell you glad tidings of good things, but he that is to be useful must be willing to speak unpleasant things. Brothers and Sisters, are you ready when you meet with careless people to tell them Truths of God that will be unpalatable to them! And when they are awakened, are you willing, in Gods name, to try and beat to pieces their refuges of liesto tell them plainly of the mistakes that they are so fond of and point them to the only way of salvation?

You and I cannot be useful if we want to be sweet as honey in the mouths of men! God will never bless us if we wish to please men so that they may think well of us. Are you willing to tell them what will break your own heart in the telling and break theirs in the hearing? If not, you are not fit to serve the Lord! You must be willing to go and speak for God though you will be rejected! See the seventh verse, where God says, They will not listen unto you, for they will not listen unto Me. If they reject the Master, will they receive the servant? They took up stones to stone your own dear Lord and Master! And they finally took nails to fasten Him to the Cross! Do you think they will listen to *you*?

If God is to bless you, dear Friend, you must be willing to bear witness for Him even if none should ever believe a word you saybecause in so doing you will deliver *your* soul! Take good heed, all of you, to this danger of being guilty of the blood of others. Have not some of you quite forgotten it? There is blood on your garments! Do you see the spots? Some of you who never said a word for Christ to your own children, I say there are big drops of soul-blood on your garments! *Soul*-blood is worse than the blood of the body and you are smeared with it! Cant you see the spots? Wash them out, I pray you! Oh, you say, it is of no use warning themthey would only laugh at you! But you would lose the blood stains if you did. Their blood would not be required at your hands and, therefore, if you want to be useful, be willing to do unpleasant duties in order to feel, I have warned them and cleared my soul.

Next, you need your tongue tutored to speak the Truth of God as having, yourself, heard it. You know there are several ways of speaking. I was trying to illustrate differences of speaking when addressing my students the other day. I said, Suppose you saw, by the look of my face, while I was sitting here, that I was in a terrible state of indignation when I rose to address you? You would say, Now we shall have it! We can see by the look of him that he will drive at us. Just so, when a man preaches, or warns othersit ought to be in a living style which indicates that something is coming. The man should be full of emotion, not moved by anger, but by a sacred passion which awakens him and makes the people feel that he is in awful earnest, carried out of himself, not delivering set phrases and words from his mouth outwards, but speaking from his inmost heart!

Now, if we were to meet with our Lord Jesus, Himself, and were then to speak of Him in the state of mind in which His Presence left us, what a style of speech that would be! I think I hear a mother who has been with Jesus talking to her girl. She says, Dear child, there is such joy in loving Jesus that I pant for you to know it! He is so great and good that my dear little daughter must not forget Him. I can imagine that a father has met with the Lord Jesus and felt Gods Truth sent into his own soul by the Holy Spiritand I am sure that when he gets his boy, alone, he pleads with him in deep and tender earnestness which commands the boys ear and heart! He does not know what has happened to his fatherhe is so earnest and pleads so seriouslybut the secret reason is that the father has listened to the Lord, Himself, and is, himself, the echo of that voice!

Facts vividly brought before the mind greatly influence a speaker. A sinner seen as lost touches the heart. Jesus seen as crucified affects the speech! If I were to stand up in the council of a certain town to urge them to look to their fire escapes, I should do it with tremendous vehemence if I had just come out of the midst of that shuddering crowd which saw a poor woman hanging out of the window in the midst of the flames for lack of proper apparatus to reach her! Any man, fresh from such a sight, would plead with energy! His whole soul would burn as he thought of the poor perishing fellow creature in the midst of the fire! Would not yours? It is just so when you come fresh from talking with Godthe Truth of God is vividly realizedan awe is upon you and holy zeal and sacred ardor inflame your breast!

If you dwell away from God you do not feel the value of the Gospel message, nor the weight of mens souls. The grandest of all the Truths of God lose force when they cease to be realized *facts*but their power returns when we come, again, under their actual influence! When the voice of Jesus love is still ringing in your ears, then with a deep awestruck solemnity your whole soul is poured forth at your mouth and you speak as pleading with men that they would yield to God and accept His great salvation!

The tongue must speak when the ears are tingling with the message of the Lord! The tongue needs to be trained in the case of each one of us to deliver the message as from God. I believe that God has given commission to every Christian who knows the Truth of God, to tell it, and that there is authority given to every *man* who has the living water within himself to let it flow out, for it is written, Out of the midst of him shall flow rivers of living water. You see your calling, Brothers. You may not all be called to the work of prophesying as ministers are, but you are all called by some means to warn men of the wrath to come and lead them to Christand I want you to feel that God is at the back of you when you warn sinners.

You never pray for a soul; you never weep over a soul; you never drop one kernel of Divine Truth into a human ear; you never utter one word of warning or expostulation but what God is with you in so doing. God will acknowledge His Truth, therefore never be ashamed of it. Make your face like adamant if their hearts are like adamantif they are not ashamed to sin, do not you be ashamed to warn them! If they are not ashamed of their unbelief, be not you ashamed of your faith in the Divine Testimony! The hosts of Heaven are on your side, therefore be not dismayed! Your faith may hear the noise of the wings of the living creatures, the noise of the wheels and the noise of a great rushing, for all Heaven is astir when the watchman moves to warn the people (Ezekiel 3:13). If God is at your back, speak boldly and do not let your testimony be silenced!

The Lord tells Ezekiel that the people would be a restraint to him and how often they are so. Non-success often ties the preacher up so that he can scarcely speak. You, O Son of Man, behold they shall put bands upon you and shall bind you with them, and you shall not go out among them. But what a grand verse is the twenty-seventhBut when I speak with you, I will open your mouth and you shall say unto them, Thus says the Lord God. He that hears, let him hear; and he that forbears, let him forbear: for they are a rebellious house. None can silence a mouth which God has opened! May we henceforth feel that now, between here and Heaven, we have souls committed to our charge and that we will be clear of their blood!

Each one of you has his little plot of ground to sow. You must resolve that it shall not lie waste. You will be called home very soon, my dear fellow workers, therefore work while it is day. I who have to lead you in this plowing may soon be called away. I feel it and I feel that the same is true of each one of ustherefore, since these poor souls are dying as well as we are and they are sinking into Hell forever, let us be in earnest and may God help us to save them! Let us begin to weep, for weeping, perhaps, may be the fittest beginning of a higher life as it was the beginning of our natural life. Let us cry unto God! Let us watch for opportunities and as they come, let us avail ourselves of them, if by any means we may save some. We dare no longer fritter away life. Dare we? We dare not furnish a continuation of mans foolish history if, indeed, it is true that all the world is a stage and all the men and women merely players.

We do not believe that statement and if it is true we will alter it. Let us upset the stage, tear off the masks and truly live. Life is real, life is earnest, as we shall know at the Judgment Seat of God! How real will it look by the light of the Last Great Day! Come, let us ask to have ears and tongue trained and let us begin, now, to serve our Lord by warning our fellow men!

III. I finish my sermon this morning by, in the third place, endeavoring to practice THE LESSON OF THE TEXT. I desire to speak to those of you who are unconverted and to speak as if I had just come from an interview with my Lord and Master, as I trust I have. I want to speak as if I had just heard Him say what I am going to repeat to you. Try and help me with your imagination and may God give you faith!

I have to say to you, dear Friends now present, that whatever may be your natural excellence of character and whatever the religiousness of your training, yet you must all of you be born again! You heard me say, You must be born again, but I want to say it as Jesus said it when, one evening, He was visited by a ruler of the Jews, a man of spotless character, of admirable reputation and of deep learning. Sitting alone with Him, our Lord treated Him with great kindness, but yet with solemn emphasis. He said, You must be born again.

Yes, young Friend, there is much about you that is very admirable and you know a great deal of Divine Truth, but, You must be born again. The Master would lay a strong tender emphasis upon the, must. You *must* be born again. Jesus would not demand of us more than is absolutely necessary, nor say a syllable that would tend to shut a soul out of Heaven. If He says, You must, why then we must! I want you to admit that necessity.

Next I desire to introduce you to Jesus sitting at the well with the woman of Samaria. You can see the smile upon His countenance as He instructs her. I need you, now, to hear Him say these wordsGod is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. I should like to say to you, dear Friend, that all the outward forms of religion in the world will be of no value to you unless you are *spiritual*. You must have a spiritual mind and a spiritual nature through being born againand then you must worship God in a spiritual way, for mere outward religion is nothing in His sight. I desire to warn you as to that fact, but I would rather you should hear my Master say the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeks such to worship Him. You believe it, do you not? Oh, ask that the Spirit of God would teach you how to worship in spirit and in truth!

Now listen to my Master again. He is addressing the Jews and He uses these words. I give them accurately translatedYou search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life and they are they which testify of Me. And you will not come to Me that you might have life. I am glad that you read your Bibles, but how is it that you feel so easy when you have read your chapter every day? Do you think you will get salvation by *Bible reading*? Alas, you are in error! You must go further than that! You must go to Christ Jesus Himself! Oh, that you would, by an act of faith, come to Him this morning! Do you think this Truth of God is hard? I hope you dont, for it is the teaching of Jesus and I have heard Him say it to my own soul. You must come to Jesus, Himself, or the Scriptures will do you no good! The Scriptures are a road sign pointing to Christit will never do to sit down by the road signwe must hasten on to find the Lord, Himself.

Listen to my Master once again. He says to the Jews, If you believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sins. I know, now, you will say that I speak hard things! Perhaps I do, but not with a hard heart. Now, my Lord is always tender, never man spoke like this Man and never man wept as He did when He had a hard thing to say. Hear, then, His declaration, Except you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins. Die in your sins? Do you know what that means? To die in irons, to die in a ditch, to die on the gallowsthese are nothing compared with dying in your *sins*!

I must tell you some other things which my Master says, because nowadays the fine new theologians do not like to have them spoken. I have heard Him speak them in my very soul and I must, therefore, warn you of them. He says there are tares growing among the wheat and that the Day will come when the angels will gather the tares in bundles to burn them. That is how He puts the destiny of the ungodly! Hear how the modern theologians hiss between their teeth, Dreadful language. These horrible expressions are borrowed from Dante and Milton and the old writers.

No Dante, Milton, or the old writers had existed then, but Jesus Himself says, The Son of man shall send forth His angels and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Such will be the lot of some of *you* unless you repent! Though growing up among Christian people and hearing the Gospeland looking very much like Christiansyou will be separated from among the wheat to be cast into the fire! Some of you are rich and enjoy yourselves a great deal. I must tell you what Jesus said of one who fared sumptuously every day but cared not for his soul.

He said, The rich man, also, died and was buried. And in Hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and sees Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. My Lord, my sweet Lord my dying, my bleeding Lordthe Man who receives sinners, it was thus He spoke! I would not speak less tenderly than He if I were able, but I want to assure you rich people who have your comforts in this life and yet are out of Christ, that this is what will happen to you! Nor will this be for a time, but forever!

You will never be able to escape from torment, according to my Masters teaching, for He says there is a great gulf fixed so that they who would come from there cannot. I pray you, therefore, take warning, as I would give you warning from His mouth! The last thing that was ever seen of my Lord and Master upon earth was this. He stood on tiptoe on this world which had treated Him so ill and around Him were gathered a few disciples. Just before He rose out of their sight He addressed them in loving tones and said, Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. They stood with their ears and eyes open to know how He would have them put the Gospel and He said, He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. He that believes not shall be damned.

Did *He* say *that*? Yes, just before the cloud received Him out of their sight, He said, He that believes not shall be damned. It was He that said it! I should have liked to have seen how He looked when He thus spoke the evident pain which crossed His mind and showed itself in His eyes as He said in effect, There will be some who will not believe, but you must tell them plainly, He that believes not shall be damned. I do warn you of this, men and women, every one of youif I am not a believer in Christ, I shall be damned! And if *you* are not believers you will be damned! I beseech you run not so dreadful a risk!

Trust yourselves with Jesus, right now, and you shall be saved, for it is He that says it, not IHe that believes and is baptized shall be saved. And again, He that believes in Him has everlasting life. I do not think He meant me to try and put this in any pretty shape in order to amuse you with it and so I have not tried to do so. I have spoken to you His own Word as best I know how. May He be pleased to weed out my frailties and throw them away, but may all that is His own live in your souls and mine unto eternal life! Amen.

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SPARED!
NO. 2807

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1902.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON A LORDS-DAY EVENING, DURING THE WINTER OF 1860-61.
I was left.
Ezekiel 9:8.

THE vision of Ezekiel which is recorded in the previous chapter brought to light the abominations of the house of Judah. The vision which follows in this chapter shows the terrible retribution that the Lord God brought upon the guilty nation, beginning at Jerusalem.

He beheld the men of slaughter who come forth with their weapons. He marked them begin the destroying work at the gate of the Temple. He saw them proceed through the main streets and not omit a single lane they utterly slew all those who were not marked with the mark of the writers inkhorn on their brow. He stood alonethat Prophet of the Lordhimself spared in the midst of universal carnage and, as the carcasses fell at his feet, and the bodies stained with gore lay all around him, he said, I was left. He stood alive among the dead because he was found faithful among the faithlesshe survived in the midst of universal destruction because he had served his God in the midst of universal depravity.

We shall now take the sentence altogether apart from Ezekiels vision and appropriate it to ourselves. And I think, when we read it over, and repeat it, I was left, it very naturally invites us to take a *review of the past.* It also very readily suggests *a prospect of the future* and, I think, it also permits a *terrible contrast in reserve for the impenitent.*

I. First of all, then, my Brothers and Sisters, we have here a pathetic reflection which seems to invite us to take A SOLEMN REVIEWI was left.

You remember, many of you, times of sickness, when cholera was in your streets. You may forget that season of pestilence, but I never can when the duties of my pastorate called me to continually walk among your terror-stricken households and to see the dying and the dead. Impressed upon my young heart must ever remain some of those sad scenes I witnessed when I first came to this metropolis and was, really, employed at that time to bury the dead rather than to bless the living. Some of you have passed through not only one season of cholera, but many, and you have been present, too, perhaps, in climates where fever has prostrated its hundreds and where the plague and other dire diseases have emptied out their quivers and every arrow has found its mark in the heart of some one of your companions. Yet you have been left.

You walked among the graves, but you did not stumble into them. Fierce and fatal maladies lurked in your path, but they were not allowed to devour you. The bullets of Death whistled by your ears and yet you stood alive, for his bullet had no billet for your heart. You can look back, some of you, through fifty, sixty, 70 years. Your bald and gray heads tell the story that you are no more raw recruits in the warfare of life. You have become veterans, if not *invalids*, in the army. You are ready to retire, to put off your armor and give place to others. Look back, Brothers and Sisters, I say, you who have come into the sere and yellow leaf remember the many seasons in which you have seen death hailing multitudes about youand think, I was left.

And we, too, who are younger, in whose veins our blood still leaps in vigor, can remember times of peril when thousands fell about us, yet we can say, in Gods house, with great emphasis, I was leftreserved, great God, when many others perished. Sustained, standing on the rock of life when the waves of death dashed about me, the spray fell heavily upon me and my body was saturated with disease and painyet am I still alive still permitted to mingle with the busy tribes of men!

Now, then, what does such a review as this suggest? Ought we not, each one of us, to ask the question, Why was I spared? Why was I left? Many of you were, at that timeand some of you are even now dead in trespasses and sins! You were not spared because of your fruitfulness, for you brought forth nothing but the grapes of Gomorrah! Certainly God did not stay His sword because of anything good in you. A multitude of clamorous evils in your disposition, if not in your conduct, might well have demanded your summary execution. But you were spared. Let me ask you why? Was it that mercy might yet visit youthat Grace might yet renew your soul? Have you found it so? Has Sovereign Grace overcome you, beaten down your prejudices, thawed your icy heart, broken your stony will in pieces? Say, Sinner, in looking back upon the times when you have been left, were you spared in order that you might be saved with a great salvation?

And if you cannot say, Yes, to that question, let me ask you whether it may not yet be so? Soul, why has God spared you so long, while you are yet His enemy, a stranger to Him and far off from Him by wicked works? Or, on the contrary, has He spared youI tremble at the bare mention of the possibilityhas He prolonged your days to develop your propensities, that you may grow riper for damnationthat you may fill up your measure of crying iniquity and then go down to the Pit a seared and dry sinner, like wood that is ready for the fire? Can it be so? Shall these spared moments be spoiled by more misdemeanors, or shall they be given up to repentance and to prayer? Will you now, before the last of your sins shall set in everlasting darkness, will you now look to Him? If so, you will have reason to bless God through all eternity, that you were leftbecause you were left that you might yet seek and might yet find Him who is the Savior of sinners!

Do I speak to many of you who are Christians, who, too, have been left? When better saints than you were snatched away from earthly ties and creature kindredwhen brighter stars than you were enclouded in nightwere you still permitted to shine with your poor flickering ray? Why was it, great God? Why am I now left? Let me ask myself that question. In sparing me so long, my Lord, have You not something more for me to do? Is there not some purpose, not conceived in my soul, which You will yet suggest to meand to carry out which You will yet give me Grace and strength and spare me a little while longer? Am I yet immortal or shielded at least from every arrow of death because my work is incomplete? Is the tale of my years prolonged because the full tale of the bricks has not yet been made up? Then show me what You would have me do! Since thus I have been left, help me to feel myself a specially-consecrated man, left for a purpose, reserved for some end, otherwise I had been worms many years ago and my body had crumbled back to its mother earth! Christian, I say, always be asking yourself this question, but especially be asking it when you are preserved in times of more than ordinary sickness and mortality. If I am left, why am I left? Why am I not taken home to Heaven? Why do I not enter into my rest? Great Lord and Master, show me what You would have me do and give me Grace and strength to do it!

Let us change the review for a moment and look upon the sparing mercy of God in another light. I was left. Some of you now present, whose history I well know, can say, I was left, and say it with peculiar emphasis. You were born of ungodly parents. The earliest words you can remember were base and blasphemoustoo bad to repeat. You can remember how the first breath your infant lungs received was tainted air the air of vice, of sin and iniquity. You grew up, you and your brothers and your sisters, side by side. You filled the home with sin. You went on together in your youthful crimes and encouraged each other in evil habits. Thus you grew up to manhood and then you were banded together in ties of immorality as well as in ties of blood. You added to your numberyou took in fresh associates. As your family circle increased, so did the flagrancy of your conduct. You all conspired to break the Sabbath. You devised the same schemes and perpetrated the same improprieties. You recollect how one and another of your old comrades diedyou followed them to their graves and your merriment was checked a little whilebut it soon broke out again. Then a sister died, steeped to the mouth in infidelity. After that, a brother was takenhe had no hope in his deathall was darkness and despair before him. And so, Sinner, you have outlived all your friends! If you are inclined to go to Hell, you must go there along a beaten tracka path which, as you look back upon the way you have trodden, is stained with blood, for you can remember how all who have been before you have gone to the long home in dismal gloom, without a glimpse or ray of joy.

And now you are left, Sinner, and, blessed be God, it may be you can say, Yes, and I am not only left, but I am here in the House of Prayer! And if I know my own heartthere is nothing I should hate so much as to live my old life over again. Here I am and I never believed I would ever be here! I look back with mournfulness, indeed, upon those who have departed, but, though mourning them, I express my gratitude to God that I am not in tormentsnot in Hellbut still here! Yes, not only here, but having a hope that I shall one day see the face of Christ and stand amidst blazing worlds robed in His righteousness and preserved by His love.

You have been left, thenand what ought you to say? Ought you to boast? Oh, no! Be doubly humble! Should you take the glory to yourself? No! Put the crown upon the head of free, rich, undeserved Grace! And what should you do above all other men? Why, you should be doubly pledged to serve Christ! As you served the devil through thick and thin until you came to serve him, alone, and your company had all departed, so, by Divine Grace, may you be pledged to Christto follow Him, though all the world should despise Himand to hold on to the end, until, if every professor should be an apostate, it might yet be said of you at the last, He was left. He stood alone in sin while his comrades died and then he stood alone in Christ when his companions deserted him. Thus of you it shall always be said, He was left.

This suggests also one more form of the same review. What a special Providence has watched over some of us and guarded our feeble frames! There are some of you, in particular, who have been left to such an age that, as you look back upon your youthful days, you recall far more of kinsfolk in the tomb than remain in the world, more under the earth than above it! In your dreams you are the associates of the dead. Still you are left! Preserved amidst a thousand dangers of infancy, then kept in youth, steered safely over the shoals and quicksands of an immature age and over the rocks and reefs of manhood, you have been brought past the ordinary period of mortal lifeand yet you are still here. Seventy years exposed to perpetual death and yet preserved till you have come almost, perhaps, to your fourscore years! You have been left, my dear Brother or Sisterand why are you left? Why is it that brothers and sisters are all gone? Why is it that the ranks of your old schoolmates have gradually thinned? You cannot remember one, now alive, who was your companion in youth. How is it that now, you, who have lived in a certain quarter so long, see new names there on all the shop doors, new faces in the street and everything new to what you once saw in your young days? Why are you spared? Are you an unconverted man? Are you an unconverted woman? To what end are you spared? Is it that you may, at the 11th hour be saved? God grant it may be so! Or are you spared till you shall have sinned yourself into the lowest depths of Hell, that you may go there the most aggravated sinner because of the oft-repeated warnings so often neglectedare you spared for this, or is it that you may yet be saved?

But are you a Christian? Then it is not hard for you to answer the question, Why are you spared? I do not believe there is an old woman on earth, living in the most obscure cottage in England and sitting this very night in a dark attic, with her candle gone out, without means to buy anotherI do not believe that old woman would be kept out of Heaven five minutes unless God had something for her to do on earth! And I do not think that yon gray-headed man would still be preserved unless there was something for him to do. Tell it out, tell it out, you aged man! Tell the story of that preserving Grace which has kept you up till now! Tell to your children and to your childrens children what a God He is whom you have trusted! Stand up as a hoary patriarch and tell how He delivered you in six troubles and in seven suffered no evil to touch you! Bear to coming generations your faithful witness that His Word is true and that His promise cannot fail! Lean on your staff and say, before you die in the midst of your family, Not one good thing has failed of all that the Lord God has promised. Let your ripe days bring forth a mellow testimony to His love and, as you become more and more advanced in years, so be you more and more advanced in knowledge and in confirmed assurance of the Immutability of His counsel, the truthfulness of His oath, the preciousness of His blood and the sureness of the salvation of all those who put their trust in Him! Then shall we know that you are spared for a high and noble purpose, indeed! You shall say it with tears of gratitude and we will listen with smiles of joyI was left.

II. I must rather suggest these reviews than follow them up, though, did time permit, we might well enlarge abundantly and, therefore, I must hurry on to invite you to A PROSPECT.

You and I shall soon pass out of this world into another. This life is, as it were, but the ferrywe are being carried across and we shall soon come to the true shore, the real terra firmafor here there is nothing that is substantial. When we shall come into that next world, we have to expect, by-and-by, a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust. And in that solemn day we are to expect that all that dwell upon the face of the earth shall be gathered together in one place. And He shall come, who came once to sufferHe shall come to judge the world in righteousness and the people in equity! He who came as an Infant shall come as the Infinite! He who lay wrapped in swaddling bands shall come girt about the waist with a golden girdle, with a rainbow wreath and robes of storm! There shall we all stand, a vast, innumerable companyearth shall be crowned from her valleys deepest base to the mountains summitand the seas waves shall become the solid standing-place of men and women who have slept beneath its torrents. Then shall every eye be fixed on Him, every ear shall be open to Him and every heart shall watch with solemn awe and dread suspense for the transactions of that greatest of all days, that Day of Days, that sealing up of the ages, that completing of the dispensation!

In solemn pomp the Savior comes and His angels with Him. You hear His voice as He cries, Gather together the tares in bundles to burn them. Behold the reapers, how they come with wings of fire! See how they grasp their sharp sickles which have long been grinding upon the millstone of Gods long-suffering, but have become sharpened at the last. Do you see them as they approach? There they are, mowing down a nation with their sickles! The vile idolaters have just now fallen and yonder a family of blasphemers has been crushed beneath the feet of the reapers! See there a bundle of drunkards being carried away upon the reapers shoulders to the great blazing fire. See again, in another place, the whoremonger, the adulterer, the unchaste and such like, tied up in vast bundlesbundles the ropes of which shall never be cutand see them cast into the fire and see how they blaze in the unutterable torments of that Pit! And shall I be left? Great God, shall I stand there wrapped in His righteousness, alone, the righteousness of Him who sits as my Judge, erect upon the Judgment Seat? Shall I, when the wicked shall cry, Rocks, hide us; mountains, on us fall, gaze upon Him? Shall these eyes look up, shall this face dare to turn itself to the face of Him that sits upon the Throne? Shall I stand calm and unmoved amidst universal terror and dismay? Shall I be numbered with the goodly company, who, clothed with the white linen which is the righteousness of the saints, shall await the shock, shall see the wicked hurled to destruction and feel and know themselves secure?

Shall it be so or shall I be bound up in a bundle to burn and swept away forever by the breath of Gods nostrils, like the chaff driven before the wind? It must be one or the other! Which shall it be? Can I answer that question? Can I tell? I can tell ittell it nowfor I have in this very Chapter of Gods Word, that which teaches me how to judge myself! They who are preserved have the mark on their foreheads! And they have a character as well as a markand their character is that they sigh and cry for all the abominations of the wicked. Then, if I hate sin, and if I sigh because others love itif I cry because I, myself, through infirmity fall into itif the sin of myself and the sin of others is a constant source of grief and vexation of spirit to methen I have that mark and evidence of those who shall neither sigh nor cry in the world to come, for sorrow and sighing shall flee away!

Have I the blood-mark on my brow today? Say, my Soul, have you put your trust in Jesus Christ, alone, and as the fruit of that faith, has your faith learned how to love, not only Him that saved you, but others, too, who as yet are unsaved? And do I sigh and cry within while I bear the blood-mark without! Come Brother, Sister, answer this for yourself, I charge you! I charge you do so by the tottering earth and by the ruined pillars of Heaven that shall surely shake! I pray you, by the cherubim and seraphim that shall be before the Throne of the Great Judge by the blazing lightning that shall then illumine the thick darkness and make the sun amazed, and turn the moon into bloodby Him whose tongue is like a flame, like a sword of fire! I charge you by Him who shall judge you, and try you, and read your heart, and declare your ways, and divide unto you your eternal portion! I charge you by the certainties of death, by the sureness of judgment, by the glories of Heaven, by the solemnities of HellI beseech, implore, command, entreat youask yourself, now, Shall I be left? Do I believe in Christ? Have I been born-again? Have I a new heart and a right spirit? Or am I still what I always wasGods enemy, Christs despiser, cursed by the Law of God, cast out from the Gospel, without God and without hopea stranger to the commonwealth of Israel?

I cannot speak to you as earnestly as I would to God that I could. I want to thrust this question into your very loins and stir up your hearts deepest thoughts with it. Sinner, what will become of you when God shall winnow the chaff from the wheat? What will be your portion? You that stand in the aisle, yonder, what will be your portion? You who are crowded over therewhat will your portion be when He shall come and nothing shall escape His eyes? Say, shall you hear Him? Say, and shall your heart-strings crack while He utters the thundering sound, Depart, you cursed? Or shall it be your happy lotyour soul transported all the while with unutterable blissto hear Him say, Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world? Our text reveals a prospect, I pray you to look at it, gaze across the narrow stream of death, and say. Shall I be left?

When you, my righteous Judge, shall come To fetch Your ransomed people home,
Shall I among them stand?
Shall such a worthless worm as I,
Who sometimes am afraid to die
Be found at Your right hand?
I love to meet among them now,
Before Your gracious feet to bow,
Though vilest of them all!
But can I bear the piercing thought
What if my name should be left out
When You for them shall call?
Prevent, prevent it by Your Grace!
Be You, dear Lord, my hiding place
In this the accepted day
Your pardoning voice, oh let me hear
To still my unbelieving fear
Nor let me fall, I pray.

III. But now we come to A TERRIBLE CONTRAST which I think is suggested in the text, I was left.
Then there will be some that will not be left in the sense we have been speaking ofand yet who will be left after another and more dreadful manner. They will be left by mercy, forsaken by hope, given up by friends and become a prey to the implacable fury, to the sudden, infinite and unmitigated severity and justice of an angry God! But they will not be left or exempted from judgment, for the sword shall find them out, the vials of Jehovah shall reach even to their heart! And that flame, the pile whereof is wood and much smoke, shall suddenly devour them and that without remedy. Sinner, you shall be left! I say, you will be left of all those fond joys that you now hugleft of that pride which now steels your heartyou will be low enough, then! You will be left of that iron constitution which now seems to repel the darts of death. You shall be left of those companions of yours that entice you on to sin and harden you in iniquity. You shall be left by those who promise to be your helpers at the last. They shall need helpers, themselves, and the strong man shall fail. You shall be left, then, of that pleasing fancy of yours and of that merry wit which can make sport of Bible Truths and mock at Divine solemnities!
You shall be left, then, of all your buoyant hopes and of all your imaginary delights. You shall be left of that sweet angel, Hope, who never forsakes any but those who are condemned to Hell! You shall be left of Gods Spirit, who sometimes now pleads with you. You shall be left of Jesus Christ, whose Gospel has been so often preached in your ear. You shall be left of God the FatherHe shall shut His eyes of pity against youHis heart of compassion shall no more yearn over you, nor shall He regard your cries. You shall be left but, oh, again I tell you, you shall not be left as one who has escaped, for, when the earth shall open to swallow up the wicked, it shall open at your feet and swallow you up! When the fiery thunderbolt shall pursue the spirit that falls into the Pit that is bottomless, it shall pursue you, reach you and find you! When God tears the wicked in pieces and there shall be none to deliver, He shall tear you in pieces! He shall be unto you as a consuming fire, your conscience shall be full of gall, your heart shall be drunk with bitterness, your teeth shall be broken, even as with gravel, your hopes melted with His hot thunderbolts and all your joys withered and blasted by His breath!
O careless Sinner, mad Sinner, you who are now dashing yourself downward to destruction, why will you play the fool at this rate? There are cheaper ways of making sport for yourself than this! Dash your head against the wall. Go there and, like David, let your spittle fall upon your beard, but let not your sin fall upon your conscienceand let not your despite of Christ be like a millstone hung about your neck with which you shall be cast into the sea forever. Be wise, I pray you. O Lord, make the sinner wise! Hush his madness for a while. Let him be sober and hear the voice of reason! Let him be still and hear the voice of conscience! Let him be obedient and hear the voice of Scripture! Thus says the Lord, because I will do this, consider your ways. Prepare to meet your God, O Israel. Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.
I do feel that I have a message for someone tonight. Though there may be some who think the sermon not appropriate to a congregation where there is so large a proportion of converted men and women, yet what a large proportion of ungodly ones there is here, too! I know that you come here, many of you, to hear some funny tale, or to catch at some strange, extravagant speech of one whom you repute to be an eccentric man. Ah, well, he is eccentric and hopes to be so till he dies! But it is simply eccentric in being in earnest and wanting to win souls! O poor Sinners, there is no odd tale I would not tell if I thought it would be blessed to you! There is no grotesque language which I would not use, however it might be thrown back at me, if I thought it might but be serviceable to you! I set not my account to be thought a fine speakerthey that use fine language may dwell in the kings palaces. I speak to you as one who knows he is accountable to no man, but only to his Godas one who shall have to render his account at the Last Great Day.
And I pray you will not go away to talk of this and that which you have marked in my language. Think of this one thing, Shall I be left? Shall I be saved? Shall I be caught up and dwell with Christ in Heaven, or shall I be cast down to Hell forever and ever? Turn over these things! Think seriously of them. Hear that voice which says, Him that comes to Me I will in nowise cast out. Give heed to the voice which expostulates, 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.
How else shall your life be spared when the wicked are judged? How else shall you find shelter when the tempest of Divine wrath rages? How else shall you stand in the lot of the righteous at the end of the days?

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *EPHESIANS 1.*

Verses 1, 2. *Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints, which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus, Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.* The Apostle desires the same blessing for us who are the faithful in Christ Jesus, as he did for the saints at Ephesus. He longs that we, also, may be filled with Grace and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. And the wish of the Apostle is according to the will of God who would have us abound in Grace and in peace. Some of you Christian people are troubled in mind, yet your Lord said to His disciples and through them to you, Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you...Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Jesus knew that in the world you would have tribulation, but He willed that in Him you would have peace. And the way to get that peace is by getting Divine Grace. Grace be to you, and peace. The more gracious you are, the more easily will you bear the trying circumstances which surround you. Look not for peace apart from Gracewhen you have Grace, you have a right to peace.

3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.* I notice how, often, in the Epistles, benedictions are followed by doxologies. This is because the true heart loves to bless the Lord. What a rich treasure we have who are blessed with all spiritual blessings! There is nothing we can need but what is provided for us by our gracious God. Why are you poor, then, when God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ? Is it not because you often forget to go to the heavenly in Christ, and begin looking to the earthly in yourselves? There is nothing but starvation thereall true riches are found in the heavenly in Christ.

4. *According as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should he holy and without blame before Him in love.* The Apostle did not ignore the glorious and blessed doctrine of Divine Election. He delighted to meditate upon it and to speak of it. I wish that some Christians, nowadays, were not so much afraid of it. All spiritual blessings come to us in this waythis is the fountainhead of all favor and GraceAccording as He has chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world. The objective of our electionthat to which God has chosen us in Christ isthat we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Unless you are holy, how can you talk of being chosen of God, for the elect are chosen unto holiness, chosen to be delivered from all blame through the love and Grace of God?

5, 6. *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His Grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved.* It is well said, by an old writer, that there is no book which is written with such brevity as the Bible. It seems to give us the condensed essence of the Truth of God in the smallest possible space. What a mass of thought there is in those few lines which I have just read to you! We see here that we become the children of God by adoption, whatever the Universal Fatherhood people may sayHaving predestinated us unto the *adoption* of children by Jesus Christ to Himselfand that this adoption is the result of predestination and is not because of our own merits, but, according to the good pleasure of His will. Some systems of theology have much of logic, but little of God. But in Pauls teaching, it is God first, and last, and in the middle and all over. To the praise of the glory of His Grace. What a wonderful expression this isnot only the glory of His Grace, but the praise of that glory! God has done all things with a view to magnifying His Grace in the hearts of the sons and daughters of menWherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved. There seems to me to be a sacred poem in these words, accepted in the Beloved. To my heart there is more heavenly music in those four words than in any oratorio I ever heard! Accepted in the Beloved. Oh, what honey this is in the mouth, what cheer this is in the heart! Are all of you, dear Friends, accepted in the Beloved?

7, 8. *In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace; wherein He has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence.* Wisdom and prudence are two of the handmaids of Grace. Grace reigns through righteousness and the wisdom and prudence of God are set to work so to conduct the whole of the arrangements that the glory of His Grace may be all the more conspicuous!

9. *Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He has purposed in Himself.* Even our knowledge of Gods will is the result of His good pleasure. If your eyes have been divinely opened, you see the will of God coming in everywhereand ordering all things according to His gracious and unerring purpose!

10. *That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him.* All the things that are in Christ shall be gathered together. None of them shall be left out. His great Covenant work shall be, in all respects, fully accomplished. There shall be no failure in any point. Whether in Heaven, or on earth, the things which are in Christ shall be gathered together in One, even in Him.

11. *In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will.* How the Apostle delights to harp upon this theme! The Holy Spirit knew that a time would come when men would put a slur upon this glorious Truth of God, so He inspired His servant to set it forth as the very brightness of the sun in the spiritual firmamentbeing predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will.

12-14. *That we should be to the praise of His glory, whom first trusted in Christ. In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.* Twice more, in these three verses you have this expression, to the praise of His glory, making a third time with that which he said before, to the praise of the glory of His Grace. The true Gospel glorifies God! False gospels may have what is called the enthusiasm of humanity about them, but the true Gospel has an enthusiasm for the living God and it magnifies and glorifies Him. Note, O Believers, that you first trust in Christ and after that you have the seal of the Spirit. There are some who look for the sealing of the Spirit before believing in Jesus but neither God nor man will set a seal to a blank paperthere must be the writing of faith upon the heart and *then* the Spirit of God comes in, with His blessed seal, and sets it at the bottom as His Divine and gracious token of acceptance. The Holy Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance. Now, an earnest is a part of the possession, itselfit is not simply a pledge, it is more than thatso the Holy Spirit in our heart is Heaven begun belowit is the young dawn of the everlasting day! Blessed be God, we have His Spirit within us, and we rejoice in His indwelling!

15-17. *Therefore I, also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.* You know Him, for He has saved younow go on to know a great deal more of Him. You can scarcely have a better gift than this, the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. The knowledge of Christ Crucified is the most excellent of all the sciences! It is better to be well acquainted with Christ than to be a very Solomon concerning all other things, yet not to know Him.

18. *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened.* You have eyes Gods Grace has given them to youbut they are capable of additional power and force and there is the telescope of faith, which you are allowed to use, which will enable you to see much more than you have ever seen as yet!

18. *That you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.* First, you are to know what your inheritance is. That is the hope of His calling. And, next, you are to know what Christs inheritance in you is, which is another thing. It is a most blessed subject for meditation that you are Christs, altogether Christs, and that all you are to be, will be Christs, and that in you, poor creatures though you are, He will yet have a rich inheritance. Paul would have you know what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

19. *And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe.* It takes a great deal of Divine Grace to make a Believer, and to keep a Believernothing but the almighty power of God can do it.

19, 20. *According to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.* Not only raising Him from the dead, but lifting Him up to His own right hand and setting Him there, in the heavenly places.

21. *Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.* The power of God which works in a Believer is the same power with which He raised Christ from the dead and set Him in this preeminent place.

22. *And has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church.* This power is also to be seen working in you who believe in Jesus. What wonders of Grace we shall be when God has exerted that stupendous and amazing energy in each one of us, even as in His own Son! What an inheritance Christ will have in us then!

23. *Which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.* Said I not truly to you that this blessed Book is full of Truth put into as few words as possible? Verily, there is none like it! Other books, at the best, are like gold hammered out very thin, but here you have ingots of solid spiritual wealth, priceless in value! God help us all to make them our own treasure, for Christs sake! Amen.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #3377 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE GREATEST WONDER OF GRACE
NO. 3377

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1913. ***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,***
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. ***And I was left.***
Ezekiel 9:8.

SALVATION never shines so brightly to any mans eyes as when it comes to himself. Then is Divine Grace illustrious, indeed, when we can see it working with Divine power upon ourselves. To our apprehension, our own case is always the most desperate and, therefore, mercy shown to us is the most extraordinary! We see others perish and wonder that the same doom has not befallen ourselves. The horror of the ruin which we dreaded and our intense delight at the certainty of safety in Christ unite with our personal sense of unworthiness to make us cry in amazement, And I was left.

Ezekiel, in vision, saw the slaughter men smiting right and left at the bidding of Divine Justice. And as he stood unharmed among the heaps of the slain, he exclaimed with surprise, I was left. It may be the day will come when we, too, shall cry with solemn joy, And I, too, by Sovereign Grace, am spared while others perish. Special Grace will cause us to marvel. Emphatically will it be so at the Last Dread Day.

Read the story of the gross idolatry of the people of Jerusalem as recorded in the 8th Chapter of Ezekiels prophecy, and you will not wonder at the judgment with which the Lord at length overthrew the city. Let us set our hearts to consider how the Lord dealt with the guilty people. Six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lies toward the north, and every man with a slaughter weapon in his hand. The destruction worked by these executioners was swift and terribleand it was typical of other solemn visitations. All through history the observing eye notices lines of justice, red marks upon the page where the Judge of all the earth has at last seen it necessary to decree a terrible visitation upon a guilty people. All these past displays of Divine Vengeance point at the coming judgment even more complete and overwhelming. The past is prophetic of the future! A day is surely coming when the Lord Jesus, who came once to save, will descend a second time to judge! Despised mercy has always been succeeded by deserved wrathand so must it be in the end of all things. But who may abide the day of His coming? Or who shall stand when He appears? When sinners are smitten, who will be left? He shall lift the balances of Justice and make bare the sword of execution. When His avenging angels shall gather the vintage of the earth, who among us shall exclaim in wondering gratitude, And I was left.? Such an one will be a wonder of Grace, indeed, worthy to take rank with those marvels of Grace of whom we have spoken in many former discourses in this place! To each one of you, I put this enquiryWill you be an instance of sparing Grace, and cry, And I was left?

We will use the wonderfully descriptive vision of this Chapter that we may, with holy fear, behold *the character of the doom* from which Grace delivers us. And then we will dwell upon the exclamation of our text, I was left, considering it as the joyful utterance of *the persons who are privileged to escape the destruction.* And lastly, *the emotions which the escaped feel.*

By the help of the Holy Spirit, let us solemnly consider
I. THE TERRIBLE DOOM from which the Prophet in vision saw himself preserved, regarding it as a figure of the judgment which is yet to come upon all the world.
Observe, first, that it was a *just* punishment inflicted upon those who had been often warneda punishment which they willfully brought upon themselves. God had said that if they set up idols, He would destroy them, for He would not endure such an insult to His Godhead. He had often pleaded with them, not with words only, but with severe Providences, for their land had been laid desolate, their city had been besieged and their kings had been carried away captive! But they were bent on backsliding to the worship of their idol gods. Therefore, when the sword of the Lord was drawn from its scabbard, it was no novel punishment, no freak of vengeance, no unexpected execution. So, in the close of life, and at the end of the world, when judgment comes on men, it will be just and according to the solemn warnings of the Word of God. When I read the terrible things which are written in Gods Book in reference to future punishment, especially the awful things which Jesus spoke concerning the place where their worm dies not and their fire is not quenched, I am greatly pressed in spirit. Some there are who sit in judgment upon the Great Judge and condemn the punishment which He inflicts as too severe! As for myself, I cannot measure the power of Gods angerbut let it burn as it mayI am sure that it will be just. No needless pang will be inflicted upon a single one of Gods creatures! Even those who are doomed forever will endure no more than Divine Justice absolutely requires, no more than they, themselves, would admit to be the due reward of their sins if their consciences would judge aright. Mark you, this is the very Hell of Hell that men will know that they are justly suffering. To endure a tyrants wrath would be a small thing compared with suffering what one has brought upon himself by willful wanton choices of wrong. Sin and suffering are indissolubly bound together in the constitution of Natureit cannot be otherwise, nor ought it to be. It is right that evil should be punished. Those who were punished in Jerusalem could not turn upon the executioners and say, We do not deserve this doom every cruel wound of the Chaldean sword and every fierce crash of the Babylonian battle-axe fell on men who in their consciences knew that they were only reaping what they themselves had sown! Brothers and Sisters, what wonders of Grace shall we be if, from a judgment which we have so richly deserved, we shall be rescued at the last!
Let us notice very carefully that this slaughter was *preceded by separation* which removed from among the people those who were distinct in character. Before the slaughter men proceeded to their stern task, a man appeared among them clothed in linen with a writers inkhorn by his side, who marked all those who in their hearts were grieved at the evil done in the city. Until these were marked, the destroyers did not commence their work. Whenever the Lord lays bare His arm for war, He first gathers His saints into a place of safety! He did not destroy the world by the flood till Noah and his family were safe in the ark. He would not suffer a single fire drop to fall on Sodom till Lot had escaped to Zoar. He carefully preserves His ownflood, nor flame, nor pestilence, nor famine shall do them harm! We read in the Revelation that the angel said, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads. Vengeance must sheath her sword till Divine Love has housed its darlings. When Christ comes to destroy the earth, He will first take away His people. Before the elements shall melt with fervent heat and the pillars of the universe shall rock and reel beneath the weight of wrathful Deity, He will have caught up His elect into the air, so that they shall be forever with Him! When He comes He shall divide the nations as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats no sheep of His shall be destroyed! He shall without fail take the tares from among the wheat, but not one single ear of wheat shall be in danger. O that we may be among the selected ones and prove His power to keep us in the day of wrath! May each one of us say, amid the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds, And I was left. Dear Friend, do you think you are marked on the forehead? If at this moment my voice were drowned by the trumpet of Resurrection, would you be among those who would awake to safety and glory? Would you be able to say, The multitude perished around me, but I was left? It will be so if you hate the sins by which you are surrounded and if you have received the mark of the blood of Jesus upon your soul! If not, you will not escape, for there is no other door of salvation but His saving name! God grant us Grace to belong to that chosen number who wear the Covenant seal, the mark of Him who counts the people!
Next, this judgment was placed *in the Mediators hands.* I want you to notice this. Observe that according to the Chapter, there was no slaughter done except where the man with the writers inkhorn led the way.
So, again, we read in the 10th Chapter that, One cherub stretched forth his hand from between the cherubims into the fire that was between the cherubims and took, thereof, and put it into the hands of him that was clothed with linen; who took it and went out, and cast it over the city. See this! Gods Glory of old shone forth between the cherubim! That is to say, over the place of Propitiation and Atonement, and as long as that glow of light remained, no judgment fell on Jerusalem, for God in Christ condemns not! But by-and-by the Glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house, and then judgment was near to come! When God no longer deals with men in Christ, His wrath burns like fire and He commissions the ambassador of mercy to be the messenger of wrath! The very man who marked with his pen the saved ones, threw burning coals upon the city and led the way for the destruction of the sinful. What does this teach but thisThe Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son? I know of no Truth of God more dreadful to meditate upon! Think of it, you careless onesthe very Christ who died on Calvary is He by whom you will be sentenced! God will judge the world by this Man, Christ Jesus! He it is who will come in the clouds of Heaven and before Him shall be gathered all nations! And when those who have despised Him shall look upon His face, they will be terrified beyond conception! Not the lightning, not the thunder, not the dreadful sound of the last tremendous trumpet shall so alarm them as that face of injured love! Then will they cry to the mountains and hills to hide them from the face of Him that sits upon the Throne! Why, it is the face of Him that wept for sinners, the face which scoffers stained with bloody drops extracted by the thorny crown, the face of the Incarnate God who, in Infinite Mercy, came to save mankind! But because they have despised Him. Because they would not be saved. Because they preferred their own lusts to Infinite Love and persisted in rejecting Gods best proof of kindness, therefore will they say, Hide us from the face, for the sight of that face shall be to them more accusing and more condemning than all else besides! How dreadful is this Truth of God! The more you consider it, the more will it fill your soul with terror! Would to God it might drive you to fly to Jesus, for then you will behold Him with joy in that day!
This destruction, we are told, *began at the sanctuary.* Suppose the Lord were to visit London in His angerwhere would He begin to smite? Oh, somebody says, of course, the destroying angel would go down to the low music halls and dancing rooms! Or He would sweep out the back slums and the drink palaces, the jails and places where women of illrepute congregate! Turn to the Scripture which surrounds our text. The Lord says, Begin at My sanctuary. Begin at the Churches! Begin at the Chapels! Begin with the Church members! Begin with the ministers, the bishops! Begin with those who are teachers of the Gospel! Begin with the chief and front of the religious worldbegin with the high professors who are looked up to as examples! What does Peter say? The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begins with us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely are saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

The first thing the slaughter men did was to slaughter the ancient men which were before the Temple, even the 70 elders of the people, for they were secret idolaters! You may be sure that the sword which did not spare the chief men and fathers made but short work with the baser sort! Elders of our Churches, ministers of Christjudgment will begin with us! We must not expect to find more lenient treatment than others at the Last Great Assize! No, rather, if there shall be a specially careful testing of sincerity, it will be for us who have taken upon ourselves to lead others to the Savior! For this cause let us see well to it that we are not deceived or deceivers, for we shall surely be detected in that day! To play the hypocrite is to play the fool! Will a man deceive his Maker, or delude the Most High? It cannot be! You Church members, all of you, should look well to it, for judgment will begin with you! Gods fire is in Zion and His furnace in Jerusalem! In the olden times, the people fled to Churches and holy places for sanctuarybut how vain will this be when the Lords avengers shall come forth, since there the havoc will begin! How fiercely shall the sword sweep through the hosts of carnal professorsthe men who called themselves servants of God while they were slaves of the devilwho drank of the cup of the Lord, but were drunk with the wine of their own lustswho could lie, cheat, commit fornication and yet dared to approach the sacred Table of the Lord? What cutting and hewing will there be among the base-born professors of our Churches! It were better for such men that they had never been born, or being born, that their lot had fallen amid heathen ignorance, so that they might have been unable to add sin to sin by lying unto the living God! Begin at My sanctuary. The word is terrible to all those who have a name to live and are dead! God grant that in such testing times, when many fail, we may survive every ordeal and, through Grace, exclaim in the end, And I was left.

After the executioners had begun at the sanctuary, it is to be observed that they *did not spare any except those upon whom was the mark.* Old and young, men and women, priests and people, all were slain who had not the sacred sign! And so in the Last Tremendous Day all sinners who have not fled to Christ will perish! Our dear babies that died in infancy, we believe to be all washed in the blood of Jesus, and all savedbut for the rest of mankind who have lived to years of responsibility, there will be only one of two thingsthey must either be saved because they had faith in Christ, or else the full weight of Divine Wrath must fall upon them. Either the mark of Christs pen, or of Christs sword, must be upon everyone! There will be no sparing of one man because he was rich, nor of another because he was learned, nor of a third because he was eloquent, nor of a fourth because he was held in high esteem. Those who are marked with the blood of Christ are safe! Without that mark all are lost! This is the one separating signdo you wear it? Or will you die in your sins? Bow down at once before the feet of Jesus and beseech Him to mark you as His own so that you may be one of those who will joyfully cry, And I was left. Now, secondly, I have to call your very particular attention to

II. THE PERSONS WHO ESCAPED, who could each say, And I was left. We are told that those were marked for mercy who did sigh and cry for the abominations that were done in the midst thereof. Now, we must be very particular about this. It is no word of mine, rememberit is Gods Word and, therefore, I beg you to hear and weigh it for yourselves. We do not read that the devouring sword passed by those quiet people who never did anybody any harmno mention is made of such an exemption! Neither does the record say that the Lord saved those professors who were judicious and maintained a fair name and reputation until death. No, the only people who were saved were those who were exercised in heartand that heart-work was of a painful kindthey sighed and cried because of abounding sin. They saw it, protested against it, avoided it and, last of all, wept over it continually. Where testimony failed, it remained for them to mourn. Retiring from public labors, they sat down and sighed their hearts away because of the evils which they could not cure. And when they felt that sighing alone would do no good, they took to crying in prayer to God that He would come and put an end to the dreadful ills which brooded over the land! I would not say a hard thing, but I wonder, if I were able to read the secret lives of professors of religion, whether I should find that they all sigh and cry over the sins of others? Are the tenth of them thus engaged? I am afraid that it does not cause some people much anxiety when they see sin rampant around them. They say that they are sorry, but it never frets them much, or causes them as much trouble as would come of a lost sixpence or a cut finger! Did you ever feel as if your heart would break over an ungodly son? I do not believe that you are a Christian if you have such a son and have not felt an agony on his behalf. Did you ever feel as if you could lay down your life to save that daughter of yours? I cannot believe that you are a Christian if you have not sometimes come to that! When you have gone through the street and heard an oath, has not your blood chilled in you? Has not horror taken hold upon you because of the wicked? There cannot be much Grace in you if that has not been the case. If you can go up and down in the world fully at ease because you are prospering in business and things go smoothly with you, if you forget the woe of this citys sin and poverty and the yet greater woe which comes upon it, how dwells the love of God in you? The saving mark is only set on those who sigh and cryif you are heartless and indifferent, there is no such mark on you!

Are we to be always miserable? asks one. Far from it! There are many other things to make us rejoice, but if the sad state of our fellow men does not cause us to sigh and cry, then we have not the Grace of God in us! Well, says one, but every man must look to himself. That is the language of CainAm I my brothers keeper? That kind of talk is in keeping with the spirit of the Wicked One and his seedthe heir of Heaven abhors such language! The genuine Christian loves his race and, therefore, he longs to see it made holy and happy. He cannot bear to see men sinning and so dishonoring God and ruining themselves. If we really love the Lord, we shall sometimes lie awake at night sighing to think how His name is blasphemed and how little progress His Gospel makes! We shall groan to think that men should despise the glorious God who made them and who daily loads them with benefits! It sometimes lies upon my heart like a huge mountain which rushes my spirit, to think that Jesus should be rejected and that in this land of Bibles, where Latimer lit a candle which shall never be put out, the old madness is returning and many are again bowing before the images of jealousy which the priests have set up! Yes, we have priests among us again! You can see them in their long and ugly garments in every street! And women have begun to confess to them! Shame! Shame! I marvel that the crimson blush does not mantle the cheek of everyone who dares to ask or answer the questions appointed for the confessional! And yet the questions are asked, modesty is outraged and the multitudes tamely look on!

My countrymen are going back to Rome! Their fathers noble blood was shed for God and none was left for the veins of their sons. In vain the conflicts of the years gone by! In vain a Cromwells mighty arm and the purging of the land! In vain the Puritans driven from their pulpits and witnessing in poverty and persecution! Must England go back, again, to wear the fetters forged by papal Rome? My God, prevent it! Prevent it if it costs the lives of thousands of us, for we would be glad to die to save our country from so dire a curse! If you never sigh and cry because of the spread of Ritualism, I do not understand you! What stuff are you made of? Oh, but my business goes on exceedingly well. Yes, and so does mine when souls are saved, but when they are led away into error, my business cannot prosper and I have loss upon loss! I am happy enough when I think Christs Kingdom comes, but nothing beneath the sky can give me solid satisfaction if my Lords work is at a standstill! I would to God we were all so taken up with the Glory of God that the wickedness of mankind would grieve us to the heart!

But it was not their mourning which saved those who escapedit was the mark which they all received which preserved them from destruction! We must all bear the mark of Jesus Christ. What is that? It is the mark of faith in the atoning blood. That sets apart the chosen of the Lord and that alone! If you have that markand you have it not unless you sigh and cry over the sins of othersthen in the Last Day no sword of justice can come near you! Did you read that word, But come not near any man upon whom is the mark. Come not even *near* the marked ones lest they be afraid. The Grace-marked man is safe even from the near approach of harm! Christ bled for him and, therefore, he cannot, must not die! Leave him alone, you bearers of the destroying weapons! Just as the angel of death, when he flew through the land of Egypt, was forbidden to touch a house where the blood of the lamb was on the lintel and the two side posts, so is it sure that avenging Justice cannot touch the man who is in Christ Jesus. Who is he that condemns since Christ has died? Have you, then, the blood mark? Yes, or no? Do not refuse to question yourself upon this point. Do not take it for granted, lest you are deceived. Believe me, your all hangs upon it. If you are not registered by the man clothed in linen, you will not be able to say, And I was left.

This brings me to this last point of which I desire to speak. What were

III. THE PROPHETS EMOTIONS WHEN HE SAID, AND I WAS LEFT?

He saw men falling right and left and he, himself, stood like a lone rock amidst a sea of blood! And he cried in wonder, And I was left.

Let us hear what he further saysI fell on my face. He lay *prostrate with humility.* Have you a hope that you are saved? Fall on your face, then! See the Hell from which you are delivered and bow before the Lord! Why are you to be saved more than anyone else? Certainly not because of any merit in you. It is due to the Sovereign Grace of God alone! Fall on your face and acknowledge your indebtedness

Why was I made to hear Your voice,
And enter while theres room,
When thousands make a wretched choice, And rather starve than come?

And I was left.

If a man has been a drunkard and has at length been led to flee to Christ, when he says, And I was left, he will feel the hot tears rising in his eyes, for many other drinkers have died in delirium. One who has been a public sinner, when she is saved, will not be able to think of it without astonishment. Indeed, each saved man is a marvel to himself. Nobody here wonders more at Divine Grace in his salvation than I do! Why was I chosen, and called, and saved? I cannot make it out, and I never shallbut I will always praise, and bless, and magnify my Lord for casting an eye of love upon me! Will you not do the same, Beloved, if you feel that you, by Grace, are left? Will you not fall on your face and bless the mercy which makes you to differ?

What did the Prophet do next? Finding that he was left, he *began to pray for others.* Ah, Lord, he said, will You destroy all the residue of Israel? Intercession is an instinct of the renewed heart. When the Believer finds that he is safe, he must pray for his fellow men. Though the Prophets prayer was too late, yet, blessed be God, ours will not be! We shall be heard. Pray, then, for perishing men! Ask God, who has spared you, to spare those who are like you. Somebody has said there will be three great wonders in Heavenfirst, to see so many there whom we never expected to meet in Glory. Secondly, to miss so many of whom we felt sure that they must be safe. And thirdly, the greatest wonder of all will be to find ourselves there! I am sure that everyone who has a hope of being in Glory feels it to be a marvel and he or she resolves, If I am saved, I will sing the loudest of them all, for I shall owe most to the abounding mercy of God!

Let me ask a few questions and I have done. The firstand let each man ask it of himselfshall I be left when the ungodly are slain? Answer it now to yourselves. Men, women, childrenwill you be spared in that Last Great Day? Are you in Christ? Have you a good hope in Him? Do not lie to yourselves. You will be weighed in the balanceswill you be found wanting or not? Shall I be left? Let that question burn into your souls.

Next, will my relatives be saved? My wife, my husband, my children, my brother, my sister, my father, my motherwill these all be saved? Happy are we who can say, Yes, we believe they will, as some of us can joyfully hope. But if you have to say, No, I fear that my boy is unconverted, or that my father is unsaved, then do not rest till you have wrestled with God for their salvation. Good woman, if you are obliged to say, I fear my husband is unconverted, join me in prayer. Bow your heads at once and cry unto your God, Lord, save our children! Lord, save our parents! Lord, save our husbands and wives, our brothers and sisters and let the whole of our families meet in Heaven, unbroken circles, for Your names sake!

May God hear that prayer if it has come from the lips of sincerity! I could not endure the thought of missing one of my boys in HeavenI hope I shall see them both there and, therefore, I am in deep sympathy with any of you who have not seen your households brought to Christ. O for Grace to pray earnestly and labor zealously for the salvation of your whole households!

The next earnest enquiry is, if you and your relatives are saved, how about your neighbors, your fellow workmen, your companions in business? Oh, you say, many of them are scoffers! A good many of them are still in the gall of bitterness. A sorrowful fact, but have you spoken to them? It is amazing what a kind word will do. Have you tried it? Did you ever try to speak to that person who meets you every morning as you go to work? Suppose he should be lost? Oh, it will be a bitter feeling for you to think that he went down to the Pit without your making an effort to bring him to God! Do not let it be so. But we must not be too pushy, says one. I do not know about that. If you saw poor people in a burning house, nobody would blame you for being too forward if you helped to save them. When a man is sinking in the river, if you jump in and pull him out, nobody will say, You were rude and intrusive, for you were never introduced to him! This world has been lost and it must be savedand we must not mind our manners in saving it. We must get a grip of sinking sinners somehow, even if it is by the hair of their heads, before they sink, for if they sink, they are lost forever! They will forgive us very soon for any roughness that we use, but we shall not forgive ourselves if, for lack of a little energy, we permit them to die without a knowledge of the Truth of God!

Oh, beloved Friends, if you are left while others perish, I beseech you, by the mercies of God, by the heart of compassion which is in Christ Jesus, by the bleeding wounds of the dying Son of Godlove your fellow men and sigh and cry about them if you cannot bring them to Christ! If you cannot save them, you can weep over them. If you cannot give them a drop of cold water in Hell, you can give them your hearts tears while they are yet in this body!

But are you in very deed reconciled to God yourselves? Reader, are you cured of the awful disease of sin? Are you marked with the blood-red sign of trust in the atoning blood? Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? If not, the Lord have mercy upon you! May you have sense enough to have mercy upon yourself! May the Spirit of God instruct you to that end. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: ***ROMANS 8:14-30.***

Verse 14. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.* Not those who say they are the sons of God, but those who undoubtedly prove that they are by being led, influenced, gently guided by the Spirit of God!

15. *For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear: but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.* We did receive the spirit of bondage once. We felt that we were under the Law and that the Law cursed us. We felt its rigorous taxation and that we could not meet it. Now that spirit has gone and we have the spirit of freedom, the spirit of children, the Spirit of adoption. I suppose that the Apostle, when he thus spoke and said, you, felt so much of the Spirit of adoption in his own bosom that he could not talk of it as belonging to others alone. He was obliged to include it thus, and so he puts it, You have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father. He wanted to intimate that he, himself, was also a partaker of this blessed Spirit. And woe to the preacher who can preach an adoption which he never enjoyed! Woe to any of us if we can teach others concerning the spirit of sonship, but never feel it crying in our own souls, Abba, Father.

16. *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.* It corroborates the testimony of conscience. We feel that we are the children of God and the Spirit of God comes forward as a second, but still greater and higher witness, to confirm the testimony that we *are* the children of God!

17. *And if children then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.* It is to be all with Him! With Him in the suffering. With Him in the glory. With Him in the reproach of men. With Him in the honor at the right hand of the Father. But if we shun the path of humiliation with Him, we may expect that He will deny us in the day of His Glory.

18. *For I reckon.* Judge, count it up, and calculate.
18. *That the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* These sufferings, however, sharp, are short compared with eternal gloryinfinitesimal, not worthy to be taken account oflike one drop falling into a river and lost in it.
19-21. *For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.* There is a future even for materialism. That poor, dusky clod in which we dwell is yet to be illuminated with the light of Godand these poor bodies which are akin to the dust of the earth, and still remain as if they were not delivered, being subjected to pain, and weakness, and deatheven they are yet to be brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God!
22-23. *For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves, also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.* The soul has obtained its redemption. Therefore, our heart is glad and our glory rejoicing. But our body has not yet obtained its redemption. That is to come at the Resurrection. Then will be the adoption. Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. Oh, blessed fact! Though now, in common with the whole creation, the body is subjected to bondages, yet it shall be delivered and wethe whole man, body as well as soul and spiritshall be brought into the liberty of the children of God!

24-25. *For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for it? But if we hope for what we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.* Ah, Brothers and Sisters, if we could be all we should like to be, there would then be no room for the exercise of hope! If we had all that we are to have, then hope, which is one of the sweetest of the Divine Graces, would have no room in which to exercise herself. It is a blessed thing to have hope. Though I have heard that faith and hope are not to be found in Heaven, I very much question it. I do not think they will ever die. Now abide these threefaith, hope, and lovefor in Heaven there will be room, surely, for trust in the ever blessed God that He will never cast us out from our blessednessroom for the expectation of the Second Adventroom for the expectation of the conquest of the worldroom for the fulfilled promise of bringing all the elect to Glory! Still something to be hoped for! Still something to be believed! Yet here is the main sphere of hope and, therefore, let us give it full scope. And when other graces seem to be at a non-plus, let us still hope. I believe the New Zealand word for hope is swimming thought, because that will swim when everything else is drowned. Oh, happy is that man who has a hope that swims on the crest of the stormiest billow!
26. *Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities.* And especially our infirmities in prayer, for there is where infirmities are mostly seen.
26. *For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groans which cannot be uttered.* I should have thought that it would have read, But the Spirit Himself teaches us what we should pray for. But it does more than that. He goes beyond teaching us what we should pray forHe makes intercession for us, with groans which cannot be uttered. Do you know what those groans are? I am afraid that those who never had groans which cannot be uttered will never know anything of that glory which cannot be expressed, for that is the way to it. The groans that cannot be uttered lead on to unutterable joy!
27. *And He that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.* That is the philosophy of prayer. Whatever Gods will is, the Spirit of God writes it on the hearts of praying saints, and they pray for the very thing which God intends to give. As the barometer often foretells the weather that is coming, so the spirit of prayer in the Christian is the barometer which indicates when showers of blessing are coming. It is well with us when we can pray. If we cannot do anything else, if we feel that we can pray, times are not so bad with us as we might think.
28. *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.* We know it! We are assured of it!
29-30. *For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.* No breaking of these links! Where God gives one of these blessings, He gives the rest. There is no intimation of a failure somewhere in between. The predestinated are called, and the called are justified and the justified are glorified!
31-33. *What shall we say, then, to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not, with Him, also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of Gods elect?* Who shall? Who may? Who dares?
33-35. *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. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?* All these have done their worst.
36. *As it is written, For Your sake we are killed all the daylong; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.* But have they divided the saints from the love of Christ? Have they made the saints leave off loving Christ, or Christ cease from loving His people?
37-39. *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* For which blessed be the name of the adorable Trinity, world without end!

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.

THE EVIL AND ITS REMEDY
NO. 223

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, NOVEMBER 14, 1858, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.
The Iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great. Ezekiel 9:9.
The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleans us from all sin. 1 John 1:7.

I SHALL have two texts this morningthe evil and its remedy. The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great. And The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleans us from all sin.

We can learn nothing of the Gospel except by feeling its Truthsno one Truth of the Gospel is ever truly known and really learned until we have tested and tried and proved it and its power has been exercised upon us. I have heard of a naturalist who thought himself exceedingly wise with regard to the natural history of birds and yet he had learned all he knew in his study and had never so much as seen a bird either flying through the air or sitting upon its perch. He was but a fool although he thought himself exceeding wise. And there are some men who think themselves great theologians. They might even pretend to take a doctors degree in divinity. And yet, if we came to the root of the matter and asked them whether they ever saw or felt any of these things of which they talked, they would have to say, No. I know these things in the letter, but not in the spirit. I understand them as a matter of theory, but not as things of my own consciousness and experience.

Be assured that as the naturalist who was merely the student of other mens observations knew nothing, so the man who pretends to religion but has never entered into the depths and power of its doctrinesor felt the influence of them upon his heartknows nothing whatever and all the knowledge he pretends to is but varnished ignorance. There are some sciences that may be learned by the head, but the science of Christ crucified can only be learned by the *heart*.

I have made use of this remark as the preface to my sermon because I think it will be forced from each of our hearts before we have done, if the two truths which I shall consider this morning shall come at all home to us with power. The first truth is the greatness of our sin. No man can know the greatness of sin till he has felt it, for there is no measuring rod for sin except its condemnation in our own conscience when the Law of

God speaks to us with a terror that may be felt. And as for the richness of the blood of Christ and its ability to wash usof that also we can know nothing till we have ourselves been washed and have ourselves proved that the blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God *has* cleansed us from all sin.

I. I shall begin, then, with the first doctrine as it is contained in the ninth chapter of Ezekiel, the ninth verseThe iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great. There are two great lessons which every man must learn and learn by experience, before he can be a Christian. First, he must learn that sin is an exceeding great and evil thing. And he must learn also that the blood of Christ is an exceedingly precious thing and is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto it. The former lesson we have before us. O may God, by His infinite Spirit and by His great wisdom teach it to some of us who never knew it before!

Some men imagine that the Gospel was devised, in some way or other, to soften down the harshness of God towards sin. Ah, how mistaken the idea! There is no more harsh condemnation of sin anywhere than in the Gospel. You shall go to Sinai and you shall there hear its thunders rolling. You shall behold the flashing of its terrible lightning, till, like Moses, you shall exceedingly fear and quake and come away declaring that sin must be a terrible thing otherwise the Holy One had never come upon Mount Paran with all these terrors round about Him. But after that you shall go to Calvary. There you shall see no lightning and you shall hear no thunder, but instead thereof you shall hear the groans of an expiring God and you shall behold the contortions and agonies of One who bore

All that Incarnate God could bear,
With strength enough and none to spare.

And then you shall say, Now, though I never fear nor quake, I know how exceedingly great a thing sin must be since such a Sacrifice was required to make an atonement for it. Oh, Sinners! If you come to the Gospel imagining that there you shall find an apology for your sin, you have indeed mistaken your way. Moses charges you with sin and tells you that you are without excuse. But as for the Gospel, it rends away from you every shadow of a covering. It leaves you without a cloak for your sin. It tells you that you have sinned willfully against the Most High Godthat you have not an apology that you can possibly make for all the iniquities that you have committed against Him. And so far from smoothing over your sin and telling you that you are a weak creature and therefore could not help your sin, it charges upon you the very weakness of your nature and makes

that itself the most damning sin of all. If you seek apologies you better look into the face of Moses, when it is clothed with all the majesty of the terrors of the Law, than into the face of the Gospelfor that is more terrible by far to him who seeks to cloak his sin.

Nor does the Gospel in any way whatever give man a hope that the claims of the Law will be in any way loosened. Some imagine that under the old dispensation God demanded great things of manthat He did bind upon man heavy burdens that were grievous to be borneand they suppose that Christ came into the world to put upon the shoulders of men a lighter Lawsomething which would be more easy for them to obeya Law which they can more readily keep, or which if they break, would not come upon them with such terrible threats. Ah, not so. The Gospel came not into the world to soften down the Law. Till Heaven and earth shall pass away, not one jot or tittle of the Law shall fail. What God has said to the sinner in the Law, He says to the sinner in the Gospel. If He declares that, the soul that sins it shall die, the testimony of the Gospel is not contrary to the testimony of the Law. If He declares that whosoever breaks the sacred Law shall most assuredly be punished, the Gospel also demands blood for blood and eye for eye and tooth for tooth and does not relax a solitary jot or tittle of its demands. It is as severe and as terribly just as even the Law itself. Do you reply to this, that Christ has certainly softened down the Law? I reply that you know not, then, the mission of Christ.

What said He Himself? The Lord has said in the Law You shall not commit adulteryhas Christ softened the Law? No. Says He, I say unto you that whosoever looks upon a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery with her already in his heart. That is no softening of the Law. It is, as it were, the grinding of the edge of the terrible sword of Divine Justice to make it sharper far than it seemed before. Christ has not put out the furnace. He rather seems to heat it seven times hotter. Before Christ came sin seemed unto me to be but little. But when He came sin became exceeding sinful and all its dread heinousness started out before the light.

But, says one, Surely the Gospel does in some degree remove the greatness of our sin. Does it not soften the punishment of sin? Ah, no. You shall appeal to Moses. Let him ascend the pulpit and preach to you. He says, The soul that sins, it shall die. And his sermon is dread and terrible. He sits downand now comes Jesus Christ, the man of a loving countenance. What says He with regard to the punishment of sin? Ah, Sirs, there was never such a preacher of the fires of Hell as Christ was. Our Lord Jesus Christ was all love but He was all honesty, too. Never man spoke like that man, when He came to speak of the punishment of the lost. What other Prophet was the author of such dread expressions as these?He shall burn up the chaff with unquenchable fireThese shall go away into everlasting punishment? Or thisWhere their worm dies

not and their fire is not quenched?

Stand at the feet of Jesus when He tells you of the punishment of sin and the effect of iniquity and you may tremble there far more than you would have done if Moses had been the preacher and if Sinai had been in the background to conclude the sermon. No, Brethren, the Gospel of Christ in no sense whatever helps to make sin less. The proclamation of Christ today by His minister is the same as the utterance of Ezekiel of oldThe iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great.

And now let us endeavor to deal with hearts and consciences a moment. My Brethren, there are some here who have never felt this truth. There are many of you who start back frightened from it. You will go home and represent me as one who delights to dwell on certain dark and terrible things that I suppose to be trueyou say within yourselves, I cannot, I will not receive that doctrine of sin. I know I am a frail weak creature. I have made a great many mistakes in my lifethat I will admit. But still such is my nature and I therefore could not help it. I am not going to be arraigned before a pulpit and condemned as the chief of criminals. I may be a sinnerI confess I am with all the rest of mankindbut as to my sin being anything so great as that man attempts to describe, I do not believe it. I reject the doctrine.

And do you think, my Friend, that I am surprised at your doing so? I know who you are. It is because as yet the grace of God has never touched your soul that therefore you say this. And here comes the proof of the doctrine with which I started. You do not know this truth because you have never felt it. But if you had felt it, as every true-born child of God has felt it, you would say, The man cannot describe its terrors as they are. They must be *felt* before they can be known and when felt they are not to be expressed in all their fullness of terror.

But come, let me reason with you for a moment. Your sin is great, although you think it small. Remember, Brothers and Sisters, I am not about to make out that your sin is greater than mine. I speak to you and I speak to myself alsoyour sin *is* great. Follow me in these few thoughts and perhaps you will better understand it. How great a thing is one sin, when according to the Word of God *one* sin could suffice to damn the soul? One sin, remember, destroyed the whole human race. Adam did but take of the forbidden fruit and that one sin blasted Eden and made all of us inheritors of the curse and caused the earth to bring forth thorns and thistles, even unto this day. But it may be asked, could one sin destroy the soul? Is it possible that one solitary sin could open the gates of Hell and then close them upon the guilty soul forever and that God should refuse His mercy and shut out that soul forever from the presence of His face? Yes, if I believe my Bible, I must believe that. Oh, how great must my sins be if this is the terrible effect of *one* transgression. Sin cannot be the little thing that my pride has helped me to imagine it to be. It must be an awful thing if but one sin could ruin my soul forever!

Think again my Friend, for a moment, what an imprudent and impertinent thing sin is. Behold, there is one God who fills all in all and He is the Infinite Creator. He makes me and I am nothing more in His sight than an animated grain of dust. And I, that animated grain of dust, with a mere ephemeral existence, have the impertinence and imprudence to set up my will against His will! I dare to proclaim war against the Infinite Majesty of Heaven! It is a thing so audaciousso infernally full of pridethat one need not marvel that even a sin in the little eye of man, should, when it is looked upon by the conscience in the light of Heaven, appear to be great indeed.

But think again, how great does your sin and mine seem if we will but think of the ingratitude which has marked it? The Lord our God has fed us from our youth up to this day. He has put the breath into our nostrils and has held our souls in life. He has clothed the earth with mercies and He has permitted us to walk across these fair fields. And He has given us bread to eat and raiment to put on and mercies so precious that their full value can never be known until they are taken from us. And yet you and I have persevered in breaking all His laws willfully and wantonlywe have gone contrary to His will. It has been sufficient for us to know that a thing has been Gods will and we have at once run contrary to it. Oh, if we set our secret sins in the light of His mercy, if our transgressions are set side by side with His favors, we must each of us say our sins, indeed, are exceedingly great!

Mark, I am not now addressing myself solely and wholly to those whom the Word itself condemns of great sin. We of course do not hesitate for a moment to speak of the drunkard, the whoremonger, the adulterer and the thief as being great sinners. We should not spare to say that their iniquity is exceedingly great, for it exceeds even the bounds of mans morality and the laws of our civil government. But I am speaking this day to *you who have been the most moral*. To you whose outward carriage is everything that could be desired. To you who have kept the Sabbath. To you who have frequented Gods house and outwardly worshipped. Your sins and mine are exceeding great. They seem but little to the outward eye but if we came to dig into the heart and see their iniquity, their hideous blackness, we must say of them they are exceeding great.

And againI repeat it, this is a doctrine that no man can rightly know and receive until he has felt it. My Hearer, have you ever felt this doctrine to be true?My sin is exceeding great. Sickness is a terrible thing, more especially when it is accompanied with pain, when the poor body is

racked to an extreme so that the spirit fails within us and we are dried up like a potsherd. But I bear witness in this place this morning that sickness, however agonizing, is nothing like the discovery of the evil of *sin*. I had rather pass through seven years of the most wearisome pain and the most languishing sickness than I would ever again pass through the terrible discovery of the terrors of sin. There be some of you who will understand what I mean, for you have felt the same. Once you were playing with your lusts and dallying with your sin and it pleased God to open your eyes to see that sin is exceeding sinful. You remember the horror of that stateit seemed as if all hideous things were gathered into one dread and awful spectacle. You had before loved your iniquities, but now you loathed themand you loathed yourselves.

Before, you had thought that your transgressions might easily be gotten rid ofthey were matters that might be speedily washed out by repentance or purged away by amendment of your life. But now sin seemed an alarming thing and knowing that you had committed all this iniquitylife seemed to you a curse and death. If it had not been for that dreary something after death, it would have been to you the highest blessing if you could have escaped the lashings of your conscience, which seemed to be perpetually whipping you with whips of burning wire. Some of you, perhaps, passed through but a little of this. God was graciously pleased to give you deliverance in a few hours. But you must confess that those hours were hours into which it seemed as if years of misery had been compressed.

It was my sad lot for three or four years to feel the greatness of my sin without a discovery of the greatness of Gods mercy. I had to walk through this world with more than a world upon my shoulders and sustain a grief that so far exceeds all other griefs, as a mountain exceeds a mole hill. And I often wonder to this day how it was that my hand was kept from rending my own body into pieces through the terrible agony which I felt, when I discovered the greatness of my transgression. Yet I had not been a greater sinner than anyone of you here present, openly and publicly, but heart sins were laid bare, sins of lip and tongue were discovered and then I knewoh, that I may never have to learn over again in such a dreadful school this terrible lessonThe iniquity of Judah and of Israel is exceeding great. This is the first part of the discourse.

II. Well, cries one, turning on his heel, there is very little comfort in that. It is enough to drive one to despair, if not to madness itself. Ah, Friend, such is the very design of this text. If I may have the pleasure of driving you to despair, if it is a despair of your self-righteousness and a despair of saving your own soul, I shall be thrice happy.

We turn therefore from that terrible text to the second onethe first of John, the first chapter and the seventh verseThe blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleans us from all sin. There lies the blacknesshere stands the Lord Jesus Christ. What will He do with it? Will He go and speak to it and say, This is no great evil. This blackness is but a little spot? Oh, noHe looks at it and He says, This is terrible blackness, darkness that may be felt. This is an exceeding great evil. Will He cover it up then? Will He weave a mantle of excuses and then wrap it round about the iniquity?

Nowhatever covering there may have been He lifts it off and He declares that when the Spirit of Truth is come He will convict the world of sin and lay the sinners conscience bare and probe the wound to the bottom. What then will He do? He will do a far better thing than make an excuse or than to pretend in any way to speak lightly of it. He will cleanse it all away, remove it entirely by the power and meritorious virtue of His own blood which is able to save unto the uttermost! The Gospel does not consist in making a mans sin appear little. The way Christians get their peace is not by seeing their sins shriveled and shrinking until they seem small to them. On the contrarythey, first of all, see their sins expanding and thenafter thatthey obtain their peace by seeing those sins entirely swept awayfar as the east is from the west.

Now, carrying in mind the remarks I made upon the first text, I call your attention for a few moments to the greatness and beauty of the second one. Note here, The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleans us from ALL sin. Dwell on the word all for a moment. Our sins are great. Every sin is great. But there are some that in our apprehension seem to be greater than others. There are crimes that the lip of modesty could not mention. I might go far in this pulpit this morning in describing the degradation of human nature in the sins which it has invented. It is amazing how the ingenuity of man seems to have exhausted itself in inventing fresh crimes. Surely there is not the possibility of the invention of a new sin. But if there is, before long man will invent itfor man seems exceedingly cunning and full of wisdom in the discovery of means of destroying himself and the endeavor to injure His Maker.

But there are some sins that show a diabolical extent of degraded ingenuitysome sins of which it were a shame to speakof which it were disgraceful to think. But note hereThe blood of Jesus Christ cleans from *all* sin. There may be some sins of which a man cannot speak, but there is no sin which the blood of Christ cannot wash away. Blasphemy, however profane. Lust, however bestial. Covetousness, however far it may have gone into theft and plunder. Breach of the Commandments of God, however much of riot it may have runall this may be pardoned and washed away through the blood of Jesus Christ.

In all the long lists of human sins, though they are long as time, there stands but one sin that is unpardonable and that one no sinner has committed if he feels within himself a longing for mercy. For that sin once committed, the soul becomes hardened, dead and seared and never desires afterwards to find peace with God. I therefore declare to you, O trembling Sinner, that however great your iniquity may be, whatever sin you may have committed in all the lists of guilt, however far you may have exceeded all your fellow-creatures, though you may have distanced the Pauls and Magdalenes and every one of the most heinous culprits in the black race of sinthe blood of Christ is able to wash your sin away.

MarkI speak not lightly of your sins, they are exceedingly great. But I speak still more loftily of the blood of Christ. Great as your sins are, the blood of Christ is greater still. Your sins are like great mountainsbut the blood of Christ is like Noahs Floodtwenty cubits upwards shall this blood prevail and the top of the mountains of your sin shall be covered.

Take the word all in another sense. Not only as taking in all sorts of sin, but as comprehending the great aggregate *mass* of sin. Come here Sinner, you with the gray head. What are we to understand in your case by this word all? Bring here the tremendous load of the sins of your youth Those sins are still in your bones and your tottering knees sometimes testify against the iniquities of your early youth. But all these sins Christ can remove. Now bring here the sins of your riper manhood, your transgressions in the family, your failures in businessall the mistakes and all the errors you have committed in the thoughts of your heart. Bring them all here. And then add the iniquities of your frail and trembling age. What a mass is there! What a mass of sin! Stir up that putrid massbut put your finger to your nostrils firstfor you can not bear the stench if you are a man with a living and quickened conscience. Could you bear to read your own diary if you had written there all your acts? No. Though you are the purest of mankind, your thoughtsif they could have been recordedwould now if you could read them, make you startle and wonder that you are demon enough to have had such imaginations within your soul. But put them all here and all these sins the blood of Christ can wash away.

No, more than that. Come here you thousands who are gathered together this morning to listen to the Word of God. What is the aggregate of your guilt? Here you have come, men of every grade and class and women of every age and orderwhat is the mass of all your united guilt? Could you put it so that mortal observation could comprehend the whole? Even if it were as a mountain with a base, broad as eternity and a summit lofty almost as the throne of the great archangel? But, remember, the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleans from *all* sin. Let but the blood be applied to our consciences and all our guilt is removed and cast away foreverall not one left, not one solitary stain remainingall gone, like Israels enemiesall drowned in the Red Sea so that there was not one of them left. All swept away, not so much as the remembrance of them remaining. The blood of Jesus Christ cleans from *all* sin.

Yet, once morein the praise of this blood we must notice one further feature. There are some of you here who are saying, Ah, that shall be my hope when I come to die, that in the last hour of my extremity the blood of Christ will take my sins away. It is now my comfort to think that the blood of Christ *shall* wash and purge and purify the transgressions of life. But, markmy text doesnt say that! It does not say the blood of Christ *shall* cleansethat is truebut it says something greater than thatit says, The blood of Jesus Christ His Son *cleans*cleans *now*. And is it possible that *now* a man may be forgiven? Can a harlot *now* have all her sins blotted out of the Book of God? And can she know it? Can the thief this day have all his transgressions cast into the sea. And can he know it?

Can I, the chief of sinners, this day be cleansed from all my sins and know it? Can I know that I stand accepted before the Throne of God, a holy creature because washed from every sin? Yes! Tell the wide world over that the blood of Christ can not only wash you in the last dying article, but can wash you NOW. And let it be known, moreover, that to this there are a thousand witnesses, who, rising in this very place from their seats, could sing

Oh, how sweet to view the flowing
Of my Saviors precious blood,
With Divine assurance knowing,
He has made my peace with God.

What would you not give to have all your sins blotted out *now*? Would you not give yourself away to become the servant of God forever, if *now* your sins should be washed away? Ah, then, say not in your hearts, What shall I do to obtain this mercy? Imagine not there is any difficulty in your way. Suppose not there is some hard thing to be done before you can come to Christ to be washed. O Beloved! To the man that knows himself to be guilty, there is not one barrier between himself and Christ. Come, Soul, this moment come to Him that hung upon the Cross of Calvary! Come now and be washed!

But what do I mean by coming? I mean thiscome and put your trust in Christ and you shall be saved. What is meant by believing in Christ? Some say, that to believe in Christ is to believe that Christ died for me. That is not a satisfactory definition of faith. An Arminian believes that Christ died for everybody. He must, therefore, necessarily believe that

Christ died for him. His believing *that* will not save him, for he will still remain an unconverted man and yet believe that.

To believe in Christ is to *trust* Him. The way I believe in Christ and I know not how to speak of it except as I feel it myself, is simply thisI know it is written that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. I do firmly believe that those He came to save He will save. The only question I ask myself is, Can I put myself among that number whom He has declared He came to save? Am I a sinner? Not one that utters the word in a complimentary sense, but do I feel the deep compunction in my inmost soul? Do I stand and feel convicted, guilty and condemned? I do. I know I do. Whatever I may not be, one thing I know I ama sinnerguilty, consciously guilty and often miserable on account of that guilt.

Well, then, the Scripture says, This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners ***And when your eye of faith is dim,***
Still trust in Jesus, sink or swim.;
Thus, at His footstool, bow the knee
And Israels God your peace shall be.

Let me put my entire trust in the bloody sacrifice which He offered upon my behalf. No dependence will I have in my prayers, my works, my feelings, my weeping, my preaching, my thinking, my Bible readings, nor all that. I would desire to have good works and yet in my good works I will not put a shadow of trust.

Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to your Cross I cling.

And if there is any power in Christ to save I am saved. If there is an everlasting arm extended by Christ and if that Savior who hung there was God over all, blessed forever, and if His blood is still exhibited before the Throne of God as the sacrifice for sin, then I cannot perish till the Throne of God shall break and till the pillars of Gods justice shall crumble.

Now, Sinner, what have you to do this morning? If you feel your guilt to be great, cast yourself entirely upon this sacrifice by blood. But no, says one, I have not felt enough. Your feelings are not Christ. No, but I have not prayed enough. Your prayers are not Christ and your prayers cannot save you. No, but I have not repented enough. Your repentance may destroy you, if you put that in the place of Christ. All that you have, I repeat this morning, is thisdo you feel yourself to be a lost, ruined, guilty sinner? Then simply cast yourself on the fact that Christ is able to save sinners and rest there. What? Do you say you cannot do it? Oh may God enable you, may He give you faith, sink or swim, to cast yourself on that. Well, but, you say, I may notbeing such a sinner. You mayand God never yet rejected a sinner that sought salvation by Jesus. Such a thing never happened, though the sinner sometimes thought it had.

Come, the crumb is under the table. Though you are but a dog, come and pick it up. It is a privilege even for the dog to take it. And mercy that is great to you is but a crumb to Him that gives it freelycome and take it. Christ will not reject you. And if you are the worst sinner that ever lived, only simply trust yourself upon Him and perish you cannot, if God is God and if this Bible is the book of His Truth. The Lord now help each one of us to come afresh to Christ and to His name be glory. Amen.

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THUS SAYS THE LORDOR, THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER WEIGHED IN THE BALANCES OF THE SANCTUARY NO. 591

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 25, 1864, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.
Thus says the Lord.
Ezekiel 11:5.

THE wise man says, Where the word of a king is, there is power. What power must there be where there is the word of the King of kings who rules over all! We are not left to conjecture as to the power of the Divine Word, for we know that, By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. Out of nothingness the glorious Creation leaped at the bidding of the Most High. And when the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, there was nothing wanted but that solemn voice, Light be, and straightway light was. Gods Word was sufficient in itself to build the temple of the universe. And to finish it from its foundations to its pinnacles.

That same Word upholds by its power and rules all things by its might. The pillars of Heaven stand because the Divine Word has fixed them upon their bases, nor shall they be shaken until that same almighty Word shall bid them remove. Then, as a moments foam dissolves into the wave which bears it and is gone forever, so shall the whole creation melt away. His Word which created, shall also destroy. But until that Word is spoken every atom of this world is imperishable.

Consider, my Brethren, what power is concentrated in Him who is clothed with a vesture dipped in blood and whose name is THE WORD OF GOD. With what glorious power our Lord Jesus Christ uplifted the burden of our sins, carried the load up to the Cross and cast it forever into the Red Sea of His own atoning blood! You know how He burst the bars of death, tore away the gates of the grave, overthrew all the hosts of Hell and dragged the mightiest principalities of darkness as captives at His chariot wheels. At this day the government is upon His shoulders and His name is the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father. Heaven and earth salute Him as the Omnipotent Word.
He sustains the spiritual life of all His people by feeding them upon

Himselfand He shall, in due time, perfect His saints and present them without spot before His Fathers Throne. We ought, therefore, to bow with reverence to that which is truly the Word of God since it contains within itself the highest degree of power and is ever the way in which Divine Omnipotence manifests itself.

It is in the Word that we must find wisdom and powerbecause the foolishness of God is wiser than men. And the weakness of God is stronger than men. The faintest whisper of Jehovahs voice should fill us with solemn awe and command the deepest obedience of our souls. Brethren, how careful should we be that we do not set up in Gods temple anything in opposition to His Wordthat we do not permit the teachings of a creature to usurp the honor due to the Lord alone.

Thus says antiquity. Thus says authority. Thus says learning. Thus says experiencethese are but idol-gods which defile the temple of God! Be it yours and mine as bold iconoclasts to dash them in pieces without mercy, seeing that they usurp the place of the Word of God. Thus says the Lordthis is the motto of our standard! The war cry of our spiritual conflict! The sword with which we hope yet to strike through the loins of the mighty who rise up against Gods Truth. Nothing shall stand before this weapon in the day when God comes out of His hiding place. Even at this hour when, Thus says the Lord, sounds from the trumpet of the Lords ministers, the hosts of Midian begin to tremble! They well know the might of that terrible watchword in days of yore!

This morning I shall endeavor first to show, briefly, the value of a, Thus says the Lord. Then, secondly, I shall, with as much calmness of spirit as I can command, request a, Thus says the Lord for certain things which are received and practiced in the State Establishment of our land. Then I shall close with a word of personal application, beseeching you to seek a, Thus says the Lord, for any hopes which you may entertain of being partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

I. LET US CONSIDER THE VALUE OF A THUS SAYS THE LORD. **1.** Our first observation is that it is the ministers message. If he is Gods minister he does not found his teaching upon his own authority, for then his message would be only that of himself and not to be esteemed. But he shows the authority of his Master and none can oppose him. He claims mens attention on the ground that he utters a, Thus says the Lord. No matter how aged he may be, he does not proclaim the Truth of God as merely the result of his long investigations or his extraordinary experiencehe grounds it upon, Thus says the Lord.
So spoke the hoary-headed Joshua when for many a year he had known the faithfulness of God and was about to diehe was singing his swan song, preaching his last sermon. But he did not commence with, Thus says my *age*thus I say upon my own authority, butThus says the Lord God of Israel. A God-sent minister is the ambassador of the Most High, but he has no right to go beyond his commission. And when he does so, his office cannot yield him support. The Prophets of God did not say, Thus I speak as a Prophet, but, Thus says the Lord.
The Prophet came in Gideons days and spoke to erring Israel. He opened his mouth with, Thus says the Lord God of Israel. Turn to the pages of Isaiah and mark how frequently he quotes the Divine authority! Study the plaintive words of Jeremiah and observe how solemnly his prophetic woes are prefaced with, Thus says the Lord. Also the soaring Ezekiel, to whom was given, as it were, six wings that he might take more lofty flights than the eagle knowseven *he* relied not upon the sublimity of his language or the glory of his imagery, but found the sinews of his strength in, Thus says the Lord God.
This is the trowel and the hammer of Gods builders! This the trumpet of His watchmen and the sword of His warriors. Woe to the man who comes in any other name! If we, or an angel from Heaven, shall preach unto you anything but a, Thus says the Lord, no matter what our character or standinggive no heed to usbut cleave unto the Truth of God as it is in Jesus. To the Law and to the Testimony! If we speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in us. That test which we demand to be exercised upon others we cheerfully consent to be exercised upon ourselves, praying that we may have Grace to forsake our errors as we would have other men forsake theirs.
2. Thus says the Lord is the only authority in Gods Church. When the tabernacle was pitched in the wilderness, what was the authority for its length and breadth? Why was the altar of incense to be placed here, and the brazen laver there? Why so many lambs or bullocks to be offered on a certain day? Why must the Passover be roasted whole and not boiled? Simply and only because God had shown all these things to Moses on the holy mount. And thus had Jehovah spoken, Look that you make them after their pattern, which was showed you on the mount.
It is even so in the Church at the present day. True servants of God demand to see for all Church ordinances and doctrines the express authority of the Churchs only Teacher and Lord. They remember that the Lord Jesus bade the Apostles to teach Believers to observe all things whatever He had commanded themand He neither gave to them nor to

any man power to *alter* His commands.
The Holy Spirit revealed much of precious Truth and holy precept by the Apostles, and to His teaching we would give earnest heed. And when men cite the authority of fathers and councils and bishopsdo we give place for subjection? No! Not for an hour! They may quote Irenaeus or Cyprian, Augustine or Chrysostom. They may remind us of the dogmas of Luther or Calvin. They may find authority in Simeon, or Wesley, or Gill we will listen to the opinions of these great men with the respect which they deserve as men, but having so donewe deny that we have anything to do with these men as authorities in the Church of God! For there nothing has any authority, but, Thus says the Lord of Hosts.
Yes, if you shall bring us the concurrent consent of all traditionif you shall quote precedents venerable with fifteen, sixteen, or seventeen centuries of antiquitywe burn the whole lot as so much worthless lumber unless you put your finger upon the passage of Holy Writ which warrants the matter to be of God! You may further plead, in addition to all this venerable authority, the beauty of the ceremony and its usefulness to those who partakebut this is all foreign to the pointfor to the true Church of God the only question is thisis there, Thus says the Lord, for it? And if Divine authority is not forthcoming, faithful men MUST thrust forth the intruder as the cunning craftiness of men.
3. Thus says the Lord is the most fitting word of rebuke for erring saints. Gods people, when they err, if they are rebuked, even though it should be in the gentlest manner, are too apt to resent the rebuff. But when we can come to them with, Thus says the Lord, if there is a spark of spiritual life left, it is sure to catch at this flame. When the man of God came to Eli, how Elis heart trembled when he began, Thus says the Lord, and described to him the doom of his house because his sons had made themselves vile and he had not restrained them!
David, the king, might have been moved to anger against Nathan, for that personal parable and pungent application, but his anger was stayedno, better stillhis heart was broken because the Prophet could say, Thus says the Lord. My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, you and I have often risen in anger at the intrusive reproofs of ignorant men! But I hope we have far more often felt the melting power of a, Thus says the Lord. When the heart is right, the Word of God sweetly melts us as the breath of the south wind melts the frozen rivers.
4. Thus says the Lord is the only solid ground of comfort to Gods people. Where can a child of God find true solace apart from that which comes out of the mouth of the Most High? Truly, man does not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God does man live. Your Words were found and I did eat them. How sweet are Your Words unto my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth! When Nathan came to tell David of the Covenant which the Lord would make with him and his house, David would scarcely have believed so great a mercy to be really his if the Prophet had not begun with, Thus says the Lord.
It was not, Thus says Nathan, or, Thus do the ancients say, but, Thus says the Lord, and Davids heart was full of holy joy when he saw the Covenant to be ordered in all things and sure. When Hezekiah lay sick unto death he turned his face to the wall and prayed. But there was no comfort to the royal suppliant until the Prophet came with, Thus says the Lord. And when Sennacherib was about to besiege Jerusalem and Lachish had fallen, Hezekiah prayed and the people with him. But oh, they could not think it possible that there should be a hook put into the jaw of the mighty Assyrian and that he should be turned back by the way in which he came till the Prophet reassured their hearts with a, Thus says the Lord!
Zions sons and daughters feast upon the sure Word of their faithful God. Brethren, I need not enlarge here, for I hope most of you know the preciousness of a Divine promise. There is nothing needed to stay your soul in your worst troubles but the Word of God applied with power. God may not send you a friendHe may not raise up a deliverer. But if He shall only give you Divine Grace to believe His Word, that shall be enough for you! Martin Luther said, I have covenanted with my Lord that He should not send me visions, or dreams, or even angels. I am content with this one gift of the Scriptures, which abundantly teaches and supplies all that is necessary both for this life and that which is to come.
Oh Lord, only feed me on Your Word and I will not envy kings their delicacies, nor even the angels around Your Throne the bread of Heaven on which they live.
5. Yet, againThus says the Lord is that with which we must confront the Lords enemies. When Moses went in before Pharaoh, the words which he used were not, The elders of Israel have consulted and thus have they bid me say. Nor, Our Father Abraham once said and his words have been handed to us by long traditionsuch talk would have been readily resisted. No, he confronted the haughty monarch with, Thus says the Lord, let My people go, and it was the power of this Divine Word which rained plagues upon the fields of Zoan and brought forth the captives with silver and gold.
Pharaoh might boast, Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice? But before long he knew that Jehovahs Word was mightier than all the horsemen and chariots of Mizraim and was not to be resisted without terrible defeat. To this day, if we would break sinners hearts, our hammer must be, Thus says the Lord. And if we would woo them to obedience to King Jesus, our reasons must come from His own Word. I have often noticed in conversions, that though sometimes a particular passage of the sermon may be quoted by the converted person as the means of enlightenment, yet in the majority of cases it is the *text*, or some passage of Scripture, *quoted during* the sermon, which is blessed to do the work.
McCheyne says, Depend upon it, it is Gods Word, not our comment upon Gods Word, that saves souls. And so it is. Let us use much of Scripture, much of the pure silver of sacred Revelation and no human alloy. What is the chaff to the wheat, says the Lord?
6. To close this point. Such an authority has a, Thus says the Lord, that it is not to be despised without entailing upon the offender the severest penalty. Samuel came to Saul with, Thus says the Lord, and bade him destroy the Amalekites. He was to utterly cut them off and not to spare so much as one of them. But Saul saved the best of the cattle and the sheep, and brought home Agagand what was the result? His kingdom was taken from him and given to a neighbor of his that was better than he. And because he exalted himself beyond measure to do otherwise than according to the letter of Gods command, he was put away forever from having dominion over Israel.
And mark this wordif any Church in Christendom shall continue, after light is given, and after plain rebuke is uttered, to walk contrary to the Word of God and to teach that which is inconsistent with Holy Scripture as Saul was put away from the kingdom so shall that Church be put away from before the Lord of Hosts. And if any man, be he who he may, after receiving light from on high, continues willfully to shut his eyes, he shall not, if an heir of Heaven, be rejected from eternal salvation, but he shall be cast off from much of the usefulness and comfort which he might otherwise have enjoyed. He knew his Masters will and did it nothe shall be beaten with many stripes. He has been as the horse or the mule which have no understanding and his mouth shall be held in with bit and bridle.
Many sorrows shall be to those who dare to dash themselves against the thick bosses of Jehovahs buckler by opposing His, Thus says the Lord. Upon whomever this stone shall fall it shall grind him to powder and whoever shall fall upon it shall be broken to his own lasting damage. O, my Brethren, I would that we trembled and stood more in awe of Gods Word! I fear that many treat the things of God as though they were merely matters of opinionbut remember that opinion cannot govern in Gods House! Gods Word, not mans opinion, claims your allegiance!
Remember that although our ignorant conscience may not accuse us of error, yet if we walk contrary to Gods Word, our conscientiousness does not screen us from sinfor conscience is not the sovereign arbiter of right and wrongthe plain Word of God is the rule of equity. I do not sin so foully as if I sinned against my conscience. But I still sin, if, having an unenlightened conscience I ignorantly transgress. But if I willfully keep my conscience in darkness and continue in errors which I might easily know to be such by a little thought and searching of Gods Word, then my conscience can offer me no excuse, for I am guilty of blindfolding the guide which I have chosen and then, knowing him to be blindfolded, I am guilty of the folly of letting him lead me into rebellion against God. O Church of God, hear the voice of your great Founder and Lord! Whoever, therefore shall break one of these least Commandments and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven. He that has My Commandments and keeps them, he it is that loves Me. And he that loves Me shall be loved of My Father and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him. O for a stern integrity that will hold the Word and will never depart from it, come what may! This much concerning the value of a, Thus says the Lord.
II. Dear Friends, the second part of our subject may be very displeasing to some who have strayed in here, but that I cannot help. I do not remember ever asking anyone to come and hear me, and therefore, as you come of your own wills, when I have any Truth of God to speak, I shall not conceal it because you choose to be present. At the present crisis I feel that it is, woe unto me, if I do not lift up my voice like a trumpet and urge with all my might the necessity of reformation in our State Church.

I have moreover an excellent excuse for the enquiry I am about to makefor as I am publicly charged with ignorance, it is at once my duty and my privilege to seek instruction of those who claim authority to teach. When one is known to be profoundly ignorant and there are certain fathers in the faith who have the power to instruct, the least thing that can be allowed us is to ask questionsand the smallest gift we can expect is to have them answered by men expressly ordained to instruct the ignorant.
The Rev. W. Goode, the Dean of Ripon, appears to be much better acquainted with the extent of my reading and mental acquirements than I am myself. He speaks with all the positiveness of a personal acquaintance concerning my reputed ignorance, and for my own part I am not at all anxious to question so very reverend an authority. He writesAs to that young minister who is now raving against the Evangelical clergy on this point, it is to be regretted that so much notice has been taken of his railings. He is to be pitied, because his entire want of acquaintance with theological literature leaves him utterly unfit for the determination of such a question, which is a question, not of mere doctrine, but of what may be called historical theology.
And his charges are just a parallel to those which the Romanists would bring against himself as well as others for the interpretation of the words, This is My body. But were he a wiser man than he is, he would know better what his qualifications are for passing judgment on such a point. And He would be willing to learn from such facts, among others, as the Gorham Judgment and the cases of Mr. Maskell and Mr. Mozley, what ground there is for his charges against the Evangelical clergy. Let him hold and enforce his own view of doctrine as he pleasesbut when he undertakes to determine what is the exclusive meaning of the Book of Common Prayer and brings a charge of dishonesty against those who take a different view of that meaning from what he does, he only shows the presumptuous self-confidence with which he is prepared to pronounce judgment upon matters of which he is profoundly ignorant. To hold a controversy with him upon the subject would be to as little purpose as to attempt to hold a logically-constructed argument with a child unacquainted with logical terms.
When these paragraphs caught my eye, my heart leaped with joy, for I knew that the sinners in Zion were afraid! And I thought I heard a voice crying from the Word, 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 confuse the wise. And God has chosen the weak things of the world to confuse the things which are mighty. And base things of the world and things which are despised, has God chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are that no flesh should glory in His Presence.
My mind flew back to the valley of Elah and I remembered the words of the old recordAnd when the Philistine looked about and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth and ruddy and of a fair countenance. And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog that you come to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And the Philistine said to David, Come to me and I will give your flesh unto the fowls of the air and to the beasts of the field.
My spirit kindled at these words of the boastful champion of yore and at their modern reproduction by the vainglorious Divine of Ripon and the answer of David was in my heart as it is even now upon my tongueYou come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a shield: but I come to you in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day will the Lord deliver you into my hands...that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lords and He will give you into our hands.
Admitting the witness of the venerable dean to be correct and that the young minister is not an expert in logic, I am not, therefore, ashamed! Far otherwise! I will rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me, for when I am weak, then am I strong. Take, O you great ones of the earth, every profit that can be made out of your belief in my utter total ignorance and your own profound and extensive learning, and then go your ways and learn what this meansYour wisdom and your knowledge, it has perverted you. And you have said in your heart, I am, and none else beside me. Therefore shall evil come upon you! You shall not know from where it rises.
And now at this hour having been condemned as intolerably ignorant, I feel I have the liberty to ask just a few explanations of those reverend divines who do know, or ought to know, the grounds of their faith and practice.
1. I open this little bookthe Prayer Book, of whose occasional services, the more I know, the less I approveand I find in the Baptismal Service that when little children are brought to be sprinkled, certain godfathers and godmothers promise for them that they shall renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, etc. And that they shall obediently keep all Gods holy will and Commandments and walk in the same all the days of their life.
To me it seems that they might as well promise that the infants should grow up with Roman noses, auburn hair and blue eyes, for they are just as able to make them do the one as the other. I shall not, however, intrude my opinion further, but simply ask whether there is a, Thus says the Lord, for any mans standing proxy for a babe and making such promises in its name?
In other words, I ask for Apostolic, Prophetic, or any other form of Scriptural precept, or precedent, for the use of proxies in Baptism! True religion is a personal matteris its first manifestation in Regeneration to be connected with the impossible promises of *others*? Plain proof texts are requested for godfathers and godmothers. And such important persons deserve to be defended by the clergy, if texts of Scripture can be discovered! As I cannot imagine where the texts will be found, I must pause till the learned shall produce them.

Further I find that these children enter into a covenant by proxy, of which we are assured that the promise of our Lord Jesus, will for His part, most surely keep and perform. But the children are bound to do their part, that part being something more than the gigantic task of keeping all the Commandments of God. Now I ask for a, Thus says the Lord, for such a covenant as this! I find two Covenants in the Word of Godone is the Covenant of Works, This do and you shall live.
I find another, the Covenant of Grace, which runs only in this wise, I will be their God and they shall be My people. I find it expressly declared that there cannot be a mixture of works and Grace, for says Paul, If by Grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise Grace is no more Grace. But if it is of works, then is it no more Grace: otherwise work is no more work. And I ask a, Thus says the Lord, for this baptismal covenant, which is nominally of Grace, but really of works, or at best an unnatural conglomerate of Grace and works. I ask those who have searched Scripture through to find me the form or the command for any baptismal covenant whatever! It is idle to say that such a covenant was allowed among the early Christians. Their witness is not early enough for uswe want a, Thus says the Lord, and nothing but this will justify this pretended covenant.
We then find that after this covenant has been made and the water has been applied in a manner which we think needs also a, Thus says the Lord, to justify it, it is publicly declared that the babe is regenerated Seeing now, dearly beloved Brethren, that this child is regenerate and grafted into the body of Christs Church, let us give thanks unto Almighty God for these benefits and with one accord make our prayers unto Him, that this child may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning.
And, again, We yield You hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it has pleased You to regenerate this infant with Your Holy Spirit, to receive him for Your own child by adoption and to incorporate him into Your holy Church, etc. We are told we do not understand the meaning of, regeneration, as it is used in the Services of the Anglican Church. The meaning of this passage is historical, hypothetical, ecclesiastical, and we know not what. The words, To be born again did not formerly seem to us to be so very difficult to understand, nor do they appear so now as they stand in Scripture, for we find in them the one regeneration which has renewed us in the spirit of our mind and we cannot consent to use those words in any other sense.
Well, whether regeneration is or is not a very equivocal word, we simply ask, is there a, Thus says the Lord, for the assertion that a sprinkled infant is therefore regenerate in any sense of the word? Will any person find us a text of Scripture? He shall have large rewards from clergymen with uneasy consciences! We put our enquiry again in plain termswill someone oblige us with a plain, Thus says the Lord, proving that water Baptism in any one instance makes an unconscious babe a member of Christ and a child of God in any sense which any sane person chooses to attach to those words?
Where is the passage? Where? Echo answers, where? But this subject you have been considering for some time and are well convinced that the process of regenerating babies by occult influences conveyed by water is a pure, no, an *impure* invention of priest-craft. There is therefore no necessity that I enlarge upon a point so well understood.
2. I have a second question to ask. There is prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer, a peculiar ceremony called Confirmation. I do not remember to have read of that in Scripture. I would like to have a, Thus says the Lord, for that rite. As I am ready to yield as far as possible, suppose we take it for granted that this ceremony is defensible from Holy Writ. I would like to know whether there is any, Thus says the Lord, allowing a person called a bishop to give to the assembled youths an assurance of Divine favor by laying his hands on their heads?

The bishop having laid his hands on every head presented to him, whether it be gracious or graceless, talks thus in the collectAlmighty and ever living God, who makes us both to will and to do those things that are good and acceptable unto Your Divine majesty, we make our humble supplications unto You for these, Your servants, upon whom (after the example of your holy Apostles), we have now laid our hands to certify them (by this sign) of Your favor and gracious goodness towards them.
Does this mean that the bishops hand certifies the person touched thereby of special Divine favor? So it seems to teach, as far as I can see. We want, then, a, Thus says the Lord, authorizing this individual to exercise the office of an Apostle! We then desire Scriptural warrant permitting him to certify these kneeling youths the enjoyment or possession of any particular Divine favor by putting his hands on their heads! If this means the common goodness of God, the bishops hands are not needed to certify them of *that*but as he has already declared in prayer that they were regenerated by water and the Spirit and had been forgiven all their sinsit is clear that special favor is intended! We enquire, therefore, for his authority for giving these young people a further certificate of special Divine favor by the imposition of his hands.
Why *his* hands? Who is he that he can certify these persons of Gods favor more than any other man? Where is his Scriptural warrant to confer, by his hands, a certificate of Divine Grace upon young people, who, in innumerable cases are thoughtless and unconverted, if not profane? We want a, Thus says the Lord, for the whole thing and then for each item in detail. Endless is the task thus proposed to the honest Churchman.
3. Another matter needs a little clearing up and, as this book was set forth by learned divines and bishops, I would like a lucid explanation. The priest visits a sick man, sits down by his bedside, reads certain prayers, bids the patient remember his Baptism, questions him as to his creed, gives him good advice about forgiving his enemies and making his will. He moves him to make a special confession of his sin if he feels his conscience troubled with any weighty matter, after which confession the rubric says, the priest shall absolve him (if he humbly and heartily desires it), after this sort.
Here is *absolution* and I humbly and heartily desire a, Thus says the Lord, for it! Our Lord Jesus Christ, who has left power to His Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him, of His great mercy forgives you your offensesand by His authority committed to me, I absolve you from all your sins, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Sir Priest, I want you to give me a plain warrant from Gods Word for your absolving my dying neighbor at this rate.
Who are you that you should use such words? The season is solemn, it is the hour of death. And the matter is weighty, for it concerns the eternal interests of the dying man, and may, no, *will*, if you are found to be acting presumptuously in this matter, involve your own soul in eternal ruin! Where did you derive your right to forgive that sick man? Might he not raise his withered hands and return the compliment by absolving you? Are you quite sure as to the committal of Divine authority to you? Then show me the deed of gift and let it be clearly of Divine origin!
The Apostles were empowered to do many things, but who are you? Do you claim to be their successors? Then work miracles similar to theirs! Take up serpents and drink deadly things without being harmed! Prove to us that you have seen the Lord, or even that cloven tongues of fire have sat upon each of you! You evangelical clergydo you dare claim to be successors of the Apostles and to have power to forgive sins? Your Puseyite Brethren go the whole length of superstitious pretension, but you have too much light to be so superstitious and yet you do what is quite as wickedyou solemnly subscribe that this absolution is not contrary to the Word of Godwhen you know it is!
Gorham case, you say! I care nothing for your Gorham case! I want a, Thus says the Lord, warranting you to swear to what you know to be false and dangerous! Mr. Mozley and Mr. Maskell may give you all the comfort which they can afford, but one word of Peter or of Paul would be of more weight in this matter than a thousand words from either of them! You are aware, perhaps, that it is not every man who is permitted by the Established religion to pronounce this absolution. A person called a deacon is, I am informed, allowed to preach and do a great many things, but when he reads the Book of Common Prayer in the daily service he must not grant absolution!
There is a supernatural something which the man has not yet received, for he has only once felt the Episcopal imposition of hands. We shall see, by-and-by, where absolving power comes from. The deacon has attained to one grade of priest-craft, but the full vigor of mystic influence rests not upon him. Another touch, another subscription and the keys of St. Peter will swing at his girdlebut his time is not yet. I ask him, whether he calls himself a deacon or a priest, where he gets a, Thus says the Lord, for this absolution? Which, if it is not of God, is a piece of impertinence, superstition, blasphemy and falsehood!
4. I turn on and find that when the sick dies, he is buried in consecrated ground and though he may have cut his throat while under delirium tremensif the jury does not return a verdict of suicidethe priest shall say, as he casts earth upon the body, Forasmuch as it has pleased Almighty God of His great mercy to take unto Himself the soul of our dear Brother here departed, we therefore commit his body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life.
And again, We give You hearty thanks for that it has pleased You to deliver this, our Brother, out of the miseries of this sinful world. And yet again, We meekly beseech You, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness, that when we shall depart this life, we may rest in Him, as our hope is this, our Brother, does. We beg a, Thus says the Lord, for burying every baptized thief, harlot, rogue, drunkard and liar who may die in the parishin sure and certain hope of the blessed resurrection.
Oh, it is commanded by authority. What authority? We challenge it and permit none to pass muster but a, Thus says the Lord. Until clergymen will bring us Scriptural warrant for uttering falsehoods over a grave, we dare not cease our testimony against them! How long will the many godly laymen in that Church remain quiet? Why do they not bestir themselves and demand revision or disruption?
5. Turning a little further on, into a part of the Prayer Book not much frequented by ordinary readers, we come to the Ordering of Priests, or the way in which priests are made. Why priests? Is one Believer more a priest than another when all are styled in Scripture a royal priesthood? Let that pass. Of course, Brethren, the priests are made by the bishops, as the bishops are made by Lord Palmerston, or Lord Derby, or any other *political* leader who may be in office!
The Prime Minister of England is the true fountain from whom all bishops flow and the priests are minor emanations branching off from the miter rather than the crown. Here is the way of ordering priests! Let Heaven and earth hear this and be astonished! When this prayer is done, the bishop with the priests present shall lay their hands severally upon the head of everyone that receives the order of priesthood. The receivers humbly kneeling upon their knees and the Bishop saying, Receive the Holy Spirit.
Listen to it, now! Imagine you behold the scenea man of God, a bishop whom you have been in the habit of considering a most gracious, godly man and such, no doubt, he may beimagine you see him putting his hands upon the head of some evangelical man whom you will go and hear, or if you like, upon some young rake fresh from Oxford and imagine you hear him say, Receive the Holy Spirit for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God, now committed unto you by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins you do forgive, they are forgiven and whose sins you do retain, they are retained!
We want a, Thus says the Lord, for that! For that is putting it rather strongly in the popish line, one would think. Is the way of ordering priests in the Church of Rome much worse than this? That the Apostles did confer the Holy Spirit we never thought of denying, but that Oxford Exeter, or any other occupants of the bench can give the Holy Spirit needs some proof other than their silk aprons or long sleeves can afford us! We ask, moreover, for one instance in which an Apostle conferred upon any minister the power to forgive sins. And where it can be found in Scripture that any man other than an Apostle ever received authority to absolve sinners?
Sirs, let us speak the truthhowever much yonder priest may pretend at his parishioners bedside to forgive sinsthe mans sins are not forgiven. And the troubled conscience of the sinner often bears witness to the fact as the Day of Judgment and the fearful Hell of sinners must also bear witness! And what do you think, Sirs, must be the curse that fills the mouth of damned souls, when, in another world they meet the priest who absolved them with this sham absolution? With what reproaches will such deceived ones meet the priest who sent them down to perdition with a lie in their right hands?
Will they not say to him, You did forgive me all my sins by an authority committed unto you, and yet here I am cast into the pit of Hell! Oh, if I do not clear my soul upon this infamous business and if the whole Christian Church does not cleanse herself of it, what guilt will lay upon us! This is become a crying evil and a sin that is not to be spoken of behind the door, nor to be handled in gentle language. I have been severe, it is said, and spoken harshly. I do not believe it possible to be too severe in this matter! But, Sirs, if I have been so, let that be set down as my sin if you will, but is there any comparison between my sin and that of men who know this to be contrary to the Word of God and yet give it their unfeigned assent and consent? Or between the sin of those who can lie unto the Holy Spirit by pretending to confer Him, who goes where He wills, upon men who as likely as not are as graceless as the very heathen?

Fresh from the dissipations of college life, the sinner bows before the man and rises a full blown priestfully able to remit or retain sins! After this, how can the priests of the Church of England denounce the Roman Catholics? It is so very easy to fume and bluster against Puseyites and Papists, but the moment our charity begins at *home* and we give our Evangelical Brethren the same benefit which they confer upon the open Romanists, they are incensed beyond measure! Yet will we tell them to their faces, that they, despite their fair speeches, are as guilty as those whom they denounce, for there is as much popery in this priest-making as in any passage in the mass-book?
Protestant England! Will you long tolerate this blasphemy? Land of Wickliffe, birthplace of the martyrs of Smithfieldhow long this is to be borne with? I am clear of this matter before the Most High, or hope to be, before I sleep in the grave. And having once sounded the trumpet, it shall ring till my lips are dumb. Do you tell me it is no business of mine? Is it not the National Church?does not its sin rest, therefore, upon every man and woman in the nationDissenter and Churchmanwho does not shake himself from it by open disavowal?
I am not meddling with anybody elses Church! But the Church that claims me as a parishioner would compel me, if it could, pay its Church Rates and does take from me my share of tithe every year. I ask the sturdy Protestants of England and especially the laity of the Church of England, whether they intend forever to foster such abominations? Arise, Britannia, nation of the free, and shake your garments from the dust of this hoary superstition! And as for you, O Church of England, may God bless you with ministers who will sooner come forth to poverty and shame, than pervert, or assist in perverting the Word of God.
6. I have not quite doneI have another question to ask. Look at the thanksgiving which is offered on the twentieth day of June on account of Her Majestys accession. In this thanksgiving we very heartily join, although we decline to pray by book on the twentieth of June or any other day! Look at the close of that thanksgiving and you see the name of Lord John Russell as a sort of official authority for the prayer! Is Earl Russell also among the prophets? And on the other side of the page, in order that the Tories may edify the Church as well as the Whigs, I see the hand of S. H. Walpole. Is he also a governor in Christs Church?

Has the Lord given these men power to legislate for His Church, or sign mandates for her to obey? But what is it all about? Victoria Reginaour will and pleasure is that these four forms of prayer, etc. Do you see? Here is royal supremacy! Further on in the next pageNow, therefore, our will and pleasure is, etc. See the Preface to the ArticlesBeing by Gods Ordinance, according to our just Title, Defender of the Faith and Supreme Governor of the Church, within these our Dominions. And againWe are Supreme Governor of the Church of England.
This is the way in which your Church bows herself before the kingdoms of this world! I demand, earnestly demand, a, Thus says the Lord, for this royal supremacy! If any king, or queen, or emperor, shall say in any Christian Church, Our will and pleasure iswe reply, We have another King, one Jesus! As to the Queen, honored and beloved as she is, she is by her sex incapacitated for ruling in the ChurchPaul decides that point by his plain precept, I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. And if a king were in the case, we should sayWe render unto Caesar the things which are Caesars and unto God the things which are Gods.
In civil matters, we cheerfully obey princes and magistrates, but if any king, queen, emperor, or what not, usurps power in the Church of God, we reply, One is our Master, even Christ, and all we are Brethren. The crown-rights belong to King Jesus. He alone is King in Zion! But I am met at once with the reply, Well, but Christ is the Head of the Established Church as well as the queen. I remember reading about a three-headed dog which kept the gates of Hell, but I never dreamed of a two-headed Church till I heard of the Anglican Establishment. A two-headed Church is a monster!
The Queen, the Head of the Church and King Jesus the Head of the Church, too? Never! Where is a, Thus says the Lord, for this? No man living who calls himself an Englishman has a word to say of Her Majesty except that which is full of honor and esteem and loyal affection. But the moment we come to talk about the Church of Christ, whoever shall say, or think, or believe that there is any headship to the Church of Christ except the Person of Christ Himselfhe knows not what he says nor whereof he affirms. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Head over all things to His Church, which is His bodythe fullness of Him fills all in all.
Here stand the two letters, V. R., at the top of certain mandates and they mean just this Our royal authority commands that you shall not believe this, and you shall believe that. You shall not pray this and you shall pray that. And you shall pray on such a day, and so on. The Church which thus bows to authority commits fornication with the kings of the earth and virtually renounces her allegiance to Christ to gain the filthy lucre of State endowments! He is the free man whom the Truth of God makes free and who wears no gilded collar with a chain hanging therefrom held in a royal hand.
Remember how the Chancellor laughed to scorn the whole bench of bishops and rightly sofor he who voluntarily makes himself a bondman deserves to feel the lash. May the little finger of our State grow heavier than the loins of James or Elizabeth until all good men flee from the house of bondage! Servants of God, will you be servants of *man*? You who profess to follow King Jesus and see Him crowned with the crown wherewith His mother crowned Him in the day of His espousalsdo you take off His diadem to put it upon the head of another? No, it shall never be! Scotland has repelled the royal intrusion right bravely by her sons of the Free Churchwho have left all to follow King Jesus.
Her bush burned in the olden times but was not consumed. The Covenant was stained with blood. But it was never slain! Let us revive that Covenant and if need be, seal it with our blood. Let the Church of England have what king she pleases, or what prince she pleases for her head, but this I know, that there is no, Thus says the Lord, concerning the Ecclesiastical supremacy of Victoria Regina, nor the authority of Lord John Russell, or S. H. Walpole, or any of that company, honorable though they may be!
7. Now, once more, one other question. I am profoundly ignorant and have not the power to judge of these things (so I am informed) and therefore I would like to ask for a, Thus says the Lord, for a few of the canonsno, perhaps I had better not read themthey are too evil. They are all full of malice and uncharitableness and everything that comes of the foul Fiend. I will ask whether there can be found any, Thus says the Lord, for this Canon 10Maintainers of Schismatic in the Church of England to be censured. Whoever shall hereafter affirm that such ministers as refuse to subscribe to the form and manner of Gods worship in the Church of England, prescribed in the Communion Book and their adherents, may truly take unto them the name of another Church not established by law, and dare presume to publish it, that this their pretended Church has of long time groaned under the burden of certain grievances imposed upon it, and upon the members thereof before mentioned, by the Church of England and the orders and constitutions therein by law establishedlet them be excommunicated and not restored until they repent and publicly revoke such their wicked errors.
What Scripture warrants one Church to excommunicate another merely for being a Church and complaining of undoubted grievances? Canon 11Maintainers of Conventicles, censured. Whoever shall hereafter affirm or maintain that there are within this realm other meetings, assemblies, or congregations of the Kings born subjects, than such as by the laws of this land are held and allowed, which may rightly challenge to themselves the name of true and lawful Churches; let him be excommunicated and not restored but by the Archbishop, after his repentance and public revocation of such his wicked errors. Where does Holy Scripture authorize the excommunication of every good man who is charitable enough to believe that there are other Churches beside his own?
Get the Book of the Lord and read it! For very much in this Book of Canons I beg to be informed of a, Thus says the Lord. For matters which do not concern religion and have only to do with the mere arrangement of service, we neither ask nor expect a Divine precept. But upon vital points of doctrine, ceremony, or precept, we cannot do without it. Scarcely can any document be more inconsistent with Scripture than the Book of Canons and therefore it is ever kept in the background because those who know anything about it must be ashamed of it! And yet these are Canons of the Church of Englandcanons which are inconsistent, many of them, with even the common rules of our own present enlightened law, let alone the Word of God! We ask a, Thus says the Lord, for them and we wait until a, Thus says the Lord, shall be found to defend them.
Now some will ask why I take this matter up and look into it. I have already told you the reason, dear Friends. There is an opportunity for pushing another Reformation given to us just now, of which, if we do not avail ourselves, we shall be verily guilty. Some have said, Why not go on preaching the Gospel to sinners? I do preach the Gospel to sinners as earnestly as ever I did in my life and there are as many conversions to God as at any former period. This is Gods work. And beware lest any of you lift a finger against it. The hand of the Lord is in this thing and he that lives shall see it! Let us have your prayers, that good may come of this controversy, even though you may deplore it.

As for anything else that you can do, it shall not turn us a hairs breadth from this testimony to which we feel God has called usthough it brings upon us every evil that flesh would shrink from! The words of Dr. Guthrie are well worth quoting hereThe servant is no better than his master. And I do believe, were we more true to God, more faithful and honest in opposing the world for its good, we should get less smoothly along the path of life and have less reason to read with apprehension these words of Jesus, Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you. Not less true than shrewd was the remark of a Scotch woman respecting one who, just settled in the ministry, had been borne to his pulpit amid the plaudits of all the people, If he is a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, he will have all the blackguards in the parish on his head before a month is gone.
III. Now to close, let me ask you, my Hearershave any of you a hope of Heaven which will not stand the test of, Thus says the Lord? What are you resting upon? Are you resting upon something which you felt when excited at a Prayer Meeting or under a sermon? Remember you will not have that excitement to bear you up in death and the religion of excitement will not suffice in the Day of Judgment! Are you building upon your own works? Are you depending upon your own feelings? Do you rely upon sacraments? Are you placing your trust upon the word of man? If so, remember that when God shakes all things He will shake these false foundations.
But O, build upon the Word of my Lord and Master! Trust your soul with Jesus! Hating sin and clinging to the great Sin-Bearer, you shall find in Him a rock of refuge which can never, never fail you! I beg you, as the Lord lives, search and try yourselves by the Word of God! No doubt there are many among us who are not built upon the Rock of Ages and we may any of us be deceived by a mere name to live. Do then, since the test-day must comesince you must be weighed in the balancesweigh yourselves now, my Hearers! And let none of us go down to the chambers of destruction believing ourselves to be heirs of Heaven, being all the while enemies to the Most High God! May the Lord exalt His own Word and give us a sure inheritance in the blessings which it brings. Amen.

[**BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.** The following Sermons contain Mr. SPURGEONS views upon the Question now under controversy *No. 573 Baptismal Regeneration. No. 577Let Us Go Forth. o. 581Children Brought to Christ, Not to the Font. No. 591Thus Says the LordOr, the Book of Common Prayer Weighed in the Balances of the Sanctuary.* Two LETTERS from C. H. SPURGEONone to the Evangelical Alliance, signifying his withdrawal from that Association and another to The Christian Public, proving that his accusations against the Evangelical clergy are neither novel nor singular.25th Thousand. One Penny each. The five post free for six stamps.]

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A LITTLE SANCTUARY
NO. 2001

INTENDED FOR READING ON THE LORDS DAY, JANUARY 8, 1888, *DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON
Therefore say, Thus says the Lord God; Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come.
Ezekiel 11:16.

THE text begins with therefore. There was a reason for Gods speaking in this way. It is profitable to trace the why and the wherefore of the gracious words of the Lord. The way by which a promise comes usually shines with a trail of light. Upon reading the connection we observe that those who had been carried captive were insulted by those who tarried at Jerusalem. They spoke in a very cruel manner to those with whom they should have sympathized. How often do prosperous Brothers look with scorn on the unfortunate! Did not Job of old complain, He that is ready to slip with his feet is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease?

The Lord hears the unkind speeches of the prosperous when they speak bitterly of those who are plunged in adversity. Read the context Son of man, your Brethren, even your Brethren, the men of your kindred and all the house of Israel wholly, are they unto whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, Get you far from the Lordunto us is this land given in possession. This unbrotherly language moved the Lord to send the Prophet Ezekiel with good and profitable words to the children of the captivity. Many a time the cruel word of man has been the cause of a tender word from God. Because of the unkindness of these people, therefore God, in loving kindness, addressed in words of tender grace those whom they despised.

As in our Saviors days, the opposition of the Pharisees acted upon the Savior like a steel to the flint and fetched bright sparks of the Truth of God out of Him. So the wickedness of man has often been the cause why the grace of God has been more fully revealed. This is some solace when under the severe chastisement of human tongues. Personally, I am glad of this comfort. I would gladly be at peace with all menI would not unnecessarily utter a word of provocationbut it is a world in which you cannot live at peace unless you are willing to be unfaithful to your conscience.

Offenses, therefore, will come. But why should we fret unduly under this trial when we perceive that out of opposition to the cause of God occasions arise for the grandest displays of Gods love and power? If from the showers we gain our harvests, we will not mourn when the heavens gather blackness and the rain pours down. If the wrath of man is made to praise the Lord, then let man be wrathful if he wills. Brethren, let us

brace ourselves to bear the bruises of slanderous tongues! Let us take all sharp speeches and cutting criticisms to God. It may be that He will hear what the enemy has said and that He will be very pitiful to us. Because of the bitterness of the oppressor He will bring home to our heart by the Spirit, with greater tenderness and power, some sweet Word of His which has lain hidden from us in His Book. Be not dismayed, but go to Him who is the God of all comfort, who comforts all those that are bowed down and He will give you a Word which shall heal your wounds and breathe peace into your spirit.

Now to proceed at once to our text, seeing that the occasion of it is a sufficient preface. Let us notice, first, where Gods people may be and yet be Gods people. They may be by Gods own hand, scattered among the countries and cast far off among the heathen. And, secondly, what God will be to them when they are in such circumstances, Yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come. May the Holy Spirit, who spoke by Ezekiel, speak though these words to our hearts!

I. First, then, WHERE GODS PEOPLE MAY BE. If you ask where they may be, the answer to the question is, first, they may be under chastisement. If you will remember, in the Book of Deuteronomy, God threatened Israel that if they, as a nation, sinned against Him, they should be scattered among the nations and cast far off among the heathen. Many a time they so sinned. I need not recapitulate the story of their continued transgressions and multiplied backslidings. The Lord was slow to fulfill His utmost threats but put forth His utmost patience till there was no more room for long-suffering. At last the threatened chastisement fell upon them and fierce nations carried them away in bonds to the far-off lands of their dread.

They were not utterly destroyedtheir being scattered among the people showed that they still existed. Though they were a people scattered and peeled, yet they were a people, even as Israel is to this day. For all that tyrants and persecutors have ever done, yet the Jew is still extant among us, even as the bush burned with fire but was not consumed, Israel is still to the front and will be to the worlds end. The Lord has not cast away His people, even though He has cast them far off among the heathen. He has scattered them among the countries but they are not absorbed into those countries. They still remain a people separated unto the living God, in whom He will yet be glorified.

But, assuredly, the chosen seed came under chastisement. By the rivers of Babylon, they sat down and weptyesthey wept when they remembered Zion, because they were under the Lords heavy hand. The instructed among them knew that their being in exile was the fruit of the transgressions of their fathers and the result of their own offenses against God. And yet, though they were under chastisement, God loved them and had a choice word for them, which I will by-and-by endeavor to explain to you. For the Lord said, Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary.

Beloved, you and I may lie under the rod of God and we may smart sorely because of our iniquities, even as David did. And yet we may be the children of God towards whom He has thoughts of Divine Grace. Our moisture may be turned into the drought of summer, while day and night the Lords hand is heavy upon us. We may be in sore temporal trouble and may be compelled by an enlightened conscience to trace our sorrow to our own folly. We may be in great spiritual darkness and may be compelled to confess that our own sins have procured this unto ourselves.

And yet, for all that, the Lord may have sent the chastisement in love and in nothing else but love. And He may intend by it, not our destruction, but the destruction of the flesh. Not our rejection, but our refining, not our curse, but our cleansing. Let us take comfort, seeing that God has a Word to say to His mourners and to His afflicted and that Word in the text is a yet which serves to show that there is a clear limit to His anger. He smites but it is with an although and a yetHe scatters them to a distance but He sends a promise after them and says, I will be to them as a little sanctuary.

In the Lords hand towards His chosen there may be a rod but not a sword. It is a heavy rod, but it is not a rod of iron. It is a rod that bruises but it is not a rod that batters to pieces. God tempers our afflictions, severe though they may seem to be. And though, apparently, He strikes us with the blows of a cruel one, yet there is a depth unutterable of infinite love in every stroke of His hand. His anger endures but for a nightHe hastens to display His favor. Listen to His own Words of overflowing faithfulnessFor a small moment have I forsaken you. But with great mercies will I gather you. In a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment. But with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on you, says the Lord your Redeemer. However, it is clear that Gods own people may be under chastisement.

But, secondly, wherever they are, whether they are under chastisement or not, they are where the Lord has put them. Read the text carefully Although I have cast them far off among the heathen and although I have scattered them among the countries. The Lords hand was in their banishment and dispersionJehovah Himself inflicted the chastisement for sin. You say to me, Why, it was Nebuchadnezzar who carried them awaythe Babylonians and the Chaldeans took them captive. Yes, I know it was so. But the Lord regards these as instruments in His hand and He says, I have done it, just as Job, when the Chaldeans and the Sabeans had swept away his property and his children had been destroyed through the agency of Satan, yet said, The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away.

The Lord was as truly in the taking away as He was in the giving. It is well to look beyond all second causes and instrumentalities. Do not get angry with those who are the nearer agents but look to the First Cause. Do not get fretting about the Chaldeans and Sabeans. Let them alone and Satan, too. What have you to do with them? Your business is with God. See His hand, and bow before it. Say, The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Come to that, for then you will be able to say, Blessed be the name of the Lord. Though your trials be peculiar and your way be

hedged up, yet the hand of the Lord is still in everything. And it behooves you to recognize it for your strengthening and consolation.

Note, next, that the people of God may dwell in places of great discomfort. The Jews were not in those days like the English, who colonize and find a home in the Far West, or even dwell at ease beneath sultry skies. An ancient Hebrew out of his own country was a fish out of waterout of his proper element. He was not like the Tyrian, whose ship went to Tarshish, and passed the gates of Hercules, seeking the Ultima Thule. The Jew tarried at home. I dwell among my own people, said a noble woman of that nation. And she did but speak the mind of a home-loving people who settled each one upon his own patch of ground and sat down under his vine and fig tree, none making him afraid.

Their Lord had driven them into a distant land, to rivers whose waters were bitter to their lips, even to the Tigris and the Euphrates. They were in a foreign country, where everything was different from their ways where all the customs of the people were strange and singular. They would be a marked and despised peoplenobody would fraternize with them but all would pass them by in scorn. The Jews excited much prejudice, for, as their great adversary, the wicked Haman, said, their laws were diverse from all people, and their customs had a peculiarity about them which kept them a distinct race. It must have been a great discomfort to Gods people to dwell among idolaters and to be forced to witness obscene rites and revolting practices.

Gods own favored ones in these days may be living where they are as much out of place as lambs among wolves, or doves among hawks. Do not imagine that God makes a nest of down for all His eaglets. Why, they would never take to flying if He did not put thorns under them and stir up their nest that they may take to their wings and learn the heavenward flight to which they are predestinated! Perfect comfort on earth is no more to be expected than constant calm on the sea. Sleep in the midst of a battle and ease when on the march would be more in place than absolute rest in this present state. God means not His children to take up their inheritance on this side of the Jordan. This is not your restbecause it is polluted.

And so He often puts us where we are very uncomfortable. Is there any Christian man who can say that he would, if he might, take up his lot forever in this life? No, no. There is an irksomeness about our condition, disguise it as we may. In one way or another we are made to remember that we are in banishment. We have not yet come unto our rest. That rest remains for the people of God, but as yet we have not come into the land which the Lord our God has given to us to be our place of rest. Some of Gods servants feel this in a very peculiar manner, for their soul is among lions and they dwell among those whose tongues are set on fire of Hell.

Abel was hated by Cain, Isaac was mocked by Ishmael, Joseph was among envious brethren, Moses was at first rejected by Israel, David was pursued by Saul, Elijah was hunted by Jezebel, Mordecai was hated by Haman. And yet these men were wisely placed and the Lord was eminently with them. I mention this in order that tried Believers may still know that, however uncomfortable their position, it is nevertheless true that God has put them there for some good end. The beloved of God may yet be in a place of great barrenness as to all spiritual good. I have cast them far off among the heathenfar off from My templefar off from the place of My worshipfar off from the shrine of My glory.

I have scattered them among the countries, where they will learn no goodwhere, on the contrary, they will see every abominable thing and often feel like Lot, who was vexed with the filthy conversation of the people among whom he dwelt. We are not kept apart from the wicked by high walls, or guards of heavenly soldiery. Even our Lord did not pray that we should be taken out of the world. Grace builds neither monasteries nor nunneries. Woe is me, is frequently the cry of Gods chosen, that I sojourn in Meshech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!

David knew what it was to be cut off from the assemblies of the Lords house and to be in the cave or in the wilderness. It may be so with you and yet you may be a child of God. You may not be out of your place, for the dear path to His abode may go straight through this barren land. You may have to pass for many a day through this great and terrible wilderness, this land of fiery serpents and of great drought, on your way to the land that flows with milk and honey. To make Heaven the sweeter we may find our exile made bitter. Our education for eternity may necessitate spiritual tribulation and bereavement from visible comforts.

To be weaned from all reliance on outward means may be for our good, that we may be driven in upon the Lord and made to know that He is All in All. Doubtless the jeers of Babylon endeared the quiet of Zion to the banishedthey loved the courts of the Lords house all the more for having sighed in the halls of the proud monarch.

Worse still, the Lords chosen may be under oppression through surrounding ungodliness and sin. The captive Israelites found Babylonia and Chaldea to be a land of grievous oppression. They ridiculed them and bade them sing them one of the songs of Zion. They required of them mirth when their hearts were heavy. On the festivals of their false gods they demanded that the worshippers of the Eternal One should help in their choirs and tune their harps to heathenish minstrelsy. Even Daniel, in his high position under the Persian monarch, found that he was not without adversaries who rested not till they had cast him into a den of lions. Those who were far away, whether in Babylonia or in Persia, found themselves the constant subjects of assault from the triumphant foe.

They were crushed down until they cried by reason of their oppression. It was not the first time that the people of God had been in the iron furnace. Did they not come forth from the house of bondage at the first, even from Egypt? Neither was Babylon the last place of trial for saints. For until the end of time the seed of the serpent will war with the Seed of the woman. Is it not still true of us, as well as of our Savior, Out of Egypt have I called My Son? Expect still to meet with opposition and oppression while you are passing to the land where the Seed shall possess the heritage. Those of us who bear public testimony may have to bear the brunt of the battle and suffer much from angry tongues. Nevertheless, to us it

shall be an evident token of the Lords favor, inasmuch as He counts us worthy to suffer for His names sake.

But enough of that. I am making a very long story about the grievous routes through which we wend our way to the Celestial City. We climb on hands and knees up the Hill Difficulty. We tremblingly descend the steep of Humiliation. We feel our way through the tremendous pass of the Shadow of Death and hasten through Vanity Fair and walk warily across the Enchanted Ground. Not much of the way could one fall in love with. Perhaps the only part of it is that Valley of Humiliation, where the shepherd boy sat down and sang his ditty among the wild flowers and the lambs. One might wish to be always there. But fierce adversaries invade even those tranquil meadows, for nearby where the shepherd sang his happy pastoral song, Christian met Apollyon and had to struggle hard for his life.

Do you not remember the spot where
The man so bravely played the man,
He made the fiend to fly?

You see where Gods people may be and yet may be none the less but all the more, under Divine protection. Are you in difficult places? Be not dismayed, for this way runs the road to Glory. Sigh not for the doves wing to hurry to your rest but take the appointed paththe footsteps of your Lord are there.

II. So, now, I hasten at once into the sweet part of the subject, which consists of thisWHAT GOD WILL BE TO HIS PEOPLE WHEN THEY GET INTO THESE CIRCUMSTANCES. Yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come.

Brethren, the great sanctuary stood on Mount Zion, beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth. That glorious place which Solomon had built was the shrine to which the Hebrew turned his eyehe prayed with his window open toward Jerusalem. Alas! when the tribes were carried away captive they could not carry the holy and beautiful house with themneither could they set up its like within the brazen gates of the haughty city. Now, says the Lord God in infinite condescension, I will be a traveling temple to them. I will be as a little sanctuary to each one of them. They shall carry My temple about with them. Wherever they are, I will be, as it were, a holy place to them.

In using the word little, the gracious God would seem to say, I will condescend to them and I will be as they are. I will bow down to their littleness and I will be to each little one of them a little sanctuary. Even the temple which Solomon built was not a fit habitation for the infinite Jehovah and so the Lord will stoop a little further and be unto His people, not as the sanctuary, exceedingly magnificent, but as a *little temple* suitable for the most humble individual, rather than as a great temple in which vast multitudes could gather. I will be to them as a little sanctuary is a greatly condescending promise, implying an infinite stoop of love. There is a good deal more in my text than I shall be able to bring out, and I may seem, in making the attempt, to give you the same thought twice. Please bear with me. Let me begin at the beginning.

A sanctuary was a place of refuge. You know how Joab fled to the horns of the altar to escape from Solomons armed menhe ran to the temple hoping to find sanctuary there. In past ages, Churches and abbeys and altars have been used as places of sanctuary to which men have fled when in danger of their lives. Take that sense and couple it with the cities of refuge which were set up throughout all Israel, to which the man who killed another by misadventure might flee to hide himself from the manslayer.

Now, Beloved, wherever you are, wherever you dwell, God will be to you a constant place of refuge. You shall flee from sin to God in Christ Jesus. You shall flee from an accusing conscience to His pardoning love. You shall flee from daily cares to Him who cares for you. You shall flee from the accusations of Satan to the advocacy of Jesus. You shall flee, even, from yourselves to your Lord and He will be to you in all senses a place of refuge. This is the happy harbor of all saints in all weathers. Here come all weather-beaten boats and cast anchor in placid waters

God is our refuge, tried and proved,
Amid a stormy world
We will not fear though earth be moved,
And hills in ocean hurled.

O my Hearer, make the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, your habitation and then shall you know the Truth of this textGod is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Wherever you are cast, God will be to you a suitable refuge, a little haven for your little boatnot little in the sense that He cannot well protect you. Not little in the sense that His Word is a small Truth, or a small comfort, or a small protection but little in this respectthat it shall be near you, accessible to you, adapted to you. It is as though the refuge were portable in all our wanderings, a protection to be carried and kept in hand in all weathers.

You shall carry it about with you wherever you are, this little sanctuary. Your God and your thoughts of your God and your faith in your God shall be to you a daily, perpetual, available, present refuge. Oh, it is a delightful thought to my mind, that from every danger and every storm God will be to us an immediate refuge which we carry about with us, so that we abide under the shadow of the Almighty!

Next, a sanctuary signifies also a place of worship. It is a place where the Divine Presence is peculiarly manifesteda holy place. It usually means a place where God dwells, a place where God has promised to meet with His people, a place of acceptance where prayers and praises and offerings come up with acceptance on His altar. Now, notice, God says to His people, when they are far away from the temple and Jerusalem, I will be to them as a little sanctuary. Not, I have loved the people and I will build them a synagogue, or I will lead others to build for them a meeting place, but, I Myself will be to them as a little sanctuary. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the true place of worship for saved souls.

There is no Chapel in the place where I live, says one. I am sorry to hear it but Chapels are not absolutely essential to worship, surely. Another cries, There is no place of public worship of any sort where the Gospel is fully and faithfully preached. This is a great want, certainly, but still, do not say, I am far away from a place of worship. That is a mistake. No

godly man is far away from a holy place. What is a place of worship? I hope that our bed-chambers are constantly places of worship. Place of worship? Why, it is ones garden where he walks and meditates. A place of worship? It is the field, the barn, the street, when one has the heart to pray. God will meet us by a well, a stone, a bush, a brook, a tree. He has great range of meeting places when mens hearts are right

Wherever we seek Him He is found,
And every place is hallowed ground.
When a man lives near to God and abides in Him, he should shake off

the folly of superstition and talk no more of holy places. God Himself, His own Presence makes a place of worship. Do you not catch the fullness of the thought? Yonder is Jacob. He lies down to sleep in a desert place with a stone for his pillow. No bishop had ever been upon the spot to consecrate it, no service had been held in the place by way of dedication and yet when he awoke in the morning, he said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the House of God and this is the gate of Heaven.

God had been to His servant a little sanctuary in that instance, as He has been oftentimes since. Whenever you go to sea, God in your cabin shall be to you a little sanctuary. When you travel by railway, the carriage shall, through the Lords presence, be a little sanctuary. Gods presence, seen in a bit of moss, made in the desert for Mungo Park a little sanctuary. How often have the streets of London been to some of us as the golden pavements of the New Jerusalem, for God has been there! The Lord Himself is the temple of saints in Heaven and He is their temple on earth. When God draws near to us, we worship and rejoice. Whenever we are abroad and cannot come to the visible sanctuary where multitudes worship, let us ask the Lord to be to us as a little sanctuary.

Have not your hearts cried out as you have thought of this house when you have been far awayZion, Zion, the place of our solemn assemblies, when shall we return to you? O sacred spot where we have worshipped God and God has met with us and made the place of His feet glorious, when shall we again behold you? I shall not contend with the feeling, but I would supplant it with this higher thoughtthe Lord Himself is our dwelling place and our holy temple. Has he not said, I will be to them as a little sanctuary?

Now, go a little farther. Our God is to us a place of stillness. What was the sanctuary of old? The sanctuary was the most holy place, the third court, the innermost of all within the veil. It was the most still place that ever was on eartha closet of absolute silence. You must not think of the tabernacle in the wilderness as being a huge building. It was a small affair and the innermost room of all was of narrow dimensions. The Holy of Holies was great for holiness but not for space. There was this peculiarity about it, that it was the shrine of unbroken quiet. Was ever a voice heard in it? Once in the year the high priest went in and filled it full of the smoke of incense as he waved his censer in the mystic presence.

But otherwise it was a chamber in which there was no footfall of living thing, or voice of mortal man. Here was the home of absolute quiet and silence. The stillness within the Holy of Holies of the temple must have reached the intensity of awe. What repose one might enjoy who could dwell in the secret place of the Most High! How one sighs for stillness! We cannot get it to the full anywhere in this countryeven to the loneliest hilltop the scream of the railway engine rises to the ear. Utter and entire stillness, one of the richest joys on this side of Heaven, one cannot readily obtain. Those who live in the wear and tear of this city lifeand it is an awful wear and tearmight well pay down untold gold to be still for a while.

What would we not give for quiet, absolute quiet, when everything should be still and the whirring wheels of care should cease to revolve for at least a little while? I sometimes propose to myself to wait upon God and be still. Alas! There is the bell! Who is this? Somebody that will chatter for a quarter of an hour about nothing! Well, that intruder has gone. Let us pray. We are on our knees. What is this? A telegram! One is half frightened at the very sight of itit is opened and it calls you away to matters which are the reverse of quieting. Where is stillness to be had? The only prescription I can give is this promiseI will be to them as a little sanctuary.

If you can get with God, you will then escape from men, even though you have to live among them. If you can baptize your spirit into the great deeps of Godhead, if you can take a plunge into the fathomless love of the Covenant, if you can rise to commune with God and speak with Him as a man speaks with his friend, then will He be unto you as a little sanctuary and you shall enjoy that solemn silence of the soul which has music in it like the eternal harmonies. The presence of the Lord will be as a calm hand for that fevered brow and a pillow for that burdened head. Use your God in this way, for so He presents Himself to you.

The sanctuary was a place of mercy. When the high priest entered within the veil, he passed into the throne room of mercy. The blood had been sprinkled there and man might draw near to the God of mercy. A light was shininga light of love and mercy, between the wings of the cherubim. Those angelic forms were ministers of mercy, attendants upon the Lord of Grace. Before the high priest stood the Mercy Seat. That was the name of the cover of the sacred Ark of the Covenant. On that Mercy Seat there was the Shekinah, which symbolized the Presence of a merciful God.

Of that Mercy Seat the Lord had said, There will I meet with you. The holy place was a house of mercy. God was not there in power to destroy, nor in subtle wisdom to discover follyHe was there in mercy, waiting to forgive. Now, dear Friends, God says, I will be to them as a little sanctuary, that is to say, an accessible throne of mercy, an accessible palace of mercy. When men have no mercy on you, go to God. When you have no mercy on yourselfand sometimes you have notrun away to God. Draw near to Him, and He will be to you as a little sanctuary.

The sanctuary was the house of mercy and hence, a place of condescensiona little sanctuary. Brethrento suit our needs the blessings of Divine Grace must be given in little forms. What are we great in at all except in sin? We hear of great men. O Friends, a great *man*? Does not the term make you laugh? Did you ever hear of a great dog, or a great ant, or

a great nothing? And that is all that the greatest of us can ever be. Our degrees and ranks are only shades of littleness. That is all. When the Lord communes with the greatest of men, He must become little to speak with him.

I cannot convey to you quite what I see to be the meaning of this little sanctuary, laying the stress upon the adjective little. If you are talking of anything that is very dear, the tendency is always to call it little. The affectionate terms of language are frequently diminutives. One never says, My dear great wife, but we are apt to say, My dear little wife. We speak thus of things which are not little, really, but we use the word as a term of affection. To speak very simply, there is a coziness about a little thing which we miss in that which is on a large scale. We say, Well, I did so enjoy that little Prayer Meeting. But when it grew so much in numbers I seemed lost in it.

It is to me so marvelous that I hardly dare to say what I mean. But when the Lord brings Himself down to our capacity He is greatly dear to us and He would have us feel at home with Him, comfortable with Him. When He becomes to us as a little sanctuary, and we are able to compass His mercy to ourselves and perceive its adaptation to our little trials and little difficulties, then we feel ourselves at home with Him and He is most dear to us. O blessed God! You are so great that You must, as it were, belittle Yourself to manifest Yourself to me! How I love and adore You that You will deign to do this! Glory be to Your great name, though the Heaven of heavens cannot contain You, yet You dwell in the temple of my poor heart!

Dear Brethren, the sanctuary was only a little place. But then, if it had been ever so greatif it had been as spacious as this whole island and had been shut in to be the House of Godwould it have been a house fitted to contain the infinite God? If you take the arch of Heaven as a roof and floor it with the sea, or if you soar into still more boundless spaceis that a house fit for Him who fills all immensity? When Jehovah makes Himself little enough to be in the least comprehended by us, the descent is immeasurable. It is nothing more to Him to come down to count the hairs of our head than to bow in the infinity of His mercy to take an interest in our littlenesses.

Go a stage further. That sanctuary, of which we read in the Old Testament, was not only a place of great stillness, great mercy and great condescension, but it was a place of great holiness. Holiness becomes Your house. This applied to the whole temple but the inner shrine was called sanctum sanctorumthe Holy of Holies, for so the Hebrews make a superlative. It was the holiest place that could be. The world is an unholy place and at times it is most grievously so. You mix up with people who defile youhow can you help it? Your daily business calls you to see and hear many things which are defiling.

When these things are more than ordinarily glaring, you say to yourself, Oh, for a lodge in some vast wilderness, that I might get away from the very sight of men! I was with a mountain climbing friend some time ago and being thirsty, I drank some water from a fountain by the roadside. When I held the cup to my companion, he refused it, saying, I dont drink that. I said, Why dont you drink it? He answered, I wait till I have climbed up into the mountains, where mortal men never pollute the streams and then I drink. I like drinking of fountains at which none but birds sipwhere the stream pours forth from Gods hand pure as crystal.

Alas! I cannot climb with my Alpine friend as to material things. But what a blessed thing it is to get right away from man and drink of the river of God which is full of water and know the joys of His own right hand, which are forevermore! What bliss to enter into the Holy of Holies! Now, you cannot do that by getting into a cell, or by shutting yourselves up in your room. But you can enter the most holy place by communion with God. Here is the promise. The text means thisI will be to them as a little sanctuarya little Holy of Holies. I will put them into Myself as into the most holy place and there will I hide them. In the secret of My tabernacle will I hide them. I will set them up upon a rock. Away from the unholiness of your own hearts and the unholiness of those about you, get to your God and hide yourselves in Him.

Againwe may regard the sanctuary as a place of cleansing. That may be gathered from the other rendering of my text. I will be unto them a little sanctification. God is the sanctification of His peopleHe cleanses them from daily defilements and is Himself their righteousness. Those that come to God shall find in Him sanctification for the daily acts of life, cleansing from ordinary as well as extraordinary transgression. We want not only the great blood-washing but also the lesser washing of the feet with water. The Lord Himself will give us this blessing. Did not Jesus take a towel, and gird Himself for this very purpose?

Lastly, God will be to us a place of communion and of revelation. In the Holy of Holies God spoke with man. On that one day in the year, in a wondrous manner did He speak. And he that had been there and came forth alive, came out to bless the congregation. Every day of the year the teaching of the sanctuary was that in God there was everything His people wanted. In the holy place was the Shekinah lightGod is light and in Him is no darkness at all. The Lord is my light and my salvation. In the holy place were the cherubimGod has legions of angels at His bidding, waiting to bless His people. In the holy place was the arkGod is to us the Ark of the Covenant. He has entered into covenant with man, towards us He has a throne of Divine Grace and there He meets us, even in Christ Jesus, who is our propitiation.

Within that ark there were three thingsthe rod of Aaron, that Divine work of Christ which always buds. The pot of manna, the emblem and token of the living bread whereon His people feed. And the tablets of the Law unbroken, in all their splendor, whereby the saints are justified. O Brethren, if you want anything, if you want everything, go to God for it! He will be to you as a little sanctuary. That is to say, He will bring to you everything which was inside that holy place. Though but one piece of furniture, yet that Ark of the Covenant did really contain in itself and round about it, all that the heirs of God can ever need while in this wilderness.

Let this be a joy to you this day.

Do not rely upon the creature. All men are liars, said David. And he was not far off. Broken cisterns abound on all sideswhy waste your time on them? Get you straight away to your Creator and find your all in Him. If this day you are wrapped up in the things that are seen and temporal, may God deliver you from them, for all these things will melt as you hold them in your hand! The joys of this life are like the ice palace of Montreal, which is fair to look upon while the winter lasts but it all dissolves as the spring comes on. All things round about us here are myths and dreams. This is the land of fancies and of shadows. Pray God to get out of them and that you may find in Him your sanctuary, and indeed, all that you want.

If at this time you have lost many of the comforts of this life and seem bereaved of friends, then find in God your little sanctuary. Go home to your chamber with holy faith and humble love and take Him to be your All in All and He will be All in All to you. Pray after this fashionO Lord, so work in me by Your Spirit that I may find You in all things and all things in You! The Lord has ways of weaning us from the visible and the tangible and bringing us to live upon the invisible and the real in order to prepare us for that next stage, that better life, that higher place, where we shall really deal with eternal things only.

God blows out our candles and makes us find our light in Himto prepare us for that place in which they need no candlefor the glory of God is their light. And where, strange to tell, they have no temple, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof. The holy leads to the holiestliving upon God here leads to living with God hereafter. Oh, that God would gradually lift us up above all the outward, above all the visible and bring us more and more into the inward and unseen!

If you do not know anything about this, ask the Lord to teach you this riddle. And if you do know it, ask Him to keep you to the life and walk of faith and never may you be tempted to quit it for the way of sight and feeling. For Christs sake we ask it. Amen.

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NOW, A SERMON FOR YOUNG MEN AND YOUNG WOMEN
NO. 1164

DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 19, 1874, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.
Son of man, behold, they of the house of Israel say, The vision that he sees is for many days to come, and he prophesies of the times that are far off Ezekiel 12:27.

ONE would have thought that if the glorious Lord condescended to send His servants to speak to men of the way of salvation, all mankind would delight to hear the message. We should naturally conclude that the people would immediately run together in eager crowds to catch every wordand would at once be obedient to the heavenly command. But, alas, it has not been so! Mans opposition to God is too deep, too stubborn for that. The Prophets of old were compelled to cry, Who has believed our report? and the servants of God in later times found themselves face to face with a stiff-necked generation who resisted the Holy Spirit as their fathers did.

Men display great ingenuity in making excuses for rejecting the message of Gods love. They display marvelous skill, not in *seeking* salvation, but in fashioning reasons for *refusing* it. They are dexterous in avoiding Divine Grace and in securing their own ruin. They hold up, first, this shield and then the other to ward off the gracious arrows of the Gospel of Jesus Christ which are only meant to slay the deadly sins which lurk in their bosoms. The evil argument which is mentioned in the text has been used from Ezekiels day right down to the present moment, and it has served Satans turn in tens of thousands of cases. By its means men have delayed themselves into Hell.

The sons of men, when they hear of the great Atonement made upon the Cross by the Lord Jesus, and are bid to lay hold upon eternal life in Him, still say concerning the Gospel, The vision that he sees is for many days to come, and he prophesies of times that are far off. That is to say, they pretend that the matters of which we speak are not of immediate importance, and may safely be postponed. They imagine that religion is for the weakness of the dying and the infirmity of the aged, but not for healthy men and women.

They meet our pressing invitation, All things are now ready, come to the supper, with the reply, Religion is meant to prepare us for *eternity*, but we are far off from it as yet, and are still in the heyday of our being. There is plenty of time for those dreary preparations for death. Your religion smells of the vault and the worm. Let us be merry while we may. There will be room for more serious considerations when we have enjoyed life a little, or have become established in business, or can retire to live upon our savings. Religion is for the sere and yellow leaf of the years fall, when life is fading, but not for the opening hours of spring, when the

birds are pairing and the primroses smiling upon the returning sun. You prophesy of things that are for many days to come, and of times that are far off.

Very few young people may have *said* as much as this, but that is the secret thought of many. And with this they resist the admonition of the Holy Spirit, who says, Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts. They put off the day of conversion as if it were a day of tempest and terror, and not, as it really is, a day most calm, most brightthe marriage of the soul with Heaven. Let every unconverted person remember that God knows what his excuse is for turning a deaf ear to the voice of a dying Saviors love! You may not have spoken it to yourself so as to put it into words. You might not even dare to do so, lest your conscience should be too much startledbut God knows it all.

He sees the hollowness, the folly and the wickedness of your excuses. He is not deceived by your vain words, but makes short work with your apologies for delay. Remember the parables of our Lord and note that when the man of one talent professed to think his Master a hard man, He took him at his word and out of his own mouth condemned him! And in the case of the invited guests who pleaded their farms and their merchandise as excuses, no weight was attached to what they said, but the sentence went forth, None of these men that are bidden shall taste of My supper. God knows the frivolity of your plea for delay. He knows that you, yourself, are doubtful about it, and dare not stand to it so as to give it anything like a solemn consideration.

Very hard do you try to deceive yourself into an easy state of conscience concerning it, but in your inmost soul you are ashamed of your own falsehoods. My business at this time is, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to deal with your consciences and to convince you even more thoroughly that delay is unjustifiable, for the Gospel has present demands upon you, and you must not say, The vision that he sees is for many days to come, and he prophesies of the times that are far off.

I. For, first, *granted for a moment that the message we bring to you has most to do with the future state, yet, even then, the day is not far of neither is there so great a distance between now and then that you can afford to wait*. Suppose that you are spared for threescore years and ten! Young man, suppose that God spares you in your sins till the snows of many winters shall whiten your head? Young woman, suppose that your now youthful countenance shall still escape the grave until wrinkles are upon your brow? Still, how short will your life be! You, perhaps, think 70 years a long period, but those who are 70, in looking back, will tell you that their age is as an hands breadth!

I, who am but 40, feel at this time that every year flies more swiftly than the last! And months and weeks are contracted into twinkling of the eyes. The older one grows, the shorter ones life appears. I do not wonder that Jacob said, Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, for he spoke as an extremely old man. Man is short-lived compared with his surroundingshe comes into the world and goes out of itas a meteor flashes through yonder skies which have remained the same for ages. Listen to the brook which murmurs as it flows and the meditative ear will hear it warble

Men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

Look at yonder venerable oak, which has, for 500 years, battled with the windswhat an infant one seems when reclining beneath its shade! Stand by some giant rock which has confronted the tempests of the ages and you feel like the insect of an hour! There are persons here tonight of 70 years of age who look back to the days of their boyhood as if they were but yesterday! Ask them, and they will tell you that their life seems to have been little more than a wink of the eyeit has gone like a dream, or a lightnings flash

What is life? tis but a vapor,

Soon it vanishes away.
Therefore do not say, These things are for a far-off time. for even if we could guarantee to you the whole length of human existence, it is but a span.

And there comes upon the heels of this a reflection never to be forgottenthat not one man among us can promise himself, with anything like certainty, that he shall ever see threescore years and ten! We may survive and by reason of strength we may creep up to fourscore yearsyet not one of us can be sure that he shall do sothe most of us will assuredly be gone long before that age. No, we cannot promise that we shall see half that length of time! You young men and women cannot be certain that you shall reach middle life. Let me check myself! What am I talking of? You cannot be certain that you will see *this year* out and hear the bells ring in a new year! Yes, close upon you as tomorrow is, boast not yourselves of it, for it may never come. Or, should it come, you know not what it may bring forth to youperhaps a coffin or a shroud.

Yes, and this very night, when you close your eyes and rest your head upon your pillow, reckon not too surely that you shall ever again look on that familiar chamber, or go forth from it to the pursuits of life. It is clear, then, that the things which make for your peace are not matters for a faroff time. The frailty of life makes them necessities of this very hour. You are not far from your graveyou are nearer to it than when this discourse began. Some of you are far nearer than you think. To some, this rejection comes with remarkable emphasis, for your occupation has enough of danger about it, every day, to furnish Death with a hundred roads to convey you to his prison in the sepulcher! Can you look through a newspaper without meeting with the words, total, or, sudden death?

Traveling has many dangers and even to cross the street is perilous. Men die at home and many, when engaged about their lawful callings, are met by death. How true is this of those who go down to the sea in ships, or descend into the heart of the earth in mines! But, indeed, no occupations are secure from deatha needle can kill as well as a sword a scald, a burn, a fall may end our lives quite as readily as a pestilence or a battle. Does your business lead you to climb a ladder? It is not a very perilous matter, but have you never heard of one who missed his footing and fell, never to rise again? You work amidst the materials of a rising buildinghave you never heard of stones that have fallen and have

crushed the workers?
Dangers stand thick through all the ground To push us to the tomb,
And fierce diseases wait around
To hurry mortals home.

Notwithstanding all that can be done by sanitary laws, fevers are not unknown and deadly strokes which fell men to the ground in an instant, as a butcher slays an ox, are not uncommon. Death has already removed many of your former companions. You have ridden into the battle of life like the soldiers in the charge at Balaclava. And, young as you are in this warfare, you have seen saddles emptied right and left around you. You survive, but death has grazed you. The arrow of destruction has gone whizzing by your ear to find another mark! Have you never wondered why it spared you? Among this congregation there are persons of delicate constitution. It grieves me to see so many fair daughters of our land with the mark of consumption upon their cheeks.

Full well I know that lurid flame upon the countenance and that strange luster of the eyessigns of exhausting fires feeding upon life and consuming it too soon! Young men and women, many of you, from the condition of your bodily frames, can only struggle on till middle lifeand scarcely thatfor beyond 30 or 40 you cannot survive. I fear that some of you have, even in walking to this place, felt a suspicious weariness which argues exhaustion and decline. How can you say, when we talk to you about preparing to die, that we are talking about things that are far off? Dear Souls, do not be so foolish! I implore you, let these warnings lead you to decision! Far be it from me to cause you needless alarm, but is it needless? I am sure I love you too well to distress you without causeand is there not cause enough?

Come now, I press you most affectionately, answer me and say, does not your own reason tell you that my anxiety for you is not misplaced? Ought you not, at once, lay to heart your Redeemers call and obey your Saviors appeal? The time is short! Catch the moments as they fly and hasten to be blessed. Remember also, once again, that even if you knew that you should escape from accident and fever and sudden death, yet there is one grand event that we too often forget, which may put an end to your day of mercy all of a sudden. Have you never heard of that Jesus Christ of Nazareth who was crucified on Calvary, died on the Cross, and was laid in the tomb? Do you not know that He rose again the third day? And that after He had spent a little while with His disciples, He took them to the top of the Mount of Olives and there, before their eyes, ascended into Heaven, a cloud hiding Him from their view?

Have you forgotten the words of the angels, who said, This same Jesus who is taken up from you into Heaven shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven? Jesus will certainly come a second time to judge the world! Of that day and of that hour knows no manno, not the angels of God! He will come as a thief in the night to an ungodly world! They shall be eating and drinking, and marrying and giving in marriage just as they were when Noah entered into the arkand they knew not until the Flood came and swept them all away! In a moment we cannot tell when! Perhaps it may be before the next words escape my lipsa sound far louder than any mortal voice will be heard above the clamors of worldly trafficyes, and above the roaring of the sea.

That sound as of a trumpet will proclaim the day of the Son of Man. Behold, the Bridegroom comes: go you out to meet Him, will sound throughout the Church. And to the world there will ring out this clarion note, Behold, He comes with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they, also, which crucified Him. Jesus may come tonight! If He were to do so, would you, then, tell me that I am talking of far-off things? Did not Jesus say, Behold, I come quickly! and has not His Church been saying, Even so, come Lord Jesus? His tarrying may be long to us, but to God it will be brief. We are to stand hourly watching and daily waiting for the coming of the Lord from Heaven! Oh, I pray you do not say that the Lord delays His coming, for that was the language of the wicked servant who was cut in pieces, and it is the mark of the mockers of the last days, that they say, Where is the promise of His coming?

Be you not mockers, lest your bands be made strong, but listen to the undoubted voice of prophecy and of the Word of God, Behold, I come quickly. Be you, also, ready, for in such an hour as you think not the Son of Man comes. Now, then, it is clear enough that even if the Gospel message did concern only our life in another world, yet still it is unwise for men to say, The vision is for many days to come, and he prophesies of the times that are far off.

II. But, secondly, I have to remind you that our *message really deals with the present*. The blessings of the Gospel have as much to do with this present life as with existence beyond the tomb. For observe, first, we are sent to plead with you, young men and women, and tenderly to remind you that you are, at this hour, acting unjustly and unkindly towards your God. He made you and you do not serve Him. He has kept you alive and you are not obedient to Him. He has sent the Word of His Gospel to you and you have not received it. He has sent His only begotten Son and you have despised Him. This injustice is a thing of the *present*and the appeal we make to you about it is that in all reason such conduct should come to an end. Oh, may Gods Holy Spirit help you to end it!

If I feel that I have done any man an injustice, I am eager to set it right. I would not wait till tomorrow. I wish to make amends with him at once. Yes, and even when I have forgotten to render assistance to some needy widow, I chide myself and feel uneasy till I have attended to the matter. Do you not feel the same? Would you willfully wrong or neglect another? I feel sure you would not! How is it, then, that you can be content to be unjust to *God*? Cruel to the dear Lover of the souls of men? And antagonistic to the loving pleadings of the Holy Spirit? That first chapter of Isaiahyou remember it, how striking it is! Why, if men had hearts that were at all tender it would break them! Read itHear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth. I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me. The ox knows his owner, and the ass his masters crib; but Israel does not know; My people do not consider. It is the wail of *God Himself* over mans unkindness to his Maker!

Young man of honor, young man of integrity, does nothing speak to your conscience in this? Will a man rob God? You would not rob your employer! You would not like to be thought unfaithful or dishonest towards man! And yet your God, your God, your *God*is He to be treated so basely, notwithstanding all His goodness? As Jesus said, For which of these works do you stone Me? So does Jehovah say, I have made you. I have kept the breath in your nostrils. I have fed you all your life and for which of all these good things do you live without Me, and neglect Me, and perhaps even curse My name? For which of these do you sin with a high hand against My sacred Law?

Now, can you think it right to remain in so wantonly unjust a course of life as this? Can it be right to continue to wrong your God and grieve His matchless love? Provoke Him no more, I pray you! Let conscience lead you to feel that you have dealt ill with the Lord. Come to Him for forgiveness and change of heart! O Spirit of God, make this appeal to be felt by these beloved young men and women! Again, our message has to do with the present, for we would affectionately remind you that you are now at enmity with your best Friendthe Friend to whose love you owe everything! You have grieved Him and are, without cause, His enemy! Can you bear this thought? I know a little child who had done something wrong and her kind father talked to her, and at last, as a punishment, he said to her in a very sad voice, I cannot kiss you tonight, for you have grieved me very much.

That broke her little heart. Though not a stroke had been laid upon her, she saw sorrow in her dear fathers face and she could not endure it. She pleaded and wept and pleaded again to be forgiven. It was thought wise to withhold the kiss, and she was sent to bed, for she had been very wrong. But there was no sleep for those weeping eyes and when mother went up to that little ones chamber she heard frequent sobs and sighs, and a sorrowful little voice said, I was very, very naughty, but pray forgive me, and ask dear Father to give me a kiss. She loved her father and she could not bear that he should be grieved.

Child of mercy. Erring child of the great Father of spirits, can you bear to live forever at enmity with the loving Father? Would He forgive me? you ask. What makes you ask the question? Is it that you do not know how good He is? Has He not portrayed Himself as meeting His prodigal son and falling upon his neck and kissing him? Before the child had reached the Father, the Father had reached the child! The Father was eager to forgive, and therefore, when the son was yet a great way off his Father saw him and ran, and had compassion. Say no longer that we are talking of things of a far-off time! It is not so. I am speaking of that which, I pray, may be true to you *tonight*, that you may not remain enemies to God even another hour, but now may become His dear repenting children and fly into your tender Fathers arms!

I have to remind you, however, of much more than this, namely, that you are this night in danger. On account of your treatment of God and your remaining an enemy to Him, He will surely visit you in justice and punish you for your transgressions. He is a just God and every sin committed is noted in His bookthere it stands recorded for His Judgment Day. The danger you are in is that you may, this moment, go down into the Pitand while sitting in that pew may bow your head in death and appear before your Maker in an instantto receive the just reward of your sins. We come to tell you that there is immediate pardon for all the sins of those who will believe in the Lord Jesus Christand that if you will believe in Jesus, your sins, which are manyare all forgiven you!

Dont you know the story (you have heard it many times) that the Lord Jesus took upon Himself the sins of all who trust Him, and suffered, in their place, the penalty due to their sins? He was our Substitute, and as such He died, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God. He laid down His life for us, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Will you refuse the salvation so dearly purchased but so freely presented? Will you not accept it here and now? Can you bear the burden of your sins? Are you content to abide for a single hour in peril of eternal punishment? Can you bear to be slipping down into the open jaws of Hell as you now are? Remember, Gods patience will not last forever! You have provoked Him long enough!

All things are weary of you. The very earth on which you stand groans beneath the indignity of bearing a sinner upon its surface! So long as you are an enemy to God, the stones of the field are against you and all creation threatens you. It is a wonder that you do not sink at once to destruction! For this cause we would have you pardoned *now* and made free from Divine wrath *now*. The peril is immediate! May the Lord grant that the rescue may be so. Do I hear you ask, But may pardon be had at once? Is Jesus Christ a *present* Savior? We thought that we might, perhaps, find Him when we came to die, or might obtain a hope of mercy after living a long life of seeking.

It is not so. Free Grace proclaims *immediate* salvation from sin and misery! Whoever looks to Jesus at this very moment shall have his sins forgiven! At the instant he believes in the Lord Jesus, the sinner shall cease to be in danger of the fires of Hell. The moment a man turns his eyes of faith to Jesus Christ he is saved from the wrath to come. It is *present* salvation that we preach to youand the present comfort of that present salvation, too! Many other reasons tend to make this weighty matter exceedingly pressing. And among them is thisthere is a disease in your heart, the disease of sinand it needs immediate cure.

I do not hear persons say, if they discover an incipient disease in their systems, that they will wait a while till the evil is more fully developed, and will then resort to a physician. The most of us have sense enough to try to check disease at once. Young man, you have a leprosy upon you! Young woman, you have a dreadful malady within your heart! Do you not desire to be healed *now*? Jesus can give you immediate healing if you believe in Him. Will you hesitate to be made whole? Do you love your mortal malady? Is hideous sin so dear to you? O that you would cry to be saved immediately, then Jesus will hear you! His Spirit will descend upon you and cleanse you. He will give you a new heart and a right spirit, yes, and make you whole from this time forward and forever! Can you wish to have so great a blessing postponed? Surely a sick man can never be

cured too soon.

The Gospel which we preach to you will also bring you present blessings. In addition to present pardon and present justification, it will give you present regeneration, present adoption, present sanctification, present access to God, present peace through believing and present help in time of trouble! And it will make you, even for this life, doubly happy. It will be wisdom for your way, strength for your conviction and comfort for your sorrow. If I had to die like a dog I would still wish to be a Christian. If there were no hereafterthough the supposition is not to be tolerated yet let me live for and with Jesus, my beloved Lord! Balaam chose the righteous mans death. I choose it, too. But quite as much do I choose the righteous mans *life*, for to have the love of God in the heart, to have peace with God, to be able to look up to Heaven with confidence and talk to my heavenly Father in childlike trustfulness is a present joy and comfort worth more than worlds!

Young men and women, in preaching the Gospel to you, we are preaching that which is good for this life as well as for the life to come. If you believe in Jesus you will be saved now, on the spot, and you will now enjoy the unchanging favor of God, so that you will go your way, from now on, not to live as others do, but as the chosen of God, beloved with special love, enriched with special blessings, to rejoice every day till you are taken up to dwell where Jesus is. Present salvation is the burden of the Lords message to you and therefore it is not true, but infamously false, that the vision is for many days to come, and the prophecy for times that are far off.

Is there not reason in my pleadings? If so, yield to them! Can you answer these arguments? If not, I pray you cease delaying. Again would I implore the Holy Spirit to lead you to an immediate decision.

III. My third point is that *I shall not deny, but I shall glory, rather, in admitting that the Gospel has to do with the future.* Albeit, that it is not exclusively a Revelation for far-off times, yet it is filled with glorious hopes and bright prospects concerning things to come. The Gospel of Jesus Christ has to do with the whole of a young person life. If you receive Jesus Christ you will not merely have Him tonight, but that faith by which you receive Him will operate upon your whole existence throughout time and eternity.

Dear young Friends, if you are saved while yet you are young, you will find religion to be a great preventive of sin. What a blessing it is not to have been daubed with the slime of Sodomnever to have had our bones broken by actual vice! Many who have been saved from a life of crime will, nevertheless, be spiritual cripples for life! To be snatched out of the vortex of vice is cause for great gratitude, but to have been kept out of it is better! It is doubly well, if the Grace of God comes upon us while we are still untainted by the pollution of the world, and have not gone into excess of riot. Before dissolute habits have undermined the constitution and selfindulgence has degraded the mindit is, above all things, well to have the heart renewed! Prevention is better than cure, and Grace gives both.

Thank God that you are still youngpray earnestly that you may now receive Divine Grace to cleanse your way by taking heed, according to His Word. Grace will also act as a preservative as well as a preventive. The good thing which God will put in you will keep you. I bless God I have not to preach a temporary salvation to you at this time. That which charmed me about the Gospel when I was a lad was its power to preserve from sinning. I saw some of my school companions who had been highly commended for their character. They were a little older than myself and became sad offenders when they left home. I used to hear sad stories of their evil actions when they had gone to London to be apprenticed, or to take positions in large establishments.

And I reasoned, thus, with myselfWhen I leave my fathers house I shall be tempted, too, and I have the same heart that they have. Indeed, I have not been even as good as they have been. The probabilities are, therefore, that I shall plunge into sin as they have done. I felt horrified with that. I could not bear that I should cause my mother to shed tears over a dissolute son, or break my fathers heart with debauchery. The thought could not be endured and when I heard that whoever believed in the Lord Jesus Christ should be saved, I understood that he would be saved from *sinning*, and I laid hold upon Jesus to preserve me from sin and He has done it! I committed my character to Christ and He has preserved me to this day. And I believe He will not let me go. I recommend to you, young men and women, a character-insurance in the form of believing in Jesus Christ!

Dear young woman, may that modest cheek of yours never need to blush for shameful deeds. May your delicate purity of feeling never be lost through gross defiling sinbut remember, it may be so unless the Lord keeps you. I commend to you the blessed preserving power of faith in Christ Jesus which will secure for you the Holy Spirit to dwell in you and abide in you, and sanctify you all your days. I know I speak to some who shudder at the thought of vice. Trained as you have been by Christian parents and under the holiest influences, you would rather die than act as some who disgrace their fathers name. I know you would. But you must not trust your own hearts. You may yet become as bad as others or worse than they unless your natures are renewedand only Jesus Christ can do thatby the power of the Holy Spirit. Whoever believes in Him has passed from death unto life. He shall not live in sin, but he shall be preserved in holiness even to the end.

My dear young Friends, if God shall be pleased to change your hearts tonight, as I pray He may, you will be prepared for the future. You have not fully entered into the battle of life. You have your way to make, your professions and trades to choose. You, young women, are still under the parental wing. You have domestic relationships to form. Now, consider how well prepared you will be for lifes work and service if you give your hearts to Jesus. Young man, you will be the right man to enter a large establishmentwith the Grace of God in your heart you will be a blessing there. Though surrounded by her snares in this wicked city, the strange woman will hunt in vain for your precious life. And other vices will be unable to pollute you.

Young woman, you will have wisdom to choose for your lifes companion no mere fop and fool, but one who loves the Lord as you will dowith whom you may hope to spend happy and holy days! You will have placed within yourself resources of joy and pleasure which will never fail. There will be a well of Living Water within you which will supply you with joy and comfort and consolationeven amid trial and distress. You will be prepared for whatever is to come. A young Christian is fit to be made an emperor or a servant, if God shall call him to either post. If you want the best materials for a model prince, or a model peasant, you shall find it in the child of God! Only, mark you, the man who is a child of God is less likely to sink into utter destitution because he will be saved from the vices of extravagance and idleness which are the frequent causes of poverty.

And, probably, on the other hand, he is less likely to become a prince, for seldom has God lifted His own children to places so perilous. You will be ready, young man, for any future, if your heart is right with God. And know when I think of you, and of what the Lord may make of you, I feel an intense respect, as well as love, for you. I hope none of us will be lacking in respect to old ageit is honorable and it is to be esteemed and reverencedbut I feel frequently inclined to do homage to our youth. When a celebrated tutor entered his schoolroom, he always took off his hat to his boys, because, he said, he did not know which of them might yet turn out to be a poet, a bishop, a lord chancellor, or a prime minister!

When I look at young men and women, I feel much the same, for I do not know what they are to be. I may be addressing, tonight, a Livingstone, or a Moffat! I may be speaking, tonight, to a John Howard, or a Wilberforce! I may be addressing a Mrs. Judson, or an Elizabeth Fry! I may be speaking to some whom God will kindle into great lights to bless the sons of men for many a day, and afterwards to shine as the stars forever and ever. But you cannot shine if you are not lighted. You cannot bless God and bless the sons of men unless God first blesses you. Unregenerate, you are useless! Born again, you will be born for usefulness. But while you are unconverted your usefulness is being lost. I will not insinuate that I expect everyone here to become famous. It is not even desirable. But I do know thisthat everyone whose heart shall be given to Jesus will be so useful and so necessary to the Church and to the world, that this world without them would lack a benefactorand Heavens company would be incomplete unless they joined its ranks.

Oh, the value of a redeemed soul! The importance of a young life! I wish I could multiply myself into a thousand bodies that I might come round and take the hand of every young person here, as he or she shall leave the Tabernacle, and say, By the preciousness of your life, by the hallowed uses to which you may be put, by the good that you may do and by the glory you may bring to God, do not think of pardon and Grace as things of the *future,* but now, even NOW, lay hold of them, and they will become to you the great power by which you shall benefit your generation and go down to the grave with honor.

When I grow gray, if God shall spare memay I see around me some of you with whom I speak todaywho shall be some 20 years younger than myself, of whom I shall say, My former deacons and elders are either very old or have gone home to Heaven. The dear men of God who were with me when I was 40 years of age have passed away. But those whom I preached to on that night in March, 1874, have come to fill their places! Those dear Sisters who used to conduct the classes, teach the school and manage the various societies for the poor, have gone and we have followed them to their graves and wept over them. But here come their daughters to fill their places.

I pray that names honored in our Churches may never die out from our midst. May the fathers live, again, in their children! It may not be my honor to be succeeded in this pulpit by one of my own sons, greatly as I would rejoice if it might be so, but at least I hope they will be here in this Church to serve their fathers God and to be regarded with affection by you for the sake of him who spent his life in your midst. I pray that all my honored Brothers may have sons and daughters in the Churchyes, from generation to generation may there be those in our assemblies of whom it shall be saidThese are of the old stockthey keep up the old name.

Brothers and Sisters of my own age, we shall soon die. God grant us to die at our posts! The standard-bearer will fall and in his last embrace he will press the standard to his heart, for it is dearer than life to him. But courage, my Brethren, our sons will urge on the sacred war and carry on the good old cause to victory. What do you say, dear Ones? Do not your hearts say, Amen? Young men, will you not take up the bloodstained banner when we shall go our ways? Sons and daughters of the faithful, will you desert your fathers God? Oh, will it be that He whom we love shall be despised by you? Will you turn your back on the Christ who was All in All to us? No. It cannot be! Be of good cheer, AbrahamIsaac shall succeed you! Jacob shall rise up to serve your God! Jacob shall live to see his son Joseph, and even to bless Ephraim and Manassehand so from generation to generation shall the Lord be praised!

Thus far concerning this life. But now let me remind you, dear young Friends, that if your hearts are given to Christ you need not tremble about the end of life. You may look forward to it with hope. It will come. Thank God, it will come! Have you never wished that you could ride to Heaven in a chariot of fire, like Elijah? I did, once, till I reflected that if a chariot of fire should come for me I should be more afraid to get into it than to lie down and die upon my bed! And of the two, one might prefer to die, for to die in the Lord is to be made like our glorious Head! I see no joy in the hope of escaping death. Jesus died, and so let me die! On His dear face the seal of death was set, so let it be on mine, that I may talk of resurrection as they cannot who shall be changed at His coming.

You need not be afraid to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Young people, whether you die in youth or old age, if you are resting in Jesus you shall sit upon the banks of Jordan singing. As our friends sang last night

Never mind the river.
The parting song will be sweet, but oh, the Glory! Oh, the Glory! I will not try to paint it. Who can? The judgment will come, but you will not tremble at it! On the right hand shall you stand, for who can condemn those for whom Christ has died? The conflagration of the globe will come. The

elements shall melt with fervent heat, but you will not tremble, for you shall be caught up together with the Lord in the airand so shall you be forever with the Lord! Hell shall swallow up the unjustthey shall go down alive into the pitbut you shall not tremble for that, for you are redeemed by the precious blood!

The millennial Glory, whatever that may be, and the reign with Christ, and the triumph over death and Hell. And the giving up of the kingdom to God, even the Father, when God shall be All in All, and eternity with all its infinite Glorythese shall be all yours! If you had to go through Hell to reach this Glory, it would be worth the cost! But you have not to do any such thing! You have only to believe in Jesus and even faith is the Lords own gracious gift. Look unto Me and be you saved, all you ends of the earth. This is the Gospel. Look! Look! Look! Tis but a look. Look, blearyeyed Soul, you who can scarcely see for ignorance! Look! You whose eyes are swimming in tears! Look! You who see Hell before you! Look! You who are sinking into the jaws of Perdition!

Look you ends of the earth, that are farthest gone in sin, if such are here! You who are plunged deep in iniquitylook! Tis Jesus on the Cross you are bid to look atyes, Jesus at the right hand of Godthe crucified Son of Man exalted at the right hand of the Father! Look unto Him, and be you saved, for He is God, and besides Him there is none else. God grant you to look to Jesus, even now, for His names sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONLuke 18:1-23. **HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK95 (VER. II), 497, 492.**

Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #816 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE WALL DAUBED WITH UNTEMPERED MORTAR
NO. 816

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, MAY 31, 1868, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.
Because, even because, they have seduced My people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar: say unto them which daub it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall: there shall be an overflowing shower; and you, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall rend it. Lo, when the wall is fallen,
shall it not be said unto you, Where is the daubing with which you have daubed it?
Ezekiel 13:10-12.

EZEKIEL was sent to arouse the people of Jerusalem to a sense of danger. This task was in itself difficult enough since he had to deal with a slumbering people who were carnally secure. But the difficulty was much increased by the fact that a large number of base pretenders to prophecy, both male and female, sprang up at that time and exercised great influence among the people. They imitated the Prophets speech. They came forward with their lies and prefaced them with the solemn words, Thus says the Lord, pretending to have a commission from the Lord of Hosts.

Thus the people of Jerusalem scarcely knew which to believeEzekiel prophesying terrorsor these pretenders saying, Peace, peace. Their evil hearts always leaned to the side of the false prophets because they flattered them grossly. They heaped to themselves teachers who, for a piece of bread, prophesied as they desired. You may well believe that the Prophets blood often boiled within him as he saw his own labors spoiled, and the souls that he loved so well so fearfully deluded by the baseborn hirelings who wore a rough mantle to deceive. He was not of those who could be content to deliver his message and let others alone, as we nowadays are bid to do, but he turned upon the deceivers and denounced them with terrible earnestness because he saw them to be wolves in sheeps clothing devouring the flock.

Now, in these days we are somewhat similarly circumstanced. The true servant of God in his ministry dares not prophesy smooth things to unconverted men and women. He is the bearer of glad tidings to such as turn unto the Lord, but while the burden of the Lord is upon him concerning the impenitent, and such as believe *not* on the Lord Jesus Christ, he has heavy tidings for those who live estranged from God. These he warns of a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation. He sees before them an eternity of utter destruction and he proclaims the day of vengeance of his God.

To deliver these mournful warnings boldly and fearlessly is no easy work, and to bring men to receive them is a labor impossible apart from the power of the Holy Spirit! Men love present pleasure and license and they hate to be told of the day when these things shall be required of them. Why toll the funeral knell when men love merry peals? Nor is this all, for as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do false prophets withstand us. Even at this hour there are those who oppose usthose who are always speaking smooth things to the people. With Satan at their head, that arch-master and prince of deceivers, there is a great company abroad in the world who are always saying, It shall not be so. You shall have pleasure though you sin. You shall have rest though you disobey, and it shall be well with you at the end even though you reject the Gospel of Christ.

Not in so many words, but in effect this is the loud proclamation of the messengers of Satan who are permitted to buffet us. A Prophets courage is still needed by preachers of the Word of God! O may we be able to say with Wesley

My life, my blood, I here present ,
If for Your truth they may be spent:
Fulfill Your sovereign counsel, Lord
Your will be done, Your nature adored!
Give me Your strength, O God of power!
Then let wind blow, or thunders roar,
Your faithful witness will I be
Tis fixed! I can do all through You.

Tonight we shall try, and may our puny power be strengthened by the power which comes from on high, to talk with any who may have been lulled into a state of false peace by anything to which they have listened of late, or who may have fallen into evil security simply by their own desirestheir wishes being fathers to the deceitful hope that there is peace for them while yet they are living in sin.

I. Not taking up your time with any kind of preface, I shall advance at once to the text and you will notice that THE TEXT SPEAKS OF A WALL. It is a remarkable fact that the most ungodly men who persist in sinning with a high hand nevertheless are very pleased if they can find some defense for their sin. These men of Jerusalem were exceedingly gratified when they could get some wall, no matter how rotten it might be, behind which they might shelter themselves.

Some are such outrageous offenders that they can sin boldly with a brazen face and scorn to invent an excuse, but 999 out of every 1,000 prefer to have some kind of apology, some sort of hope, some refuge to which, in the hour of danger they can fly. Men look about them to discover some sort of wall or other behind which to shelter from conscience and Divine threat. I suppose this is because conscience is not quite dead in any man. In some men it has been so drugged and chloroformed that it never seems to act with anything like vigor, and when it speaks it is only with a still small voice and not at all with the thunder which its voice ought to have to the mind of men. Yet that little relic of conscience which with a microscope you can detect in all men, needs to be pacifiedand men are glad if by any lie, however barefaced, they can create an excuse by which they may go on quietly in their sins.

Sing men a soft song of peace in sin and safety out of Christ, and they will cry your name up to the skies! You shall have a ready market, for every man will be a buyer. Perhaps the greatest wall behind which men in London shelter themselves is that of utter indifference to anything like Divine Truth. To men of all classes the great bread and cheese and jacket question is the grand question of the day, What shall we eat? What shall we drink? And how shall we be clothed? Let a man attend to his business and what other care need he have? Let the working man go about his toil and give a fair days work for a fair days wage, and what has he to do with the world to come? Let the merchant meet his bills and keep clear of the bankruptcy court, and what has he to fear as to the court of Heaven? Why need he worry his head about dying and rising again from the dead?

The mass of mankind, though they will put up with religion and will even show some sort of interest in it, and some decent respect thereto, yet have no more sense of its reality or its power than the swine that feed at a trough. Look at these dense masses thronging the thoroughfares of this huge city, and answer meAre not the most of them like the stones in Jordans bed, dead and lifeless as to spiritual things? What care they for Heaven or Hell? What care they about the precious blood of Jesus, or about the power of the Holy Spirit? It is a great deal more important question to them what horse won the Derby, or what turf speculator gained thereby, than to ask who is going down to Hell, or who has an interest in the precious blood of Christ.

Some silly dancer at the opera. Some new invention. Some novel trick of magic. Some fresh anything or nothing, and the world is all agog! But as to things which will outlast sun and moon and stand fast when yon blue Heaven, like a scroll, has been rolled up and put awaythese all important things our wiseacres think but triflesand they continue trampling Gods eternal Truth beneath their feet as swine trample pearls! And they rush madly after the bubbles of this world as though they were all that men were made to hunt after. This is the wall behind which many men hide. It really does not matter. It will be all right at the last. Why make so much ado about it? Let a man mind his business and take what comes.

Alas! Alas, for an age given up to eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage! Has it never heard of Noahs flood, or of that greater deluge which so soon will sweep them all away? The great hailstones and tempest of last Friday fluttered them a little, but they went to their sports again when the flashes of lightning had ceased. Numbers, however, are not quite so stupid, so besotted, so blind, so brutalized as to put up with this. They have a heart which palpitates with a measure of spiritual fear and will not be silenced by gross material considerations. Like a crying child their conscience will be heard. Like a horse-leech it ever cries, Give, give, and will not be content.

Who comes next? Who is the anointed one of Satan to quiet this spirit? Who will yield a quietus to an alarmed mind? See yonder priest pointing to the wall of ceremonies behind which many rest so contentedly? Were you not christened? Oh, the blessedness of that christeninga thing which is as gross a piece of evil as ever was practiced by Mohamed which has no more warrant in the Word of God than the baptism of bells or the burning of Hindu widows! And yet this idle farce, this wicked mockery, this godfathering and godmothering, no ordinance of Gods, but an invention of the Pope of Romethis is a soul-saving thing, supposedly and regenerates the children that are subjected to it! Behind this wall of *baptismal regeneration*, crowds find a temporary rest.

And then comes the confirmation, another rite of imbecility! A rite, again, which has no Scriptural warrant, but is a piece of nonsense and falsehood from beginning to end. Then follows what priests call a Sacrament, a blessed ordinance if rightly used to those who are saved, but a dreadful perversion if administered to unsaved persons with the idea that through bread and wine, which can only enter into the stomach, Divine Grace can be communicated to the heartas if spirituals could be wrapped up in carnalityas if the infinite Grace of the blessed Father could be brought to us by cakes which the baker bakes in the oven, or wine that runs forth from the winepress trod from the grapes of earth!

Yet are there thousands of people, no, millions of our fellow men, not Romanists either, so they say, who think that the christening and the confirming, and the Sacrament, and perhaps the priestly burial at the last will make it all right. Has not God declared, Incense is an abomination unto Me. Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates? And in saying that He is plainly showing that outward ceremonies, apart from a gracious heart, He could not bear! Outward ordinances, even when most gorgeous, are *nothing* when compared to *walking* and *living* righteously.

To walk before God in holinessthis is acceptable to Him. Not the visible, not the symbolical, not the outward, but the *inward*, the *spiritual*, the *heart* worshipthis it is which God accepts. Go and rend your hearts, not your garments. Seek the bread which came down from Heaven, not the bakers wafers! Think of Christ, and not of your own doings. Draw near to Him and not to the outward altars of wood and stone. Bow before the Priest in the heavens, and not before pretenders here below! Confess to the Lord, and not to prying confessors! This sacramental theory, which is now forced upon us in England under the name and sanction and authority of the National Churchthis is a wall, a bowing wall, and a tottering fencebehind which hundreds seek to find shelter, but which, as the Lord my God lives, in the day of His coming He will sweep away and not a vestige thereof shall be left!

In the day when He comes to judge the earth in righteousness, woe unto those who cry, We have eaten and drunk in Your Presence, for what is this? Where has God required it at your hands? Woe yet seven times to those who have deluded the people! Their judgment is heavy and it tarries not. There are but few among you, dear Friends, perhaps, who care for this sacramental theory. You are not idiots and therefore you sneer at it, but you may be building another wall, namely, that of selfrighteousness. This is the more popular wall by far! How many have been piling up their wall, and gathering their wood, their hay, their stubble with which to erect a defense to screen themselves from God by their own doings?

They pray so regularly! They read the Bible so constantly! They attend a place of worship with such precision! They owe no man anything! They have a contribution for the cause of charity. They give a donation for anything that is being done by the Church of Godand these are their confidences. They have done this and that, and the other. Like the Pharisee of old they have fasted twice in the week. They have paid tithes of all they possess. It is all in vain that this grand old Book thunders out against self-righteousnessself-righteousness still lives! It is all in vain that God declares that by the works of the Law there shall no flesh living be justifiedmen will persist in trying to be justified by the works of that Law which can only curse them, and cannot save them!

This Book declares again and again that we are justified by *faith*, that we must be saved through the righteousness of Christits great teaching is thisBelieve on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. But for all that man goes his way and declares that he will

force a path to Heaven, even up the steep and blazing sides of Sinai, and will do what God declares to be impossible, namely, lay *another foundation* beside that which God has laid in the work and Person of His dear Son!

O my Hearers, if you are sheltering behind your good works, I pray that you may be delivered from the delusion and that you may find no refuge there, for only Christ can save you! The wall will fall, daub it as you will it must come downit is no refuge for a perishing sinner

What is all righteousness that men devise? What but a sordid bargain for the skies?
But Christ as soon would abdicate His own, As stoop from Heaven to sell the proud a throne.

II. And now, secondly, WHENEVER A MAN TRIES TO BUILD A WALL BEHIND WHICH TO SHELTER HE ALWAYS FINDS A VOLUNTEER BAND OF READY ASSISTANTS. If he were laboring to build upon the foundation which *God* has laid, a great company would rise *against* him, but whenever he begins to put up a structure of his own, crowds come to help him. What a multitude there are who will assist a rebellious spirit to build his mud wall of false security! For instance, a man who is easy in his pleasureshow many will help him to continue at his ease? He is right, says one. You are a good fellow, says another. And they both try to keep him in countenance by their company.

Oh, says one, never care because one of those Puritan fellows has been troubling your conscience! Do not listen to him, answers another. And so they help to daub the wall and plaster it till it looks as neat and substantial as if it were built of polished stones. When these people get together you would really believe, to hear them talk, that they were the only wise people in all the world and that the men who give due consideration to religion and the next world are positively mad, or infected with irrational fanaticism! If they happen to be of the educated class, it is wonderful how learned they become in matters of which they know nothing! As for boastful talkers, how they weigh us all and do up our motives in parcels, as grocers do their goods!

We have sometimes met with men, wise in their own conceit, as ignorant of religion as the chairs they lolled upon. They in the grandest manner denounce the Puritans and sneer at those hypocrites who are always talking about another world. It is observable that the more their intellects become disturbed by wine or beer, the more they consider themselves capable of passing judgment upon eternal realitiesin fact, a man half drunk is altogether infallible! Meanwhile the men who believe that there *is* a God, and who love Him and wish to serve Him. The men who believe that there is another state and wish to be prepared for it, are noted down as mere simpletons, or crafty men who would make a gain of godliness. We do not accept the verdict, but appeal to the judgment to come.

Meanwhile we can well understand how this unanimity in folly helps to daub the wall when a man has once put it up! All his friends come in to help him with their commendations, emulating one another in their Babel building. Another company of scoffers will loudly boast themselves and cry, Yes, you are all right in continuing in neglect of God and of Divine Truth because the saints are no better than they should be. I remember what So-and-So did oncehe was a deacon! And I know the inconsistencies of Mr. Zealous, and he is one of the parsons. Ah, when they get hold of a few inconsistencies of professors, how they daub their wall with them! Truly they eat the sin of Gods people as men eat bread!

Then they say in their assemblies, These men talk about Divine Truth, but they are all liars! They speak to us religiously but they are moved by selfish motives, and in private they are as bad as we are. So by bespattering others they comfort themselves. Like hyenas and wolves they delight to dwell among the desolations of former splendor. Behold these men they pull down the characters of others and then, piling the stones one upon anotherthey shelter behind the wall which they have constructed! If they would let their reason speak, they would know that if everybody else should be hypocrites, that will make Hell none the cooler to them when they are condemned to lie there! And that if others should be inconsistent with their religion, that should be no excuse to *them* for neglecting it, but rather a warning to them, that they, at least, should be honest in their seeking unto God.

Yet any filth, especially such filth as this, will do to make untempered mortar with which to daub the bowing walls behind which the sinners conscience skulks in hopeless hope of rest. These poor creatures can make bricks without straw, and frame confidences out of vanities. Alas for them! They who will be deceived shall be given over to delusion. A numerous body of daubers gather at the sign of the Sneerer, in Atheist Street and with their doubts, or their supposed doubts of inspiration and biblical authenticityare ready to daub and plaster any amount of wall an inch thick. What a splendid barrow-load of untempered mortar that Bishop of Natal brought us from the Zulus! And then the Essays and Reviews, like industrious hood-men, brought a fine heap of the same precious commodity!

Many skeptics almost screamed with delight when they discovered that now, now, now, there was some excuse for not obeying Godsome reason for being in rebellion against Himbecause certain figures did not seem to tally and *arithmetic* was arrayed against Revelation! Years before that they ground up the rocks and tried to make a cement out of them, but the business did not answer. Now they revive old infidelities, like old Babylonian bricks made of chopped straw, and pass them off as new productions of the infernal brickfield. The stock doubts are those which were used 200 years ago, new faced, but still the same.

Certain men will treasure up worn-out sophisms and produce them with remarkable dexterity, just when a mans mind is beginning to be aroused, and so manage to send him to sleep again! How strangely ready are men to make Biblical difficulties into excuses for impenitence! Did I hear a man say, I will not believe in Jesus because I cannot see how the Israelites could have multiplied so quickly in Egypt? If so, I reply, You fool! Will that make your doom any lighter when you will be called for judgment before Gods great bar? Or will that be any reason for your sinning against the light you already have, because you do not happen to comprehend everything which is recorded in Sacred Writ? Perhaps God never meant you should comprehend all His Word. What would it improve you if you solve all mysteries? Would that soften your heart?

If our salvation depended upon our answering all the difficulties of the Bible, it might be a fair excuse for us if we did not understand it. But as our salvation depends upon our believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, and submitting ourselves to the Divine will, there can be no excuse for us, whatever our merely critical doubts and difficulties may befor there is no doubt about the existence of God in the mind of a reasonable man and there should be no doubt about the Deity of Christ in any mans mind who has once read the four Evangelists. If hearing the Divine command to come to Christ and live, you *do not* come to Christ and liveyou may daub your wall with untempered mortar, but it will not stand in the day when God shall let loose the messengers of His justice and bid them beat upon your defenseless head.

If the wall is built of ceremonies, how many are busy daubing that! What multitudes of books are streaming from the press, books of ability, tooall going to show that salvation is infallibly connected with a *mechanical process*, conducted by specified officialsand not a spiritual work independent of all outward performances! And if you choose to give yourselves up to the fiction that salvation is by forms and ceremonies, you have only to lay the foundation and there will be many who will compliment and applaud youand take pleasure in daubing the wall with their little daub of untempered mortar.

The priests will bespatter you with arguments from tradition and quotations from the fathers! Their votaries will daub you with soft speeches upon your zeal and discretion. The most impotent of all falsehoods is, by the deep cunning of its friends, made to go upon its belly like a serpent and to deceive men and women as the old serpent deceived our mother Eve. I shall not, however, tarry upon this. It is sufficiently plain that if you will but build a wall of that sort, there will be plenty who will help to daub it.

III. But now, in the next place, THE WORD OF GOD DECLARES THAT THIS WALL WILL NOT STAND. It shall fall: there shall be an overflowing shower; and you, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall rend it. You had an illustration of this last Friday. First there came a heavy deluge of rain. Then huge hailstones descended with enormous force and a terrific tempest swept over the face of the earth. The wall to which Ezekiel alludes is one of the cob walls in the East, daubed with bad mortar which had not been well tempered, that is to say, not well mixed with the straw which they use in place of the hair which we use in England.

When the rain comes it softens the whole structure of such a wall, melts it, and washes it quite away. Such a deluge as that is coming before long to try and test every human hope. It comes to some men when they enter upon times of spiritual trial. It is a blessed thing to have this test in *this* life, for although the trial is dreadfully severe, and although the true and the false seem to be in confusion, yet it may lead to a blessed result! I would not give a farthing for your religion if you have never doubted about it! If you have never had a shaking to and fro in your soul till it seemed that every bone and muscle in your mental anatomy was strained, you never will believe thoroughly.

When these times come, all the daubing with untempered mortar will be swept away by the overflowing shower and the hailstones which come down upon it! But blessed shall he be whose work shall endure! But if the test comes not thus it will usually come at

death. Oh how many, when dying, have been alarmed with the things which cheered them most before! How have their joys changed to miseries! And their hopes that once were like angels, cast off their masks and stood as devils before them beckoning them to destruction! Men have counted themselves rich, but as in the misers dream the gold he clutches dissolves into thin airso has their spiritual wealth all passed away. They reckoned that they were saved and near to Heaven, when lo, their vessel struck upon the awful rock and was dashed to pieces, and they themselves were cast away even at the harbors mouth!

O Soul, if you do not believe in Jesusif your heart has never repented of sin, if you have never clung to a bleeding SaviorI tell you death will go hard with you! Those foaming billows of the river Jordan will not deceive you. Death will play no merry tune in your ears and sing you no siren song. That skeleton will be honest with youwill pull off the visors, and take up the glass and make you see yourself a rotten hypocrite! If you have been resting upon anything but *Christ,* death will make you quiver! And if death does not do itfor some men die like lambs, and, like sheep are they laid in the grave (but the worm shall still feed upon them)if death does not do it, the *judgment* shall!

There is a judgment which comes to all men at the moment when the spirit leaves the body. Ah, you who despise God, you will think of Divine Truth in another way in that hour when your naked spirits shiver in the balances of Justice and God weighs you finally to decide your fate forever! Right or wrong you will find it no childs play, then! Nor will it be childs play when, after you have suffered for awhile, the dreadful trumpet sounds! The trumpet which earth and Heaven wait to hear, when the graves yield up their dead, and death and Hell yield up the dead that are in themwhen your spirit comes back to the body in which it once lived, and sinned, and died.

Alas for your vain confidence in that tremendous hour! O Sirs, then the walls which are not based upon the Rock of Ages will stand you in but sorry stead. You will flee away from your good works *then*, and from your *ceremonies*, and from all those *indulgences* and unbelief in which you once found comfort. You may flee from *them*, but you shall not flee from *Him* who sits upon the Throne! From His hands shall flash the thunderbolts! From His Heaven shall you fall, O you great hailstones, and down to the nethermost depths your condemned, despairing spirit, must descend! This is Gods Wordthis is Gods Truth! Reject it not. Accept it! Fly to the refuge which the Gospel provides, and may the Holy Spirit save you evermore.

IV. And now my last pointand I shall not keep you any longeris this: ACCORDING TO THE TEXT, IF WE SHALL BE FOUND LOST AT THE LAST, IT WILL BE AN EVERLASTING REPROACH TO US THAT WE ONCE ACCEPTED THE FALSE HELPS OF OUR FRIENDS. Lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said unto you, Where is the daubing with which you have daubed it?

And who will say this? Imagine, but for a moment, a spirit cast away into the land of darkness and everlasting nightshade! There it dwells with kindred souls and a voice is heard falling on its earWhere is the daubing with which you have daubed it? That voice may proceed from many lips. It may come from the lips of Jesus. I said to you, Come unto Me and live, but you would not come. You refused the refuge which I presented to you. You chose your own works, and rested in ceremonies of your own devisingand now where is the daubing with which you have daubed it? Where are your good works and your prayers now? Lost Soul, you would not have My bloodwhere are your good works and your selfrighteousness now? You would not come and trust in Me alonewhere are your christenings and your confirmations and all your inventions? Now that you are cast away without hope, what do you think of them? Where is the daubing with which you have daubed it?

I could imagine such a voice as that coming from a faithful minister, or other Christian laborer who may have honestly pointed out to you the one and only way of salvation. You shall hear ringing through those halls of woe the voice that addressed you tonight! If you perish, your memory shall make you remember the very tones I use! I told you you would perish if you did not trust in Christ, but you sought salvation somewhere else, and you shall hear me saying, then, to you, Where is the daubing with which you have daubed it? Some of you young women may hear the voice of that dear mother in Israel who has sought to bring you to Christ, whose loving tenderness you have made so light of. Some of you shall listen to a fathers voice, whose earnest warnings you have despised.

Each one educated within the Gospels pale shall hear the voice ringing from the servants of God who sought your goodWhere, after all, are your hopes? Where are your delusions and your false trusts? Where is the daubing with which you have daubed it? And there shall come another voice, with quite another tonea hoarse and horrible voicea voice full of malice and of grim laughter which shall say, Where is the daubing with which you have daubed it? You shall understand it to be the voice of him who once deceived youthe fallen spiritSatan! Ah, how he will rejoice! How he will make merry with you when he shall have led you away from the Cross to the *crucifix*! How he will rejoice when he shall have enticed you from Christ to the parish priest!

How he will rejoice when he shall have allured you from the Bible to the traditions of men! How he will rejoice when he shall have charmed you away from the heavenly Messenger to defile yourself with the pleasures and frivolities of this world. He who was your deceiver here shall become your tormentor hereafter, and he will say, Your Church attendance and your Chapel attendance, your baptism, your Sacrament-taking, your readings of the Biblewhere are these now? Your hearts were not right in the sight of God any more than mine, and you are damned as I am.

Ah, I pray you escape for your lives, lest the arrows of Satanic malice pierce you through and through when the walls of your false hope are overthrown! There shall be heard amidst that thick darkness and horrid gloom, that never shall be broken by a ray of light, another voice which once you knew. Perhaps the husband shall hear the voice of the wife who shall say, Ah, where is the daubing with which you have daubed it? You would not let me go to the House of God! You laughed me out of my religion! I was once a young unmarried woman who cared for the things of God in some respects. You courted me and enticed me away from my fathers God, and then you laughed me out of my prayers and Sunday worship. You have laughed me into Hell, but you cannot laugh me out of it again.

There will be one railing upon the other, the friend upon the friend, and those who have sinned together, grossly sinned, piercing each other through and through with bitter recollections, and taunting jeers. Ah, says one, you took me to the beer house. I came a young man fresh from the country to work in that carpenters shop and you were the man who introduced me to that ungodly club, and laughed the nonsense out of me, as you said, but now where is the daubing with which you have daubed it? You said Tom Paine understood the whole matter and that you could prove as easily as that twice two make four that there was no truth in the Biblebut where, now, is the daubing with which you have daubed it? Find me now but a drop of cold water to cool me upon this bed of flame! Come here, now, and stop this palpitating heart, you loud-voiced jester whose wit was liable to set the table on a roar! Where is the daubing with which you have daubed it?

Recriminations will be exchanged among the lost and will occasion much of that weeping and gnashing of teeth which is their portion. This is probably the reason why the rich man would not have his brothers come into the place of torment. Ah, how terrible the meeting of the betrayer and the betrayedthe seducer and his victimthe priest and his dupe! How pitiful the vicious and their pupils! Unbelievers and their followers! As glowing ashes heaped together increase the heat, so will companies of sinners inflame each others miseries. Bind them up in bundles to burn them is a sentence terrible, indeed! O my Hearers, tempt not your own destruction! Be warned to escape before your false refuges shall be your shame and scorn eternally!

And then, last of all, your own conscience, from which you *never* can escape, which is, perhaps, the worm that never diesand the flame which kindles the fire of remorse that never shall be quenchedyour conscience will say to you, Where is the daubing with which you have daubed it? A man cannot have a worse tormentor than a guilty conscience. This, like a bloodhound, follows at his heels remorselessly. Its deep baying is not to be silenced and its ferocity cannot be appeased. To be sick at heart *forever*! *Forever* a disappointed man! *Forever* self-accused and selfcondemned! O that men were wise enough to dread such a fate! I pray you, unconverted Friends, do not commit spiritual suicide! Do not murder your own souls! Condemn not yourselves to despair and remorse, but by Gods good Grace turn unto Him and live!

I am afraid of some for you good people who come here regularly and are not converted. Perhaps you think you are Christians while you are not. Or perhaps you even profess to be Christians but the life of God is not in you. Be you not deceived! Members of this Church, take heed that *you* are not deceived! Yes, I say to myself, be sure, Preacher, that *you* take heed lest you yourself become a castaway!

Brothers and Sisters, we must be right here! We cannot bear to have any question in this matter! We must, since this has to do with *eternity*, and with an *immortal* soul, make sure work here. Down with these rotten walls! With one mighty heave let every man lend a shoulder and hurl them over! Down with every false confidence, and then come to the foundation which Christ has laid and build upon it and say

You, O Christ, are all I need,
More than all in You I find.

If we build *there* we shall build well, but if we build elsewhere, the great hailstones, and the overflowing shower and the total destruction will overwhelm us! As you remember this, may God help you to escape from ruin, for Jesus sake.

Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #1651 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A DELUSION DISPELLED
NO. 1651

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

Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, says the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness. Ezekiel 14:20.

WE are told in the opening verse of this chapter that certain of the elders of Israel came to the Prophet and sat before him. You need not ask who these elders were, or form where they came because it is evident enough they were not a deputation from the Jews who were left in Judah and Jerusalem. They were individuals of distinction from among the exiles of Chebar. That they came to enquire of the Prophet of the Lord, we gather from the answer that came to them by the Word of the Lord. And we might, also, infer from the matter of the terrible denunciations that were uttered, something, at least, of the manner of enquiry they proposed. The men were downright hypocritesthey were followers of the false prophets who are exposed in the previous chapter as seeing vanity and divination and then saying, Jehovah says, though Jehovah had not sent them!

Now they come, these elders, to interview the *true* Prophet of the Lord, and before they have time to state their errand, the Word of the Lord confronts them with a life-like portrait of their own characters. These men have set up their idols in their heart, and put up the stumbling block of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them? For persons who were idolaters at heart to ask counsel of the living God, as if they would learn His will, though they defied His Law, was a most insulting mockery! The thought which seems to have nestled in their breasts and prompted their visit was, after all, the exposure that Ezekiel has made of the wickedness of the land and of its inhabitantsmay it not still be consistent with the mercy of the Lord to spare the city, as He would have spared the city of Sodom at the intercession of Abraham, for the sake of the few righteous men that remained in it?

The answer, as you are aware, was an emphatic No. A reference to the 26th chapter of Leviticus and a rehearsal of the four judgments which should work the desolation, stand associated with the protest which is repeated again and again, each time, it seems to us, with more vehement forceThough Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, says the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.

Now, my main objective this evening will be to assert, to illustrate and to enforce this one distinct feature in the moral government of God. In all the procedures of Divine judgment, the principle of individual responsibility can never be relaxed. Hence the need of personal pietythe absolute necessity that men and women should pray for themselvesthat each one should repent for himself, that each one should believe for himself and that each one should, in his own proper person, be born again by the effectual operation of the Spirit of God.

No proxy in these matters is possible! Sponsors in religion are a wicked superstitiontheir use degrades the minds of men and profanes the worship of Godthey ought to be forever done away with! I charge you, as you love God and your own souls, and the souls of otherssooner *die* than stand sponsor for child or man, for it is a sin, a mockery, an offense before high Heaven! Every man must take heed to his own soul. Let each man prove his own work for each man shall bear his own burden, and every one of us must give an account for himself at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Among the various shifts and schemes for taking comfort without a satisfactory title, or a plausible reason, the idea adopted by some that the righteousness of their friends may be of some use to them, is not the least pernicious!

They are the children of eminently gracious people. Surely, they say, they cannot be lost! They are connected with those whose name is known and whose memory is fragrant in Christian society. They were born and brought up in a house dedicated by family prayer! They have been cradled and nurtured in the midst of godliness. They readily believe that those who live in the back slums and have grown up to be wanton and willful, depraved and dishonest, will certainly perishbut can it be that those who have walked in the paths of morality and observed the ordinances of outward religion should be cast away? They scarcely think that it could be consistent with propriety to resist their claims to some discriminating consideration! Though they do not say as much in words, yet they secretly flatter themselves with the idea that the godliness of their ancestry and the scrupulous integrity of their parents will avail to shelter them from responsibility.

There are others, to mark a lighter shade in self-deception, who indulge a hope that the prayers of their dear ones will be heard for them, although they never pray for themselves. They fall back in time of need upon the belief that, surely their mothers prayers will be answered on their behalf, or their wifes petitions will bring down a blessing upon them! They do not embody the notion in wordsI wish they didfor if people were to place such thoughts in black and white, they would never like to acknowledge them! Their folly would be too palpable. They entertain a hazy notion that because they have been so often prayed for, a blessing must come to them sooner or later! They will not awaken themselves to seek the mercy of the Lord, or quit their sins and lay hold on Christ to obtain the promise of pardon and peacethey vainly dream that something mysterious will happen to them one of these days in answer to good peoples prayers. In fact, some of them eagerly ask the prayers of the godly, though they never pray to God for themselves!

My text is a stern rebuke for any who have taken themselves to either of these refuges of lies! I want to sound an alarm and drive them out of their hiding places. Oh, that God may be pleased to make His own Word effectual to this end! Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, says the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness. Now, it cannot be denied that there is great power in godliness and a mighty prevalence in the intercessions of godly people to bring down rich blessings upon men. You are perfectly right in seeking the prayers of Christian friends! Why, even the Apostle Paul said, in the name of all the sacred ministry, Brethren, pray for us.

You can hardly ask for a choicer favor from the servants of God than that they should pray for you. But certain circumstances may entirely neutralize the prayers of the godly. Such circumstances were present in the case of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah in Jeremiahs day. They went on so far in idolatry and all manner of vice that God said that He would not hear Moses and Samuel, though they stood before Him to plead on their behalf! He told Jeremiah that He might as well cease to weep and pray, for He would never hear Him for that people. And here, by Ezekiel, He declares that if so wonderful a trio as Noah, Daniel and Job should join in intercessionHe would not regard, even, them. And just so it is at this hourif men continue in their sinif, after hearing the Gospel, they refuse it.

If they persist in rejecting it; if they stifle conscience; if they silence the voice within. If they perniciously resolve to indulge their lusts and will not repent and turn to God, then the excellence of their friends will rather aggravate, than make amends for their guiltand the prayers of their friends will be so utterly nullified and made of no effect, that nothing but the dread sentence will avail themthey must perish! They have not *personally* believed in Christ and accepted Him as their Mediator, therefore they must perish. They have dissipated the last vestige of hope by rejecting the only way of salvation and they must perish! Though they come of a line of saints and in their veins there runs the blood of the faithful, they must perish! Though they have the tradition of a sound faith handed down from generation to generation, and though the escutcheon that has descended to them from holy ancestors is free from blotif they refuse Christ they must perish!

And though they have been born and bred, cradled and cared for where holy hymns make up their lullaby, yet if they give not their own hearts to Christ, but set up idols in their heartsthey must perishperish miserably with their own iniquity upon their heads. Was not Ishmael the son of Abraham? Yet he came not into the Covenant! Was not Esau the child of Isaac? Yet he obtained not the inheritance! Birth, blood and family count for *nothing* in this matter. Thus there are two propositions, which, as God shall help me, I will endeavor to set plainly before your eyes. First, the righteousness of the most godly cannot be of use for the ungodly. And, secondly, the prayers of the greatest intercessors cannot help if men persist in their unbelief.

I. First, THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE MOST GODLY CANNOT AVAIL FOR THE UNGODLY. We have to prove this and we do so, first, by referring you to our text, and asking you to read it for yourselves. Mark how the anger of the Lord kindles and how the words are launched forth like hot thunderbolts from the lips of the Most High. The statement is clear; the supposition is startling, but the oath that seals the Oracle of Heaven appalls us. A coincidence that was not likely to occur is imagined to put the utmost strain on the delineation and to give language a stress that cannot be surpassed. As a matter of fact, we are told that if Noah, Daniel and Job were in the midst of Jerusalem, yet their conjoined virtues would not be of any use to save any but themselves!

I wish I could help you to realize the picture as it must have flashed before the vision of the Seer. Three saints who were not contemporaries, for their lives on earth were passed in distant centuries and different circumstances, meet together in a season of terrible emergency. The sacred annals of those days knew no names more illustrious, no stars that shone more brightly, than Noah, Daniel and Job. Their sympathies are all excited, their hearts are in unison and their prayers blend together as they bow before the Altar. You look, you listen in trembling suspense, as you cast a glance at the miserable inhabitants of the doomed city and consider the fate of those captives who are languishing in a land far away. With what measure of acceptance will those passionate appeals for mercy be heard?

Listen, the verdict comes from the Throne of God! They deliver their own souls by their righteousness and no more! Not one of them saves so much as his own son or his own daughter by his supplications! What a wail comes up as the inexorable decree is pronounced! But the echo that lingers longest in my ears is that awful oath As I live, says the Lord God. Next to this, I am going to ask you to inspect more narrowly the portraits of these men of God who are presumed to have stood counsel for the defendantsand to have occasioned so much astonishment because with all their special pleading they signally lost their case!

Noah is the very pattern of godly fear! A model of that fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom, just as Abraham was a model of faith and the father of the faithful. Moved with fear, he built an ark for the saving of his house. Heedless of the ridicule of the many about him, he built a huge ship on dry land. He became a preacher of righteousness, and though few, if any, were converted by that preaching, he persevered for 120 years, obediently doing what God commanded him, for a testimony against the ungodly. Scarcely can we find a better man than this second father of the human race from whom we have all sprung.

Next to him we have mention made of Daniel. He was alive at the time when Ezekiel wrotea young man, I suppose, of about 30 years of age. It is very singular that he should be sandwiched in, as it were, between Noah and Jobtwo men of the olden world. He must have been highly esteemed in his own generation. Ezekiel, moved by the Holy Spirit, groups him with those whom history had canonized. He was a man greatly beloved of God and, no doubt, by his contemporaries, he was very much appreciated. Sterling virtue and an elevation of character above the common standard of a good man would be indispensable to his taking rank as one of so remarkable a triumvirate. And when you think of himof his integrity in youth when he would not defile himself with the kings meat. When you think of his steadfastness in prayer in riper years, when, with his window open toward Jerusalem, he prayed as he had done before, even though by a statute of the realm, the penalty of making supplication to the God of the Hebrews was deathwhat a model of thorough manliness he is!

There is a majesty about Daniel. He is the John of the Old Testament. He is the Seer who saw visions of God like the chosen one of Patmos. The combination of qualities that are embodied in such a man is worth your study. So chivalrous was his sense of duty that he is honored by kings! So holy is he in his conscience, as well as in his habits, that the King of kings reveals to him the secrets of His government! There is none like Daniel! Yet, says God, though in addition to Noah, Daniel stood before Me, his righteousness would suffice only for himself and could not be of the least profit to anyone else.

To complete the trio, there is Job, to whom we have Infallible testimony that he was perfect and upright. Satan, himself, could find no fault with his character, though with fiendish malice he insinuated a sinister motive for Jobs scrupulous integrity. Does Job serve God for nothing? Have You not set a hedge about him and all that he has? You have blessed the work of his hands and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth Your hand, now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse You to Your face. You remember that he did *not* curse God, but he *blessed* Him and his faith triumphed over his fretfulness even on the dunghill of his poverty, when he was covered with sores and filled with anguish! Surely Job is a model of excellence. You have heard of the patience of Job. My servant Job, was the honorable designation that the Almighty gave him. Moreover, He bestowed on him high praise and a double blessing at the end of his trial.

Now, if we had any one of these three men to plead for us, we should look upon him as putting a great weight in the scale. If we had for our next door neighbor, or brother, or father, either of theseif there were any transference of righteousness from one man to anotherwe should hope to shade ourselves under the wings of Noah, or Daniel, or Job! But here the Lord declares that if the whole three were put together, they should not save son or daughter. No, dear Friends, You must be born again. You must be made righteous, each one for himself, or else if you had all these friends at court, which you have not, they would be unable to avert the course of justice, or obtain for you the slightest favor! The text puts it plainlyThough Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, says the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.

This Truth of God may be further substantiated by observing the course of Providence as regards the things of this life. Could the merits of friends and parents secure the salvation of their relatives or children, we must expect to see the son or the daughter of a righteous man screened from the full punishment of his own misdeeds. But we have evidence that such is not the case. Let me give you Scriptural illustrations. Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant. He had a brother, Aaron, not so great a man as himself, but still an eminently holy man. Listen, you that are the sons of gracious men. Aaron had two sons and the fathers dignity rested upon themand they became priests of the Most High God. But, do you know what became of them? Drinking too much winealas, what a snare is that!they entered into the Holy Place of God with strange fire and the fire of God consumed Nadab and Abihu, though they were the sons of Aaron! And what did Aaron say about them? We read this, And Aaron held his peace.

He could say nothing. He had to bow his head before God. He knew that it must bethat if even a child of Gods High Priest pollutes the Holy Place, the fire of the Lord must come forth against him. Thus you see that Aaron could not overshadow his own sons and save them in the day of the Lords anger. Take another case equally sad. David had a favorite son who became the cruel adversary of his own father. In open rebellion Absalom attempted to usurp his throne. Yet even in the tumult of battle, the king would have spread the aegis of protection over his own child. Beware, he said to his generals, that none touch the young man Absalom. You remember how he fled from the fray, but fled in vaina just retribution overtook him. The locks of his hair in which he gloried were caught in the low branches of an oak and there he hung. Then, as you hear David cry, O Absalom, my son, my son Absalom, my son, my son! Would God I had died for you! you see that the righteousness of David could not deliver his son Absalom even as to *this* life.

If you needed other proofs, I would give the instance of Judas, which is greatly to the point, not in the matter of *relationship*, but in the matter of *association*. Judas consorted with 11 of the princes of the Church of God, for such I call them, now that they have gone up to their thrones. No, more, Judas consorted with the Master Himself and dipped in the same dish with our Redeemer! Yet, you see, the righteousness of 11 Apostles could not cover Judas. And because he did not believe in Jesus, neither did the righteousness of his Master cover him! And so this man perished in his own iniquity. These examples I have given you from the Bible. Were I to try and turn over the pages of my recollection, I could give you many miserable proofs that the fathers righteousness does not cover the son. I am afraid I shall touch a very tender string with friends here present who, in their own sons, have sad proof that it is so.

I have seen the preacher of the Gospel whose son was committed to prison. I have known the father to be a minister of Christ and his son a ringleader in infidelity, or a chief actor in things too filthy and profane to be mentioned here. Full many a child of godly parents has, in this life, brought himself to beggary, to disgrace, to disease, to death. It is a sad fact, but it is so. There may have been, perhaps, grave fault at home. That I cannot tellGod knowsbut so it has been that men who, to the best of our judgment, were not only godly, but eminently so, have, nevertheless, had the wretched lot to see their sons and daughters given up to work iniquity with both hands greedily. God save you from such a sorrow, but the recurrence of these facts goes to show that the most godly mans righteousness cannot be of use, even, for son or daughter. What need is there, however, that I multiply proofs?

The scales of justice must be poised with an equal hand. Partiality is out of the question. God is no respecter of persons. Were it otherwise, personal obedience to the will of God could be dispensed with! There would be in this world a number of chartered libertines who would plead a mothers godliness or a fathers Christian character as a setoff for their own indifference or profanityas if they had a special license to live as they like because their parents were godly. Would you have it so if you could? I would not. I should think it a most dangerous institution. Thank God, His Divine justice has never given immunity to

any vice. If a man eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge. A spendthrift shall rue the course he has run and shall beg bread, even though his father were a saint of the innermost sanctuary.

If a man indulges foul passions, he shall suffer for it in his own body, let his father be as gracious as he may. If a man puts his finger into the fire, it will burn him. If he tempts the flood in time of danger, it will drown him. You may groan to think he was the child of so good a man, but the laws of Nature are not to be trifled with. If you act contrary to them, they will be contrary to you. Relationship, which is but an accidental circumstance, is not to be confused with religion. That the righteousness of one man could compensate for the recklessness of another man is a monstrous conceit. What if I am, as I thank God I am, the son of His handmaid? I dare not to presume on that! What if my father is a minister of the Gospel? What if my grandfather preached the Gospel? I thank God that such Grace was given to them, but there is nothing in that upon which I dare presume! I think the meanest pride in all the world is the pride of ancestry, for how on earth can a man have any credit due to him for a contingency which never could be at his own disposal? It must be a matter of Gods own dispensation and if he has *received* it, why does he glory as though he had not received it?

To suppose that Grace comes with ancestry would be a supposition exactly opposite to the declaration of the Spirit of God by John, where he says of the godly, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. There must be a birth by the Spirit of God, or the first birth will be nothing whatever to our advantage. However well-born at first, you must be born again! If the righteousness of one man could excuse the unrighteousness of another man, then the great principle of responsibility would be reversed. You and I, who were born in the midst of Christian associations, are responsible for the Light of God which we receive. If we sin, we cannot sin so cheaply as others. If a man transgresses against the holy example of parents, he scores seven for every sin to what another would have done who had been trained up under vicious surroundings. Assuredly he is not a *less* sinner, but a greater sinner who, being born in the midst of godliness, ventures to depart from the good way, transgress the sacred precepts, and refuse the Savior!

That is the principle of Scriptureto whom much is given, of him much shall be requiredand we have to say daily to you children of the godly, that if you fall, your exaltation by your privileges will cause you a more awful fall than the fall of others. We say to such as you, Woe unto you, Bethsaida; woe unto you, Chorazin; woe unto you, Capernaum! You have seen the mighty works of Christ, which, if others had seen, they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes, and if you repent not, woe unto you! Such is the teaching of the Word of God. But the opposite hypothesis that the goodness of one individual can compensate for the badness of another is utterly hollow, not to say grossly vicious! Painful though it is, dear Friends, I must carry the assertion a step further.

The righteousness of good men has not availed to save their relatives from the terrors of the world to come. Instances of this come uncalled for to our recollection. Begin at the beginning. There is Cain. Who is his brother? Abel. Abel is a man whose faith is acceptable with God. Does that save Cain? No, he was of that Wicked One and slew his brother. And why did he slay him? Because his own works were evil and his brothers righteous. Cain, where are you tonight? Are you sitting here and do you dream that your brother, Abel, now with God, can, by any means, bless you? That must not be. Dispel the delusion! The opening chapter of history refutes it. The first two sons that were born to Adam depart from earth in different directions.

Look, again, at Ishmael. His father, Abraham, the father of the faithful, said, O that Ishmael might live before You! Yet Ishmael becomes the very type of the children of nature who do not inherit the blessing that belongs to the children of promise! Look at Esau, born at the same birth with Jacob, children of a godly father, yet we read of Esau that he was a profane person. The godliness of holy Isaac does not save Esau! Look at Hophni and Phinehas, priests of God by office, but sons of Belial by character! Their father Eli, with all his faults, was a man who feared God. Yet as for these sons of his, they died in their sins, from which no sacrifice nor offering could purge them! Look at Jehoramhis father, Jehoshaphat, was a truly gracious manthough, alas, he turned aside, joined with Ahab and married his son to the daughter of that woman, Jezebel!

And, ah me, how many a young man is ruined by some such perilous alliance! For money, for business, or for social position they are wedded to the ungodly. Some of you sell your daughters to the devil that they may make a respectable match, when you know that this unequal yoking is forbidden by Gospel precept! I am ashamed of Christian people who lend their countenance to this breach of the Lords Commandment! In this world there is a blight on such unions and in the world to comewell, over that you would wish to draw the veil. The life of Jehoram was evil. His death was painful and premature. His end was without hope, yet he was a son of Jehoshaphat who did that which was right in the sight of the Lord!

How tenaciously men will cling to the idea that godly ancestors can help them is illustrated from that parable of our Lord in which He tells us of the rich man who lifted up his eyes in Hell and cried, Father Abraham. As a descendant of Abraham, he looked for pity and relief, even in the place of torment! Ah, but he failed to obtain a drop of water to cool his tongue by that plea. Take the warning to yourselves, Sirs, I beseech you! It does not matter of whom you may be descendantsthey cannot relieve the pains of Hell for you! Unless you, yourselves, have personal faith and a personal renewal of heart, though you had Noah, Daniel and Job to take your partAs I live, says the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.

II. Now I come to our second proposition. THE PRAYERS OF THE GREATEST INTERCESSORS CANNOT AVAIL IF MEN PERSIST IN THEIR UNBELIEF. God forbid that I should discourage any of you from praying for your parents, your children and your friends. Let us never leave off praying for them. But if any man in this place is sitting comfortably in his seat, saying, My wife prays for me; my mother prays for me; my children pray for me. It will be all right with metheir prayers will suffice for me without any penitence or faith on my part, I should like to touch him on the shoulder and whisper in his ear these words, Though Noah, Daniel and Job were the intercessors, they could deliver none but their own souls.

Noah was undoubtedly a man of prayer. Still, there was not a single person saved by Noahs prayers except those that went into the ark. And if God would give to us, His people, everything that we ask for, yet we would not ask Him to save you if you will not believe in Christ. If you set up your idols in your heart and keep the stumbling block of your lust before your eyes, we cannot, we *dare* not pray for you that you may be saved contrary to the Gospel! Daniel was mighty in prayer, but all that his prayers ever did could not save Israel from the fatal results of the follies to which they clung. Jerusalem was destroyed, notwithstanding the prayers of Daniel, and the Jews are scattered among all lands, notwithstanding that the holy Prophet pleaded for the prosperity of Zion. We can only pray according to the will of God and our prayers must be that you may be saved in the Lords own appointed waywe cannot ask Him to change His way for you.

Job prayed for his friends and his friends were forgiven. But, note it well, not without a sacrifice. They had to bring seven bullocks and seven rams and offer up for themselves a burnt offering before the prayer of Job on their behalf was heard. If you will bring a sacrifice for yourselvesif you will present Christ as your Sacrificethen will our prayers go with yours and you shall be blessed. Had they offered no sacrifice, Jobs prayers could not have availed for them. You must believe in Jesus with a faith distinctly your own. Were the whole Church on earth to lift up one continuous prayer and persevere in it from generation to generation, it could not save *one* unbelieving man! While he remains in unbelief, the wrath of God abides on him. If you buoy yourself up with a deceitful hope that it is different, you will presently sink down in blank despair.

What a man of prayer Moses was when he held back Gods hand till the Lord cried, Let Me alone, that I may destroy them. But Moses besought the Lord God with urgent prayer and he prevailed. Yet even Moses did not avert the sentence pronounced on the generation which he had brought out of Egypt. Their carcasses all fell in the wilderness, save Joshua and Caleb. Nor could these two righteous men preserve one single person beyond themselves. All the intercession of Moses could not save an unbelieving generation. Because they believed not, they all died. As for Samuel, you will remember how he mourned for Saul, whom God had put away, till God said to him, How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him? He had to give it up and go and anoint David. The prayers of the devout Prophet could not save the disobedient king!

Oh, how this should take any of you off from a vain confidence in the prayers of others and lead you to pray for yourselves! And look to Christ for yourselves! A parents prayers are a sad pretext for a childs presumption. Striving together in prayer, saint with saint, there is a mighty power. But what a strife is that when the soul we seek is struggling to be free from all restraint only to plunge deeper into sin! Remember, beloved Friends, that all the prayers of godly men put together cannot alter the rule of the Kingdom of God. And what is the rule of the Kingdom of God? Here is one of the rules, Except you are converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven. Suppose Noah and Daniel and Job, and Moses and Samuel and Jeremiahthose six should pray God to let a man go to Heaven without being born from above and renewed by the Spirit of God? Would that be of any use? Do you think the constitution of the Kingdom of Heaven would be altered for their asking? Oh no! The will of God is not affected by the whims of men.

Well, here is another rule of the kingdom, He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; he that believes not shall be damned. Now if Noah, Job and Daniel were all to pray that this statute might be repealed and a resolution more consonant with the caprice of mortal men should be substituted in its place, do you think the appeal would be allowed? Surely our cries to God must not be complaints of His decrees! Our petitions must be submissive to His Word, not subversive of His wisdom! He will not change the ordinances of His Kingdom because men are stubborn! Like the laws of the Medes and Persians, His decrees can never be altered! They stand fast forever and they exclude forever from Heaven those who abide in unbelief.

No, Sirs, if you are not reconciled to God, you cannot have fellowship with Him! If you are not made meet to be partakers of the inheritance, you cannot enter into the enjoyment of it! In the atmosphere of Heaven you could not breathe, for without holiness no man can see God! If you believe not in Jesus Christ, you must die in your sins! Remember that all the prayers of godly men cannot alter the nature of sin and if *they* cannot alter the nature of sin, then they that continue in it must perish! If we were to hold a Prayer Meeting to prevent a person from being burnt who would put his hand into the fire, would that be of any use? If a man who cannot swim will persist in leaping into the river, what is the use of my asking you all to pray God to preserve his life? If a man puts a bottle of acid to his lips and drinks it, what is the use of our coming together to pray that his life may be spared when the deadly poison is destroying it? If he drives a dagger into his heart, he must die, unless God is pleased to reverse that order, which, according to the poet, is Heavens first law.

There is a way of salvationBelieve in Jesus Christ and liveif you will not have that, where are you, my Friend? Are you such a fool as to sit there and say, I shall be saved by my wifes prayers? Your wifes prayers will rather seal your doom! They will rise up in judgment against you! That you were so much prayed for implies that you were admonished and entreated at a most loving rate. You will not be able to say, No man cares for my soul. A mothers prayers will ring in your ears and excite remorse when repentance is no more possible. The cries of the lost will be more terrible than the recollection of her tears and agony for you. Oh, remember this! Sin is fire and it must burn! Sin is Hell and it must torment the man who continues in it! There is no help for it. Pray as much as ever we like, if you do not get out of sin, you cannot get out of destruction! If you do not find pardon through our Lord Jesus you must be punished!

Moreover, the prayers of good men cannot alter the conditions of the eternal future, so long as the present abides the same. This must be palpable to any sane judgment. The palace of luxury and time prison of penal servitude are but faint pictures of Heaven and Hell. What is Heaven? The abode of perfect spirits washed in the blood of the Lamb. The right of admission, how can it be obtained? There are qualifications that cannot be dispensed with. And there are disqualifications that cannot be denied. As British subjects, we have a right of petition to our Queen. But of what use would that be, if with a required number of signatures, we could ask her Majesty to confer the Victoria Cross on a burglar? Or how can you suppose that God will receive a rebel amongst His loyal courtiers? It cannot be!

And what is the meaning or purpose of Hell but thisthat he that will have sin must have sorrow? He that will hate God must be miserable. There is no law more immutable than, to be good is to be happy, and to be bad is sooner or later to be wretched. It must be so. Trust not, therefore, to the prayers of others, but come to Christ for yourselves, that you may be cleansed from sin and made right for Heaven. Perhaps you say, Sir, I did not think prayer would suffice to effect a change in my circumstances without a corresponding change in myself, but I thought that, somehow, by prayer, I should be *compelled* to believe and to repent.

Compelled to believe and to repent? Well, Man, what sort of repentance and faith must that be which comes of *compulsion*? Surely that mans heart is not sincere who says, I hope to go to Heaven, though it is against my own inclination. You would gladly be made to hate sin against your will? That is strange! Are you to be made to love righteousness against your own liking? I have heard of fathers saying that their daughters should marry So-and-So, but I defy them to make them *love* those with whom they have no feeling. No, these matters are far too delicate to be managed by coercion. It cannot be!

Neither does the Holy Spirit, Himself, employ force to compel those who are unwilling. He has a power that is quite congruous with the freedom of the will by which He sweetly turns the mind and will by blessed argument and illumination. By enlightening the understanding, He controls the will. But, believe me, you will never be lugged into Heaven by your ears! You will never be strapped down and carried to Heaven as we see drunken women carried to the stationhouse on a stretcher. Have you ever fancied that such would be the case? Has such an absurd idea ever entered into your head, that somehow or other, without your ever seeking it, you will be taken up by some celestial surgery and chloroformed into Glory?

It will not be so. Turn to this Book and see. How did the prodigal get to his fathers house? Did his father asphyxiate him and make him insensible and then strap him down and carry him there? Not at all. But first he was hungry and he tried to fill his belly with the husks, but he could not. And he became more hungry, still, and then he said, I will arise, and go unto my father, and he went to his father. Yes, it was all of Grace, but still he arose and came unto his father. It was all of eternal love, but he did leave the swine and seek his home. It was of infinite pity, but he did *think* and he did *will* to go! And, what is more, he did go to his fathers house. He did all that and then, when he was a great way off, his father met him!

Now, believe me, though I always preach free, rich, Sovereign Grace with all my heart, I never understood and never *shall* understand that God treats us like logs of wood and blocks of marble, and cleaves or chips us about as if we had no life, or will, or intelligence! It is not so and only fools think in such a fashion! You are men, not dumb driven cattle! You will not be saved like asses, but like men! You will not be saved like horses and mules and cats, but like men and women who can think! You will have to think and you will have to hate your sinand you will have to cry for mercy and you will have to believe in Christand if you do not, you will perish! All the prayers that have ever been poured out can be of no use to save you except through your being brought to trust your Savior, hate your sin and become obedient to His will.

Do you believe this, dear Friends? It may be that out of this large congregation there are only a few to whom these statements are particularly appropriate, but I thought that I would leave the 99 sheep in the wildernessthere are plenty of sweet grasses for you in the quiet places of the Word of Godand I would go after some that have gone astray in this direction, for I long to find you. Oh that the blessed Spirit would convince you of your sin and lead you to say, I have played the fool. I have been trusting to a privilege which I ought to have used for another purpose. Now, I will seek God and I will yield to the blessed Gospel and put my trust in Jesus. Remember, there is a righteousness which you can have the righteousness of Jesus Christ which can cover you. Though Noah and Daniel and Job cannot deliver you, Jesus can!

There an intercession that can be heard for youthe intercession of One that lives and was deadand now makes intercession for men and is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him. Come unto God by Him and His intercession is yours and shall be your health! And His righteousness is yours and shall be your covering! God grant it for the dear Redeemers sake. Amen and amen.

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THE FRUITLESS VINE
NO. 125

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JULY 18, 1856, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.
And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying: Son of man, What is the vine tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest?
Ezekiel 15:1, 2.

THE Jewish nation had arrogant ideas of themselves. When they sinned against God, they supposed that on account of the superior sanctity of their forefathers, or by reason of some special sanctity in themselves, they would be deliveredsin as they pleased! In consequence of the Infinite Mercy of Jehovah, which He had displayed towards them in delivering them out of so many distresses, they gradually came to imagine that they were the favorite children of Providence and that God could by no means ever cast them away! God, therefore, in order to humble their pride, tells them that they, in themselves, were nothing more than any other nation. He asks them what there was about them to recommend themI have often called you a vine. I have planted you and nurtured you in a very fruitful hill, but now you bring forth no fruit. What is there in you why I should continue you in My favor? If you imagine there is anything about you more than about any other nation, you are mightily mistaken. What is the vine tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest?

Let us remember that these things might be said without implying that God in the least degree alters His eternal purpose towards any chosen vessel of mercy. The Israelite nation was not chosen to eternal salvation as a

nation, but chosen to special privilegesa type and shadow of that eternal personal election, which Christ has given to His Church. From His own elect Church, God will never withdraw His love. But from the outward and visible Church, He sometimes may. From His own people, He will never take away His affectionbut from professors, from those who merely stand in His peoples external condition and are not His childrenHe may. Yes, and He will withdraw every token of His favor. God humbles Israel by reminding them that they had nothing which other nations had notthat in fact they were a contemptible nation, not worthy to be set side by side with the cedar of Lebanon, or with the oak of Samaria. They were of no usethey were worthless, unless they brought forth fruit to Him. He checks their pride and humbles them with the parable we have here before us.

Beloved, we shall, by Gods help, use this parable for ourselves and learn two lessons from it. The first shall be *a lesson of humility for saints*. And the second, *a lesson of searching for all who are professors*.

I. First, here is A LESSON OF HUMILITY for all you who have tasted that the Lord is gracious. What is the vine tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest?

In looking upon all the various trees, we observe that the vine is distinguished among themso that in the old parable of Jotham, the trees waited upon the vine tree and said unto it, Come and reign over us. But merely looking at the vine, without regard to its fruitfulness, we would not see any kingship in it over other trees. In size, form, beauty, or utility, it has not the slightest advantage. We can do nothing with the wood of the vine. Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? Or will men make a pin of it to hang a vessel thereon? It is a useless plant apart from its fruitfulness. We sometimes see it in beauty, trained up by the side of our walls and in the east it might be seen in all its luxuriance as great care is bestowed in its training. But leave the vine to itself and consider it apart from its fruitfulnessit is the most insignificant and despicable of all things that bear the name of trees!

Now, Beloved, this is for the humbling of Gods people. They are called Gods vine. But what are they by nature more than others? Others are as good as they. Yes, others are even greater and better than they. They, by Gods goodness, have become fruitful, having been planted in a good soil. The Lord has trained them upon the walls of the sanctuary and they bring forth fruit to His Glory. But what are they without their God? What are they without the continual influence of the Spirit begetting fruitfulness in them? Are they not the least among the sons of men and the most to be despised of those that have been brought forth of women? Look upon this, Believer

What was there in you to merit esteem,

Or give the Creator delight?

Yes, look upon yourself as you are now. Does not your conscience reproach you? Do not your thousand wanderings stand before you and tell you that you are unworthy to be called His son? Does not the weakness of your mental power, the frailty of your moral power, your continual unbelief and your perpetual backsliding from God tell you that you are less than the least of all saints? And if He has made you anything, are you not thereby taught that it is Grace, free Sovereign Grace, which has made you to differ? Should any here, supposing themselves to be the children of God, imagine that there is some reason in them why they should have been chosen, let them know that as yet they are in the dark concerning the first principles of Grace and have not yet learned the Gospel! If ever they had known the Gospel they would, on the other hand, confess that they were less than the leastthe offscouring of all thingsunworthy, ill-deserving, undeserving and Hell-deserving! They would ascribe it all to distinguishing Grace which has made them to differ and to discriminating Love which has chosen them out from the rest of the world! Great Christian, you would have been a great sinner if God had not made you to differ! Oh, you who are valiant for the Truth of Godyou would have been as valiant for the devil if Grace had not laid hold upon you! A seat in Heaven shall one day be yours but a chain in Hell would have been yours if Grace had not changed you. You can now sing His love, but a licentious song might have been on your lips if Grace had not washed you in the blood of Jesus! You are now sanctified. You are quickened. You are justified. But what would you have been tonight if it had not been for the interposition of the Divine hand? There is not a crime you might not have committed! There is not a folly into which you might not have run!

Even murder, itself, you might have committed if Grace had not kept you. You shall be like the angels. But you would have been like the devil if you had not been changed by Divine Grace. Therefore, never be proud. All your garments you have from aboverags were your only heritage. Be not proud though you have a large estate, a wide domain of Grace. You had not, once, a single thing to call your own except your sin and misery! You are now wrapped in the golden righteousness of the Savior and accepted in the garments of the Beloved, but you would have been buried under the black mountain of sin and clothed with the filthy rags of unrighteousness if He had not changed you! And are you proud? Do you exalt yourself? Oh, strange mystery, that you, who have borrowed everything, should exalt yourself! That you, who have nothing of your own, but still have to draw upon Grace, should be proud! A poor dependent pensioner upon the bounty of your Savior and yet proud? One who has a life which can only live by fresh streams of life from Jesus and yet proud! Go hang your pride upon the gallows, as high as Hamanhang it there to rot and stand beneath it and denounce it to all eternity, for surely of all things most to be cursed and despised, is the pride of a Christian! He of all men has ten thousand times more reason than any other to be humble and walk lowly with his God and kindly and humbly towards his fellow creatures. Let this, then, humble you, Christian, that the vine tree is nothing more than any other tree, save only for the fruitfulness which God has given it!

II. But now here comes A LESSON OF SEARCH. As the vine without its fruit is useless and worthlessso, too, the professor, without fruit, is useless and worthless. Yes, he is the most useless thing in the whole wide world!

Now, let us dwell upon this point *a fruitless profession*. And while I am preaching on it, let the words go round to each one and let the minister and let his deacons and let his hearers all try their hearts and search their reins and see whether they have a fruitless profession!

1. First, a fruitless professor. *How do we know him*? *What is his character*? Secondly, *What is the reason he is fruitless*? Thirdly, *What is the estimation God holds him in*? He is good for nothing at all! And then, fourthly, *What will be his end*? He is to be burned with fire!

First, *Where are we to find fruitless professors*? Everywhere, dear Friends, everywheredown here, up there, everywhere! In pulpits and in pews. False professors are to be found in every Church. Let us leave other denominations alone, then. They are to be found in *this* Church. They are to be found in this present assembly. To whatever denomination you may belong, there are some false and fruitless professors in it. How do you know that you may not belong to those who bring forth no fruit? There are fruitless professors to be found in every position of the Church and in every part of society. You may find the false professor among the rich. He has much wealth and he is hailed with gladness by the Church. God has given him much of this worlds goods and, therefore, the Church, forgetful that God has chosen the poor, gives him honor and what does she get from him? She gets but little helpher poor are still neglected and her means not in the least recruited by his riches! Or if she gain a portion of his riches, yet she gets none of his prayers. Nor is she in the least supported by his holy living. He that has riches often lives in sin and rolls in uncleanness. He wears his profession as a uniform, wherewith to cover his guilt! Rich men have sometimes been false professors and they are to be found among poor men, too. Full many a poor man has entered into the Church and been cordially received. He has been poor and they have thought it a good thing that poverty and Grace should go togetherthat Grace should cheer his hovel and make his poverty-stricken home a glad one. But then, this poor man has turned aside to follies and has degraded himself with drunkenness, has sworn and by unworthy conduct dishonored his God. Or, if not, he has been idle and sat still and been of little service to the Church. And so he has been false and fruitless in his profession!

False professors are to be found in the men that lead the vanguard of Gods army. The men who preach eloquently, whose opinion is law, who speak like prophets and whose language seems to be inspired! They have brought forth the fruit of popularityyes, and the fruit of philanthropy, toobut their heart has not been right with God and, therefore, the fruit, good in itself, was not fruit unto holiness! The moral benefit of their labors does not extend to everlasting life. They have not brought forth the fruits of the Spirit, seeing that they were not living branches of the living vine. Then there have been false professors in obscuritymodest people who have said nothing and seldom been heard of. They have glided into their pews on the Sunday morning, taken their seats, gone out and satisfied themselves that by their presence they had fulfilled a religious duty! They have been silent, quiet and retired. Lazy fellows, doing nothing. You may think that all the fruitless trees grow in the hedge outside of the garden. No they dont. There are some fruitless trees in the inside of it, in the very center of it! There are some false professors to be found in obscurity as well as in publicity. Some among the poor as well as among the rich!

And there are false professors to be found among men that doubt a great deal. They are always afraid they do not love Jesus and always saying, Ah, if I did but know I were His I

Tis a point I long to know

Oft it causes anxious thought.
Yes, and it ought to cause them anxious thought, too, if they are bringing forth no fruit and giving no diligence to make their calling and election sure. Fruitless professors are to be found, on the other hand, among the confident men, who say, without a blush, I know whom I have believed. I know I am a Christian, let who will, doubt. I am sure and certain my sins cannot destroy me and my righteousness cannot save me. I may do what I like, I know I am one of the Lords. Ah, fruitless professor again just as fruitless as the other manwho had all doubts and no faith and did nothing for his Master!

And then there is the fruitless professor, who, when he is asked to pray at the Prayer Meeting, never does so. And who neglects family prayer. We will not say anything about private devotionno doubt he neglects that, toohe is a fruitless one. Ah, but there may be another who stands up and prays such an eloquent prayer for a quarter of an hour, perhaps, just as fruitless a professor as the silent one! He has plenty of words but no realitiesmany leaves but no fruitsgreat gifts of utterance but no gifts of consistency. He is able to *talk* well but not to *walk* wellto *speak* piously but *not* to walk humbly with his God and serve Him with gladness. I do not know your individual characters tonight. But I know enough of you to say that your position, however honorable in the Church, and your character, however fair before men, is not enough to warrant any of you in concluding at once that you are not a fruitless professor! For fruitless professors are of every character and every rankfrom the highest to the lowestfrom the most talented to the most illiterate, from the richest to the poorest, from the most retiring to the most conspicuous! There are fruitless professors in every part of the Church.

Now, shall I tell you who is a fruitless professor? The man who neglects private prayer and does not walk with his God in public. That man whose carriage and conversation before God are hypocriticalwho cheats in trade and robs in business, yet wraps it up and comes out with a fair face, like the hypocrite with a widows house sticking in his throat and says, Lord, I thank You I am not as other men are! There is a man for you, who brings forth no fruit to perfection! Another one is he who lives right morally and excellently and depends upon his works and hopes to be saved by his righteousness. He comes before God and asks for pardon with a lie in his right hand, for he has brought his own selfrighteousness with him. Such a man is a fruitless professor. He has brought forth no fruit. That man, again, is a fruitless professor who talks big words about high Doctrine and likes sound Truth but he does not like sound livinghis pretensions are high but not his practice! He can bear to hear it said

Once in Christ, in Christ forever
but as for himself, he never was in Christ at all, for he neither loves nor serves his Master but lives in sin that Grace may abound. There is another fruitless vine for you!

But why need I stop to pick you out? May the Lord find you out tonight. There are many of you here, concerning whom the curse of Meroz might be uttered, Curse you, Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse you bitterly the inhabitants thereof. Because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Many of you are content to eat the fat and drink the sweet and bring forth no fruit to God. Nor do you serve Himlazy Issacharscrouching down like a strong ass between two burdens. You neither speak for Christ, nor pray for Christ, nor give to Christ, nor live to Christ. But having a name to live, while you are dead, wrapping yourselves up in a profession, while you are not living to Christ, nor consecrating your being to Him! Judge what I say. If you were put into the sieve this night, how many of you would come out clean in this matter? Are there not many high-flying professors here, who fly high but who do nothing? Who can talk fast but live as slowly as you like? Who, perhaps, delight in hearing the Truth but who never practice the Truth in serving their God, nor living to His honor? Such as you, Sirs, are the most useless and worthless of all creatures in the world! For, like the vine, you would be honorable if you were fruitful. But without fruit, as the vine is despicable, so are you good for nothing but to be cast out and burned!

2. And now I come to the second question*Why is it that these men are fruitless and must be cast away*? The reason is because they have no roots. Many, many professors have not roots. Fine professors they are, beautiful to look at but they have no roots whatever. Dont you remember your childhoodwhen you had a little garden of your own, when you plucked some flowers and put them in the ground and said that was your garden? And when you went the next day you found that all the flowers were withered and dead? Such are many professorspretty flowers, plucked off without roots, having no adherence to the soil, drawing no sap and no nourishment from it. And therefore it is they die and bring forth no fruit! You come to us and say, I wish to join the Church. We question you as far as we are able. You solemnly tell us that your hearts are right with God. We baptize you, receive you into our number. But then there was no root in many of you and, after a while you die. When the sun has risen with a burning heat you perish. Or if you maintain a tolerably fair profession there is never any fruit upon you, because you did not first get the root. You got the notion first and then thought you would get the root afterwards. I tremble for many young people in my ChurchI will not exclude my own Church. They get an idea into their heads that they are convertedthe work was not true, not genuine, not real. It was an excitementit was a stir in the conscience for a while and it will not last. But the worst of it is that though it does not last, they last as professors! When they have been received into the Church, they say, I am sure enough! Preach about them as long as you please, you cannot get at them. They are Church members, they are baptized persons, they have passed the Rubicon. What more do they need? You can do little for them. I tremble for thesemy most hard-hearted hearers I weep before God! But for these people I need to have four eyes to weep with, for who can make an impression upon them when they are firmly persuaded that they are right? They have had the seal of the Church that they are rightthough notwithstanding that they are deceiving themselves and others and are still in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.

My young Friends, I do not want to prevent any of you from joining a Church. But I do say to you, make sure work of it before you make a profession! I would say to as many of you as love the Lord, come forward and unite with Gods people but, I beseech you, be sure to search your hearts and try your reins. Many have thought themselves converted when they were not. Hundreds of thousands have had an impressiona kind of conversion, not realwhich for a while endured, but afterwards it passed away as a summers dream! It was but a little while ago that I had in my house a gentleman, an excellent man and I believe a true child of God. He told me he had been brought seriously under conviction, on account of sin, through hearing a sermon of late. But, he said, I was baptized in my childhood. When I was but young there was a revival in our village, in New England. Mine was the hardest heart in the village, but I was found out at last. There was scarcely a boy or girl that did not join the Church and I was at last brought under deep conviction. I used to weep before God and pray to Him. I went to the minister and told him I was converted, deceived him and was baptized. And then he went on to tell me that he had dived into the blackest crimes and gone far away, even from the *profession* of religion. After going to College, he had been struck off the Church roll on account of wickedness and that up to this time he had been an infidel and had not so much as *thought* of the things of the Kingdom! Take heed, many of you, that you do not get a sham religion! Many jump into godliness as they would into a job. But they are very glad to jump out of it, too, when they find the world pays them better! And many there are who will just come and say they are the Lords and they think they are but there is no root in them. Therefore, by-andby, their impressions pass away. Oh, we have many fruitless professors in our midst because they did not look well to their beginnings! They did not take heed at their starting point. They did not watch well the first dawnthey thought the little farthing daylight of their own hopes was the dawning of the sun of righteousness! They thought the bleeding of their own conscience was a killing by the hand of God! Whereas it was a deeper and better and surer and more entire work that they needed, than that which they received. Let us take heed, my Brothers and Sisters, that we do not put too much trust in our *experiences*, while it is not yet proved in our beginnings! Let us often go back and begin again! Let us often go to Christ with the old cry

Nothing in my hands I bring,

Simply to Your Cross I cling.
For remember that these bad beginnings have had a great effect in making a man fruitless!

3. And again, thirdly, *what is Gods estimation of fruitless professors*? I shall not ask you their own. For there are many men who are professors of religion with whom you might make your fortune very speedily if you could buy them at your price and sell them at their own! There are many, too, that have a very good opinion of themselves which they have gained from the Church. The minister thinks well of them; the Church thinks well of them; they are respectable people. It is so nice to have them come, it helps the cause, so, to see such respectable persons sitting in the pews! Really, I think he would do for a deacon! Everybody thinks well of him, everybody praises him. Now we have nothing to do with this kind of opinion, tonightour business is with

Gods opinion of such a man! And Gods opinion of a man who makes a profession without being sincere is thisthat he is the most useless thing in the world! And now let me try to prove it. Is there anyone who will prove that this man is any use at all? I will ask the ChurchHere is a man who brings forth no fruit and has only a profession. Members of the Church, what is the use of this man? Will he comfort any of you in your distress? Will he hold up the pastors hands in prayer when he is weary? Will he lead the troops to battle? Will he be of any service to you? I see you unanimously lift up your hands and say, The man is of no use to us whatever if he brings forth no fruit! If his life is not consistent with his profession, strike his name off the Church roll! Let him go, he is of no use. Where has he gone? He has gone to the world. Bring the worldlings up! What do *you* think of this man? He makes a profession of religion. Is he of any use to you? No, they say, we do not need such a fellow as that. The man is Jack-of-bothsides. He is sometimes a professor of religion and sometimes a sinner in the worldwe will have nothing to do with him. Turn him out of our company.

Where shall we send him, then? How shall we dispose of him? He seems to be of no use either to the Church or the world. Is he of any use to his family? Ask his eldest son. John, is your father any good to you? No, Sir. None at all. He used to pray the Lord to save us with seeming earnestness and rise from his knees to give vent to his temper. Many a violent blow has he given me without any reasonable provocation. He was always a passionate man. He used to go to Chapel on Sunday and take us with him. But then we knew what he used to do on Monday. He would get drunk, or swear. He was never any use to me! He made me an infidel, Sir! Ask his wife. Well, what do you think of this good husband of yours? He has long made a profession of religion. Ah, Sir, it is not for me to say a word about my husband but he has made me a miserable woman! I think I would have joined your Church long ago if it had not been for his miserable inconsistencies. But really, he has grieved my heart, he has always been a stumbling block to me. And what to do with him, I do not know. Well, Jane, we will have you out of the kitchen. What think you of your master? He makes a profession of religion, yet does not live a right life. What do you think of him? Well, I did think that Christians were a good sort of people and that I should like to live with them, but if this is Christianity, Sir, I will take five pounds a year less to work for a worldly man! Thats all I can say. Well, what is the use of him? I suppose he does something in business. He is a grand professor. He keeps a shop. Everybody thinks him a most respectable man. Has he not given a hundred pounds just now to the building of a new Church? Is he not always known to subscribe liberally to ragged schools? We will ask his men. What do you think of your master? What do we think of him? Why, we would think a great deal more of him if he would give us a half-crown a week more wages, for he is the worst paymaster in the parish. Perhaps that is nothingwhat do you think of him? Why, that he is an unutterable cant! Some of us did go to a place of worship but we are honest and we would rather stay away than go with such a miserable hypocrite.

I am describing real cases and not fictions. I need not to go farther than between this and London Bridge to knock at the door and wake them up, some of them! What is the good of such professors? If they would speak fairly out and say, I am not a Christian, there would be some sense in it. For if Baal is God, let Baal be served. And if the world is worth serving, let a man serve it outright! But if God is God and a man lives in sin and talks about Divine Grace, then of what use is he? God Himself will disown him! Ask Him if this man has been of any use and He replies, No, of no use whatever. The vine is of no use unless it brings forth fruitand this man, making a profession, is worse than worthlessbecause he does not live up to it. My dear Friends, I would not say an extravagant thing, but I will say this very coollyif any of you who make a profession of religion are deceiving others by not living up to it, I do request youand I say it advisedlyI do request you to give up your profession unless God gives you Grace to live up to it! Do not, I beseech you, halt between two opinions. If God is God, serve Him and do it thoroughly. Do not tell lies about it. If Baal is God, if he is a nice master, if you would like to serve him and win his wages, serve him! But do not mix the two together. Be one thing, or else the other. Renounce your profession and serve the devil thoroughly, or else keep your profession and serve God with all your heartone thing, or else the other. I solemnly exhort you to choose which you will have, but never think that you can keep both, for no man can serve two masters. You cannot serve God and mammon.

4. And now let me close up by mentioning *what is to become of this fruitless tree*. We are told it is to be devoured in the fire. When an old vine is pulled off the wall, after having brought forth no fruit, what becomes of it? You know there are a lot of weeds raked up in a corner of the garden and the gardener, without taking any notice of it, just throws the vine on the heap of weeds and it is burned up. If it were any other kind of tree, he would at least reserve it for chopping up to make a fire within the masters house. But this is such an ignominious thing, he throws it away in the corner and burns it up with the weeds! If it were a stout old oak, it might have the funeral of the Yule log, with honor in its burning and brightness in its flame. But the fruitless vine is treated with contempt and left to smolder with the weeds, the refuse and the rubbish. It is a miserable thing. Just so with professors. All men who love not God must perish. But those who profess to love Him and do not, shall perish with singular ignominy! They shall not come into the sepulchers of the kings. Something like that ancient king of whom it was said, He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem. The damnation of a professor will be the most horrible and ignominious sight that ever Hell itself has seen! When Satan fell from Heaven with his black Satanic malice against God, there was a kind of grandeur in his devilry. There was an awful, terrific sublimity in his damnation. And when a great blasphemer and a hard swearer shall be sent, at last, to Perdition, there shall be something of sublimity in it because he has been consistent with his profession. But when a professor of religion finds himself in Hell, it shall be the most miserable, contemptible and yet terrible mode of damnation wherewith men were ever damned!

I think I see honest blasphemers lifting themselves from their chains of fire and hissing between their teeth at the minister who comes there, after having been a deceiverAha! Aha! Aha! Are you here with us? You did warn us of our drunkenness and tell us of our curses! Ah, are you come into the drunkards Hell, yourself! Pshaw! says another, that is your strict Pharisee. Ah, I remember how he told me one night that I would perish unless I made a profession of religion. Take that, Sir! And he spits upon him. You are a loathsome thing! I perished but I served my master well. Youyou pretended to serve God and yet you are a sneaking hypocrite! Says another, yelling from the corner of the pit, Let us have a Methodist hymn, Sirquote a promise from the Bible! Tell us about Election. Let us have a little of your fine preaching now. And round Hell there goes the hiss and the, Aha! Aha! Aha! And the yell of spitefulness and scorn upon the man who professed to be a Christian but became a castaway because his heart was not right in the matter. I confess I should dread above all things the unutterable Hell of hells of hypocritical apostatesof men that stand in the ranks, profess to love God, prate of godliness, sit in the pews and uphold Christianity! They take the Sacrament and speak about communion, stand up to pray and talk about being heard for their faithwho are all the while committing abominations and under cover of their profession are cheating the poor, robbing the fatherless and doing all kinds of iniquity!

I confess I as much dread the excess of their damnation above the damnation of others, as I dread to be damned at all! It is as if in Hell another Hell had been made to damn those that sin above othersto damn them after being damnedfor hypocrites, for men who have been with us and not of us, who professed to be Christs and yet have been mean deceivers, after all! Oh, Sirs, if you would not make your chains more heavy, if you would not stir the fire to a more furious heat, if you would not make your yells more hideousquit your professions this nightif you are not worthy of them! Go out of this place and send in your resignation to the Church. Or else, Sirs, be honest and bend your knee before God and ask Him to search you and try you and make you sincere and upright before Him. Be one thing, or else the other. Do not cloak yourselves in the robes of sanctity to hide the corruptions that all the while fester beneath! Stand out boldly, brave sinners, and do not be mean, sneaking sinners that wear the masks of saints! What is the vine more than any other tree? Without fruit it is worse than any other! It must perish more dolefully, more horribly than any other if there is no fruit brought to perfection on it. Does not that shake us? Ah, it will shake you, very likely, that do not want the shaking but the men that need awakening will stay just as they were. It will go into the hearts of some of you, like the cry, Howl, Moab, howl, Moab! But alas, Moab will not howl. You will weep for Kirhareseth but Kirhareseth will not weep for herself. You will weep for your hypocritical friends, but they will rub their eyes and say, A strong sermon. But it has nothing to do with me. And they will go out with cool presumptionsin with one hand and take the sacramental cup with the othersing the lascivious song one night and then sing

Jesus, lover of my soul,
the day after. They will meet Christ here, and take the devil yonder and bid him God speed in all his freaks of devilry! Ah, Sirs, Sirs, Sirs! Take heed, take heed, I beseech you, of this matter! Let us each search our hearts lest we should have been deceived. And may God bring us to a right understanding in this matter that we may be clear before Him. Search me, O God and know my ways, try me and know my thoughts, and see if there are any wicked ways in me. And lead me in the way everlasting.

And now I must not send you away until I have had a word with my Friend in the aisle there. He says, I like that, I like that. I am no professor, I am not, I am all right. No one can call *me* a hypocrite. Well, my dear Friend, I am very glad you are not, because you say you are no Christian! But let me tell you, you must not expect to be better off for that. Suppose two men are brought up before the Lord Mayor and one says, Your worship, I am an honest man and not guilty. And he blushes that an imputation should be cast on his character. Well he is proved to be guilty and gets committed to prison for three months. Up comes the other one and says, Your worship, I am a guilty man. I always was a rogue and I always shall be. I dont make any profession at all. I think I must give you six months, says his Worship, for really, I think you must be the more determined rascal of the two. So if any of you say, I do not make a profession, I shall be all right, let me tell you that to make a lying profession is a very fearful thing, but for you to think of getting off because you make *no profession* at all is equally bad! Take heed you do not deceive yourselves! It must be the new heart and the right spirit with God, or else profession or no profession, we must perish! Oh, that God would give us Grace to go to our houses and cry to Him for mercy and would help us to repent of our sins and bring us to put our trust simply and wholly upon the Lord Jesus Christ! So should we be saved now and saved forever! Amen.

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 #323 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

VILE INGRATITUDE!
NO. 323

DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, MAY 27, 1860, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL SOUTHWARK.
Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations.
Ezekiel 16:1-2.

AND how do you think the Prophet proceed in order to accomplish the solemn commission which had been thus entrusted to him? Did he begin by reminding the people of the Law which was delivered to Moses on the top of Sinai? Did he picture to them the exceeding fearfulness and quaking of the leader of Israels host when he received that stony Law in the midst of thunders and lightning? Or did he, do you think, proceed to point out to them the doom which must inevitably befall them, because they had broken the Divine Law and violated Gods holy statutes?

No, my Brethren. If he had been about to show to the then unprivileged *gentiles* their iniquity, he might have proceeded on legal grounds. He was now, however, about to deal with Jerusalem, the highly-favored city and here he does not bring to their mind the Law. He does not begin dealing out law-thunders to them at all. He fetches obligations as his arguments to convince them of sin from the Grace of God, rather than from the Law of God.

And, my Brethren, as I am about this evening to address you who profess to be followers of the Son of God and who by faith have fled for refuge to the hope set before you in the Gospelas my business is to convince you of sin, I shall not begin by taking you to Sinai. I shall not attempt to show you what the Law is and what that penalty is which devolves upon every man that breaks it. But, feeling that you are not under the Law, but under Grace, I shall draw arguments from the Grace of Godfrom His Gospelfrom the favor which He has shown you arguments more powerful than any which can be fetched from the Law to show you the greatness of your sin and the abomination of any iniquity which you have committed against the Lord your God.

I shall take Ezekiels method as my model and proceed to copy it thus first, let us consider the abomination of our sin, aggravated as it is by the remembrance of what we were when the Lord first looked upon us. Secondly, let us see our sins in another lightin the light of what the Lord has made us since those happy days. And then, let us proceed to notice

what our sins have themselves been. And we shall have, I think, three great lamps which may cast a terrible light on the great wickedness of our sins.

I. First, then, let us consider our iniquitiesI mean those committed since conversion, those committed yesterday and the day before and today. Let us see their sinfulness in the light of what we were when the Lord first looked upon us. In the words of the Prophet Ezekiel, observe what was our birth and our nativity. He says of us, Your birth and your nativity is of the land of Canaan. Your father was an Amorite and your mother an Hittite. Now, Canaan, as you know, was a cursed one and the land of Canaan here meant refers to the cursed people whom God utterly gave up to be destroyed with the sword, that not one of them might escape.

Mark it, our nativity and our birth were of the land of the curse. Your father was an Amorite and your mother an Hittite. When the Lord is speaking of His people as they are in covenant with Him, He tells them that their father was Abraham, whom He did choose and their mother was Sarah whom He loved. Yet when He speaks of their *natural* estate, He compares their parentage to that mixed offspring of an Amorite father and a Hittite mother. Yes, and what was *our* parentage, Brothers and Sisters? Let us look back and wonder. Surely our father Adams wickedness was in us. Our early childhood began to discover the latent sparks of our sin. Scarcely do we remember the time when they were sparks, so early were they fanned into a flame.

When any of you look back to your fathers house, to the place from which God called you, you may be constrained to wonder. I know there are many members of this Church here present who are the only ones out of a family who were ever called to know the Lord. Your father, perhaps, lived and died a drunkard. You can look back to the two or three that you remember of your ancestors and they have been without God and without hope, strangers to the commonwealth of Israel. Then what was there in you or in your fathers house that God should set His love on you? Indeed, as for those of us who have been blessed with pious parents, we have nothing to boast of our ancestry, for we all were born in sin and shaped in iniquity.

Has the Lord loved us, though there was nothing in our birth or parentage to invite regard, or merit esteem? Then surely every sin that we commit now is aggravated by that sovereign choice, that infinite compassion that coated us, though our birth was vile and our original base. Did You take me from the dunghill, O my God, and do I sin against You? Did you take the beggar in his rags and lift him up to make him sit among Your sons and daughters, the very blood-royal of Heaven? And has that beggar afterward become a rebel against You? Oh Sin, you are an accursed thing indeed! When I think of that grace which has thus honored the dishonorable, exalted the mean things of this world and saved creatures that were the offscouring of creation, how I blush for the ingratitude that can forget such tender obligations and do despite to such extraordinary unmerited goodness!

Further, the Prophet goes on to say that not only their parentage was base, but their condition was dangerous in the extreme. That which was absolutely necessary for the life of an infant had in this case been utterly neglected. The babe had been cast away as though it were useless and its life unworthy of preservation. Offspring desertedhaving none to tend it or care for its welfaremay perhaps awaken the lowest, the most contemptuous kind of pity.

Was not that just our condition when the Lord looked upon us? We had not been severed from the old natural stock of Adam. There had been no water used to wash us from our natural pollution, or to make our conscience supple, our neck pliant, or our knees bend before the power of Gods grace. We had not been swaddled or cared for. There was everything in our condition that would tend to destruction, but nothing in us that would tend upwards towards God. There we were, dying, nowe were dead, rotten, corruptso abominable that it might well be said, Bury this dead one out of my sight when Jehovah passed by and He said unto us, live.

Oh, some of you can remember how you were steeped up to the very neck in lust. Pardon me, Brethren, when I allude to these things that you may be led to see your present sins in the light of the mercy which has blotted out your past iniquities. It is not long since some of your conversations were larded with oaths dailyyou could scarcely speak without blasphemy. As for others of us who were never in open sin, how base were we! The recollection of our youthful iniquity crushes us to the very earth. When we think how we despised the training we received, could laugh at a mothers prayers and contemn all the earnest tender exhortations which a godly parents heart afforded to uswe could hide ourselves in dust and ashes and never indulge another thought of self-satisfaction.

Yet, though Sovereign Mercy has put all these sins awaythough love has covered all these iniquities, and though everlasting kindness has washed away all this filthwe have gone on to sin. We have gone on to sinthank God not to sin as we did before, not so greedily, not as the ox drinks down waterstill we have transgressed and that in the light of mercy. Mercy which has blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions and, as a cloud, your sinsour sinssince redemption was revealed to our souls, are abominations indeed! If I had known, O my

Brethren, in that hour when Christ took away my sinif I had known what an untoward disposition I had then to show and what broken vows I should have now to reflect upon, I do not think I could have borne the revelation.

If some of us who are here present, rejoicing in covenant love and mercy, could have a clear view of all the sins we have committed since conversionof all the sins we shall commit till we land in HeavenI question whether our senses might not reel under the terrible discovery of what base things we are. I am sure if any man had told me that my heart would ever grow cold, that I should ever forget my Lord and Master and get worldlyif an angel from Heaven had told me these things, in the day when I first saw my Masters face and looked and loved and lived, I should have said, Is your servant a dog that I should do this thing?

When I sat down and viewed the flowing of His precious blood and knew that my sins were put away, I thought I should never sin against Him any more. I dreamed and was it only a dream, that I should spend and be spent in His service? That no toil would be too hard, no sacrifice too great? And here we find ourselves flinching and drawing back and finding excuses for leaving His service. No, worse than that, smiting the face of our best Friend and grieving His Holy Spirit and often causing Him to hide His face from us by reason of our sin. Well might Moses say, I beseech You, O Lord, show me not my wretchedness.

One thing else appears designed to represent our sins as blacker still. It appears from the fifth verse, that this child, this Jewish nation, when God loved it, had none other to love it. None eye pitied you, to do any of these unto you, to have compassion on you. But you were cast out in the open field to the loathing of your person in the day that you were born. Do any of you know what it is to be cast out to the loathing of your persons? We will not say that our character had become such that we were loathed by others, but well we remember the time when we loathed ourselveswhen we could say with John Bunyan that we wished we had been a dog or a toad sooner than have been a man, because we felt ourselves so vile in having sinned against God.

Oh, I can remember the season when my fondest wish was that I had never been born, because I so sinned against God. The sight of my iniquity was suchthat horror took hold of me and amazement of soul overwhelmed me. I was indeed cast out to my own loathing if not to the loathing of others. And indeed, it is no wonder if a man, when he has his eyes opened, loathes himself. There is nothing so loathsome as an unregenerate hearta heart that is like a den of unclean birds full of all manner of filthiness and ravenousness. The greatest abomination that ever existed physically is not to be compared with the moral abominations that dwell in the unrenewed heart. It is a miniature Hell, it is pandemonium in embryo. You have but to let it grow and the vileness which is in the human heart by nature would soon make a Hell if there were no Hell.

And yet, my Brethren, when we were loathed, when even our person was loathed, he loved us. Great God! How could You love that which we ourselves hated? Oh, it is Gods Grace, it is Gods Grace, it is Gods Grace indeed! Where is free will, my Brethren? Where is free will? There is no such thing. Nomen est sine re, said Martin Lutherit is a name for nothing. When we think of what we were, the thought of merit vanishes. It at once refutes itself the moment we look it in the face. It was Gods Gracefree, rich, unconstrained, Sovereign Grace which looked on us. I am sure if there are any who think there was some good thing in them that invited Gods attention, or led Him to look upon them, I can only say I know there was nothing of the sort in *me*.

There was everything to hate, nothing to desireeverything to detest, nothing to delight in. Much that He might spend his hatred on, but nothing which could command His affection or His love. Still He loved us, still He loved us, and yetO you heavens be astonishedyet we have sinned against Him *since then*! We have forgotten Him, we have doubted Him, we have grown cold towards Him. We have loved self at times better than we have loved our Redeemer and have sacrificed to our own idols and made gods of our own flesh and self-conceit, instead of giving Him all the glory and the honor forever and forever.

This is putting sin in a Gospel light. I pray you, Brethren, if my speech is feeble and I cannot make the light shine on these things, spend a little season, as you can, in retirement when you are at home. Look at your sins in the light of the mercy which looked on you when you were thus dead and lost and hopelessly ruined. And surely the blush will mantle on your cheek and you will bow your knee with many a tear and cry, Lord have mercy upon me! O my Father, cast not away Your child! Forgive a child that spurned his Fathers love! Forgive a wife who has played the harlot against a Divine Husband! Pardon a soul that has been traitorous to its own Lordto Him who is its life, its joy, its all!

II. We must now pass on to another point. We have to think of what the Lord has done for us since the time He first loved us. I have made a mistake, Brothers and Sisters. I have made a mistake. The time when He first loved us, did I say? Why, before all timewhen there was no day but the uprising, upsetting day of eternitybeginning that knew no beginningdays that had no dateHe loved His people then. I meant to refer rather to THE TIME WHEN HE BEGAN TO MANIFEST HIS LOVE TO US PERSONALLY AND INDIVIDUALLY.

Well then, observe that one of the chief things He did to us was to spread His garment over us and cover our nakedness. He washed us with the water of regeneration. Yes, and truly washed away the stain of our natural sanguinity. Oh, that day, that day of days, as the days of Heaven upon earth, when our eyes looked to Christ and were lightenedwhen the burden rolled from off our back! Oh, that hour, that earliest of all our gracious remembrances, that first of all dateswhen we began to live, when we stepped down into that bath of atoning blood and came out of it fairer than any queen, more glorious than the daughters of men, white as alabaster, pure as crystal, like the driven snow without spot or blemish!

That day we never can forget, for it always rises to our recollection the moment we begin to speak about pardonthe day of our own pardon, of our own forgiveness. The galley-slave may forget the hour when he ceased to tug the oar. The poor chattel of his master may forget the time when he escaped from the accursed slaveholders grasp and became a free man. The sick man may forget the day when, after being long worn with pain till he was emaciated and at the gates of death, the blood began to leap in his veins and the glow of health began to invigorate his frame. The culprit who lay shivering beneath the executioners axe may forget the hour when suddenly his pardon was granted and his life was spared.

But if all these should consign to oblivion their surprising joys, the pardoned soul can never, never, never forget. Unless reason should lose her seat, the quickened soul can never cease to remember the time when Jesus said to it, Live. Oh and has Jesus pardoned all our sins and have we sinned still? Has He washed me and have I defiled myself again? Did He shed His blood to cleanse me and have I returned again to my natural depravity? Oh, these are abominations, indeed! I have heard some say that the sins of Believers are but trifles. Ah, my Brethren, I do think, if there is any difference, the sins of disciples of Christ are a thousand times worse than the sins of unbelievers, because they sin against a Gospel of love, a Covenant of mercyagainst sweet experience and against precious promises. The sinner may kick against the pricks, that is bad enough. But to kick against the wounds of Christ, is worse still. Yet that is what you and I have done. We have sinned since the dear hour that cleansed our guilt away.

Nor did the gracious things we have mentioned exhaust the loving kindness of the Lord. When He had washed us, according to the ninth verse, He anointed us with oil. Yes. And that has been repeated many and many a time. You have anointed my head with oil. He gave us the oil of His Grace. Our faces were like priests and we went up to His tabernacle rejoicing. Have you received the Spirit, my Brethren? Oh, think how great an honor that God should dwell in man! The centurion said he was not worthy that Christ should come under the roof of his house and yet the Holy Spirit has not merely come under your roof but has come into your hearts. There He dwells and there He reigns.

Yet, my dear Brethren, yet you have sinned. With Gods oil on your head you have sinned. With the Holy Spirit in your heart you have sinned. Ah, if any man carried God within him, would he go and sin? Shall the body that is the temple of the Holy Spirit be desecrated? Yet that has been the case with us. We have had God within us and yet we have sinned. Marvel of marvels! He that would defile the house in which the king lived would certainly be guilty of high insult. But he who defiles the temple in which the Holy Spirit resideswhat shall be said of him? This is what we have done. O Lord, have mercy upon Your people! Now we see our abomination in this clear light, we beseech You pardon it, for Jesus sake!

But further, we find that He not only washed us, He not only anointed us with oil, but He clothed us and clothed us sumptuously. The rich man in the parable of Jesus was clothed in scarlet, but we are better robed than he, for we are clothed in embroidered work. Jesus spent His life to work my robe of righteousness. His sufferings were so many stitches when He made the embroidered work of my righteousness. I clothed you also with embroidered work and shod you with badgers skin. Our shoes have been as iron and brass and as our day, so has our strength been. We have had always grace up to now sufficient for us. And I girded you about with fine linenthe righteousness of saints.

He has given to us the virtues of the Holy Spirit, the robe of sanctification. And then He has covered us with silk, even with that all-glorious robe of righteousness woven from the top throughout without seam, in which all His people stand arrayed. There never was anyone dressed so well as Gods people. Outwardly they may wear fustian and calico. They may come up to the House of God dressed in the garb of poverty, but they have robes which men cannot see, though angels can see and admire. A saints wardrobe would be a matchless thing to look at if we could but see it with the eyes of our understanding illuminated.

Have you ever been taken to see the wardrobes of some great personagestheir multiplied garmentsthe robes which they wore in state? You have wondered at their lavish expenditure. But see your own, see those shoesthat girding of fine linenand that covering of silk. Why, all the wealth of mankind could not buy an thread of that stuff. They could not procure a hem, much less the entire robe with which the righteous are adorned and made glorious. And yet they have turned aside and sinned.

What should you think of a bishop in his lawn sleeves defiling himself with outcasts in the street? What would think you of a king with a crown on his head going to break the laws of his kingdom? What would you think if a monarch should invest us with all the insignia of nobility and

we should afterwards violate the high orders conferred upon us while adorned with the robes of State? This is just what you and I have done. We have had all these costly robes and glorious garments and then we have gone and sinned against our God. O ingratitude of the vilest sort! Where are there words to denounce it! What language can fully express it?

We have but time to notice each one of these briefly. We have not only received clothing, but ornaments. I have decked you also with ornaments and put bracelets upon your hands and a chain on your neck and I put a jewel on your forehead and earrings in your ears and a beautiful crown upon your head. Just like a loving husband, not content with giving his wife an ornament, he gives her many.

And the Lord, you see, gives to His Church all the ornaments she can possibly desire. There are ornaments for her ears, a crown for her head, bracelets for her hands and a chain for her neck. We cannot be more glorious. Christ has given the Church so much, she could not have more. He could not bestow upon her that which is more beautiful, more precious, or more costly. She has all she can receive. The Lord Jesus has bestowed all His wealth and all Heavens wealth upon His Church. You and I are the inheritors and wearers of these precious ornaments. He has given to us jewels in our earsa hearing earHe has given us the jewel in our foreheada holy courage for His name. He has given us a crown upon our heada garland crown of loving kindness and tender mercy. He has given us bracelets upon our hands, that whatever we touch may be graced, that our conduct may be beautiful and lovely, an ornament to the profession which we have espoused. And He has been pleased to put a chain about our neck, that we may ever be known to be right noble personagesnoble of rank, exalted of station. Nevertheless, in the face of all these, we have sinned against Him.

Dear friends, it may seem like repetition when I go over the list of these mercies, but I cannot help it! I should like every one of these to be as a trumpet in your ear to wake you up to look at your sin. As a dagger in the heart of your pride to stab it and make it die. By these mercies of God, I adjure you, hate your sins. By these loving kindnesses, these favors immense, innumerable, unsearchableby these covenant gifts, every one of them more precious than a world of diamondsI beseech you hate the sins that have grieved your gracious Lord, and made His Spirit mourn. To see my sins in the lurid light of Sinai were bad enough, but to see them in the mellow radiance of His countenance and in the light that is shed from the Cross of my dying Masterthis is to see sin in all its blackness and all its heinousness.

Dear Brethren, do not tamper with sin. Never have anything to do with those who think sin is little because grace is great. Shun, I beseech you, any man who comforts his heart with the hope that the crimes of Gods children are mere trifles. No! Though there is precious blood to wash it all away, yet sin is an awful thing. Though there are Covenant promises to keep the Believer secure, yet sin is a damning thing. Though there is eternal love which will not execute the Divine anger upon usyet sin is a thrice-cursed thing. In fact, I would strain language to find an epithet for that sin which dares to nestle in the heart of a man whom God has loved and chosen.

I know that there is a tendency among some ministersI will not say to whom I allude, you may readily guesswho preach a Gospel which does seem as if it tolerated iniquity. Oh, come not into their secret, I pray you. Better for you, though it were one of the worst things that could be, if you were to endorse Arminianism rather than Antinomianism. Of the two devils, I think the white devil is the least devilish. As Rowland Hill saidThe one is a white devil and the other a black one.

They are both devils, I doubt not, but still one is more tearful in its character than the other. Have nothing to do with that horrible spirit which has done more to destroy sound doctrine in our Churches than anything else. Arguments will never break Antinomianism down. We are not afraid to meet our antagonists in fair and open battle. The ill lives of some who call themselves Calvinists, and are no more Calvinists than they are Jews, have brought that doctrine into great disrepute. We often have flung in our faces the wickedness of some professors and the rash, not to say wicked, teaching of some of our preachers, as a reason why our Brethren should be accounted worthy of all scorn. The more gracious God is, the more holy you should be. The more love He manifests to you, the more love should you reflect to Him.

III. And now, I shall close by noticing in the third place, WHAT OUR SINS REALLY HAVE BEEN. We will not enter into particulars. We have each one, a different way. It were idle, therefore, for me to think of describing the sins of such an assembly as here present. The germs, the vileness, the essence of our own sin, has lain in thisthat we have given to sin, and to idols, things that belong unto God. You have also taken your fair jewels of My gold and of My silver, which I had given you and made to yourself images of men and did commit whoredom with them and took your embroidered garments and covered them and you have set My oil and My incense before them. My meat also which I gave you, fine flour and oil and honey, wherewith I fed you, you have even set it before them for a sweet savor.
I have done thislet me make confession for myself and then I admonish you each one apply the case to yourselves. It has been a happy Sabbath day, my soul has enjoyed personal fellowship with ChristI have gone up in the pulpit and had liberty of speech and power has attended the words. There has been manifestly the Holy Spirit in the midst of His Church. I have gone home, had access to God in prayer and enjoyed again communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. I go forth once more to unfold the things of the Gospel and with delight to my own soul, have I heard afterwards of saints who have been refreshed and sinners converted.

This was like fine flour, and honey, and oil that God had given to me. Why did He give it to me? Why, that I might offer it to Him and give Him all the glory. And do you know, I have caught myself saying, Ah, you have done well today. You are growing in grace and living near to God. What? Am I offering Gods blessings before the shrine of my abominable pride? Am I making an offering to Moloch and bringing the very gifts and lovetokens of my Father, to be laid upon the altar of my own pride? This is abominable indeed! This is so vile that no language can execrate it sufficiently. To offer my own work is bad enough, but to offer Gods Grace to idols, to spend His mercies in the gratification of my fleshto look upon my own self as having done it, to sacrifice to my own conceit, to make an ablution to self of that which God has given methis is atrocious enough to make a man fall very humbly before God, to feel the bitterness of his sin and ask for pardon.

You have transgressed in like manner, I dare say. When you pray at a Prayer Meeting, the devil insinuates the thought and you entertain it, What a fine fellow I am! You may detect yourself, when you are talking to a friend, of some good things God has done. Or when you go home and tell your wife lovingly the tale of your labor, there is a little demon of pride at the bottom of your heart. You like to take credit to yourself for the good things you have done. I am speaking of you all. There is no exception here. Does not a little bit of the old man creep out, just as when Jehu said, Come see my zeal for the Lord?

Now what is that but taking Gods fine meal and oil and honey and offering them to yourselves? If there should be an innocent man, one who pleads a not guilty upon this matter, he can get up and go out if he likes. But I am sure you will all sit still, at least, all who know your own hearts. Your own experience will require you to sayI must confess it before God. But have you not noticed that there are other ways besides this? Sometimes a man has another god besides pride. That god may be his sloth. He does not want to do much. He reads in the Bible that there is a finished righteousness, that the Covenant of Grace is complete. Have you ever detected yourself, when inclined to be dilatory in spiritual things, leaning on the oar of the Covenant, instead of pulling at it and saying, Well, these things are true, so there is no great need for me to stir myself?

Ah, you have been quietly nestling down to sleep, even under the influence of the sweet wine of the Covenant of Grace. It is sad that it should be so. It would be bad enough if we had picked up an excuse from our own logic. But instead of that, we have gone to Gods Book to feign apologies for our idleness. Was not that taking His mercies and sacrificing them to false deities? Sometimes it is even worse. God gives to His people riches and they offer them before the shrine of their covetousness. He gives them talent and they prostitute it to the service of their ambition. He gives them judgment and they pander to their own advancement and seek not the interest of His kingdom. He gives them influence. That influence they use for their own aggrandizement and not for His honor.

What is this but parallel to taking His gold and His jewels and hanging them upon the neck of Ashtaroth. Ah, let us take care when we think of our sinsthat we set them in this light. It is taking Gods mercies to lavish them upon His enemies. Now, if you were to make me a present of some token of your regard, I think it would be the meanest and most ungracious thing in the world I could do to take it over to your enemy and say, There, I come to pay my respects. To pay my respects to your foe with that which had been the token of your favor!

There are two kings at enmity with one anothertwo powers that have been at battle and one of them has a rebellious subject, who is caught in the very act of treason and condemned to die. The king very graciously pardons him and then munificently endows him. There, says he, I give you a thousand crown-pieces. Can that man take the bounty and devote it to increasing the resources of the kings enemies? Now, that were a treason and baseness too vile to be committed by worldly men. Alas then! That is what you have done. You have bestowed on Gods enemies what God gave to you as a love-token.

Oh, Brothers and Sisters, let us bow ourselves in dust and ashes before God. Let us turn pride out tonight, if we can. But it will be hard work. Let us try, in the strength of the Spirit, that we may at least put our foot on its neck and as we come to the Lords Table, may we have a joy for pardoned guilt. But may we mourn that we have pierced the Lord and mourn most that we continue to pierce Him still and sometimes put Him to an open shame by our disregard for His laws.

The Lord bless this to His people. And as for those who are unconverted, let them remember that if the righteous have cause to weep and if the sins of the saint are abominable, what must be the iniquity of that man who goes on still in his sins and repents not! The Lord grant to

such grace to repent and pardon, for Jesus sake.
MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I ought to have written to you long before this, but I have been traveling very fast and I did not feel at all in an industrious state when I arrived at an hotel late at night. We have had the very best of weather and the journey has surpassed all my expectationswe are now in lovely Venice. At Geneva I had a noble time. Only think of the Baptist in a Cathedralan unpolluted High Church pulpit wherein never stood Dissenter before. I wore the Calvinistic gown and bands for the first time and I fancied that my figure was unsightly. Nevertheless the Word was joyfully received and I felt glad. I have been into Churches innumerable and have seen sights which will never be forgotten by me. And really I cannot get the Popery enough out of my mind to attempt any poetical description of rock, river, or mountain. I shall be more glad to return than to have come here, which is saying very much, since it has been one of the gems of my life.

There are no buildings like the Tabernacle, no songs like ours, no people like my Church, no days like Sabbath-Days at home. My journey has refreshed my mind, instructed my soul, fired my imagination and rejoiced my spirit. Thank God for all his mercies. I trust there will be some enquirers when I return and those not a few, to show that the labors of my Brethren have been blessed in my absence. With kindest regards to all dear Friends and love to all the saints, I am, yours very truly in the Gospel of Christ,
Venice Hotel de la Ville,
July 21st, 1860.

C. H. SPURGEON.

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EZEKIELS DESERTED INFANT
NO. 468

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 7, 1862, *BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.
None eye pitied you, to do any of these unto you, to have compassion upon you. But you were cast out into the open field to the loathing of your person, in the day that you were born. And when I passed by you and saw you polluted in your own blood, I said unto you when you were in your blood, Live; yes, I said unto you when you were in your blood, Live.
Ezekiel 16:5, 6.

Doubtless the Lord here describes the Jewish people when they began to multiply in the land of Egypt and were grievously oppressed by Pharaoh. Pharaoh had commanded them to cast out the male children that they might perish. Hence, the figure of an infant deserted, cast out into the open field to perish by wild beasts, by starvation, or exposure, was a very apt portrait of the youthful state of Israel, when God looked upon her in love, and brought her out of Egypt to set her in a goodly land.

But all the best Divines and expositors concur in the belief that we have here also a most extraordinarily apt and significant description of the human race by nature, and of the way in which God in Divine mercy passes by the sinner when utterly lost and helpless and by the power of the Spirit, bids him Live. At any rate, we intend to consider it so this morning.

Without any preface, for we need none, we shall, first of all, bid you look at the misery of mans estate as set before us in the present verses. Then, next, we shall search for motives which could urge the Lord to have pity upon this miserable one. And then, thirdly, we shall pause a little while to listen to the Divine mandate by which this unhappy being is delivered from his lost estate. I said unto you, Live; yes, I said unto you, Live.

I. At the outset, I shall direct your contemplations to a survey of THE MISERY OF MANS ESTATE.
The verse presents to us an infant exposed to die. All the common offices that were necessary for its life and health have been forgotten. Its heartless parents have laid it out in the open field, having no regard whatever for it. There it lies before our eyes, covered with blood, exposed to wild beasts, famishing, ready to perish. Among many heathen nations there existed the barbarous custom of leaving deformed children to perish in the woods or fields. Among the Spartans it was an established regulation to abandon their weaker offspring to perish at the foot of Mount Taygetus.
And in these times there are dark places of the earth which are full of this unnatural cruelty. The Jews were certainly free from this sin but it was a practice of their near neighbors and therefore well known to them. And moreover, the remembrance of Egypt and their great lawgiver among the crocodiles of the Nile and all the males murdered by royal decree, would make the metaphor very simple to them.
1. At the very first glance, we remark, here is an *early ruin*. It is an infant. A thousand sorrows that one so young should be so deeply taught in miserys school! It is an infant. It has not yet tasted joy, but yet it knows pain and sorrow to the fullest. How early are you blasted, O sweet flower! How soon are your young dawnings quenched in darkness, O rising sun! A ruin so terrible and so early has fallen upon each of us. Let proud man kick against the doctrine as he may, Scripture tells us assuredly that we are born in sin and shapen in iniquity.
We came not into this world as Adam came into the garden, without flaw, without condemnation, without evil propensities. But lo, by one mans offense we are all made sinners and through his desperate fall our blood is tainted and our nature is corrupt. From the very birth we go astray, speaking lies and in the very birth we lie under the condemnation of the Law of God. It is not mine to defend this doctrine, to answer objections to it, or to bring arguments for it. I simply announce what God has Himself revealed by the mouth of His servant David and also more fully by the tongue of the Apostle Paul.
Man, unless God has mercy on you, you are lost and lost from your very beginning! You did not come into this world as one who might stand or fall, you were fallen already. An original and birth-sin had seized upon you in the womb, and you were even then as an infant cast out to perish and to die. There is hardly any doctrine more humbling than that of natural depravity or original sin. It has been the main point of attack for all those who hate the Gospel. And it must be maintained and valiantly vindicated by those who would exalt Christ, since the greatness and glory of His salvation lies mainly in the desperateness of the ruin from which He has redeemed us.
Man, think not to save yourself by your works. Boast not of the excellence of your character and of your nature. You are a traitors son, you are a felons child! An act of dishonor was passed upon your fathers house and you were born under the Law and under the curse obnoxious to Divine Wrath in the very moment when your first breath was drawn. Sad heritage of sin! Miserable estate of sorrow! How deep the ruin of the Fall! Oh, to Divine Grace what debtors we are, that out of this ruin it can lift us up to heights of glory!
2. The next very apparent teaching of the text is *utter inability*. It is an infantwhat can it do for itself? If it were a child of some few years it might be able, with tottering feet, to find its way to some shelter. If it had the gift of articulate speech, it might sob out its wants and tell to the passerby what it needed. But it is an infantit cannot speak. It knows sin but it has not mind enough to know why the pain is there. It is ignorant, and although conscious of its ills, its untutored, undeveloped intellect can neither describe the evil, nor prescribe the remedy.
Though it may cast its little eyes around, even if help were there, it were not in its power to avail itself of the offered aid. It is impotent, helpless, utterly powerless. If anything is to be done for it, it must all be done by anothers hand. Not even clay on the potters wheel is more helpless than this infant as it now lies cast out in the open field. Such is human nature. It can by no means help towards its own restoration. Dead, says our Apostle, dead in trespasses and sins, and what shall the dead in their graves do towards resurrection? Shall the worm become mother of life, or shall corruption be the father of immortality?

No, trumpet of God, there is no life in the dull, cold ear of death and no hearing in the hollow skull of the skeleton. If the graves open, a Divine hand must break the seal, heave up the mold and uplift the moldering corpse. If there is resurrection, it must come from God and from God alone. It must be a miracle in the beginning and a miracle even to the end. My Hearers, I am not the author of this doctrine, but simply the declarer of what God reveals. You are so lost that you cannot by the most desperate efforts of your own save yourselves! Noworseso lost that by nature you have no *wish* to be saved and will not make the efforts or *desire* to make them.
You hate God. It is a cutting accusation, but it is true, and may God the Holy Spirit make you feel its truth. Naturally, I say, you hate the Lord. By nature you love vanity and not Gods Truth. You love sin and do not wish to be delivered from it. Holiness you choose notGods commandments you abhor. Your nature has become so evil that the Ethiopian may sooner change his skin and the leopard his spots, than you of yourself learn to do well.
But, mark youand this is a thought that may crush our boasts and make us hang our heads like a bulrush evermorethis inability is our *own sin*. This is laid at our doornot as an excuse for our sinfulness but as a frightful aggravation of our guiltthat we have become so bad that we cannot make ourselves good. Our nature is now so desperately evil, both by its native depravity, and by our continual practice of sin, that iniquity has become our *nature*. It is as natural to us to sin as for water to descend, or sparks to fly upward

Where vice has held its empire long,
It will not endure the least control.
None but a power divinely strong
Can turn the current of the soul.

You cannot, Souls, you *cannot* save yourselves. You are as helpless as the infant cast out. Your inability is utter and entire.

3. Apparent, too, is yet a third misfortunewe are *utterly friendless*. None eye pitied you to do any of these things unto you. We have no friend in Heaven or in earth that can do anything for us, unless God shall interpose. Grant you that a tender parent may pity, but no parent can change his childs nature or cleanse away the sin of his offspring. Let it be granted that there are ministers of Christ whose tearful eyes would woo you to Christ, but the most earnest Evangelist cannot quicken your soul.

The most thundering of all Gods Boanerges cannot awake the dead. Let it be considered that angels are anxious for your conversion, that were you saved they would clap their wings with joy and make glad holiday in Heaven. But an angels power cannot snatch you from the grave of your sin, nor could the whole host of seraphs, with their kindred cherubs combined, do anything to deliver you from the ruin into which by Adams sin and your own, you have been brought. Your kinsfolk may weep and lament for you, but no lamentation can make an atonement for your sin, no human tears can cleanse your filthiness, no Christian zeal can clothe you with righteousness, no yearning love can sanctify your nature.

Friendless, helpless and ruined from our earliest stategood God, what creatures are men! Sinai thunders at us. The Law condemns us. Justice bares its sword. Holiness is incensed and truth is sworn to destroy. Where, where shall we fly, if You refuse us, O God!

4. Furthermore, our text very clearly reveals to us that we are by nature in a sad state of *exposure*. Cast out into the open field, left in a wilderness where it is not likely that any should pass by, thrown where the cold can smite by night and the heat can blast by day, left where the wild beast goes about, seeking whom he may devoursuch is the estate of human natureunclothed, unarmed, helpless, exposed to all manner of ravenous destroyers. Little do any of us know how exposed by nature we are to sloth, to drunkenness, to lust, and pride and unbeliefto all those young lions which hunt in company with the great lion of the pit who seeks whom he may devour.

O Lord God, You alone know the awful dangers which prowl around an unregenerate man. What mischiefs waylay him! What crimes beset him! What follies haunt him! As God only knows the fullness of the guilt of even *one* sin, so His infinite mind, alone, can grasp the number of those tremendous temptations which are planted like snares of death in the path of an unconverted soul. Death is after you, O you helpless one! Hell yawns for you, sin longs to devour you! Friend, you have none but foes and they are many. Armed and mighty are those who would destroy you, and you have no power nor will to resist them. You are as a helpless infant in a tigers jaws. Fascinated by the serpent eyes of sin, you are paralyzed by its witcheries and so rendered an easy prey for the Destroyer.

5. It seems that this child, besides being in this exposed state, was *loathsome*. You were cast out to the loathing of your person. It was in such a condition that the sight of it was disgusting and its person was so destitute of all comeliness that it was absolutely loathed. Such is man by nature, but he will not believe it. He still flatters himself that he is comely as the curtains of Solomon, while he is black as the tents of Kedar. We think ourselves angels, when we are nearest akin to devils. But when we get akin to angels, then we mourn the devil that still is within us.

I know this, that when God the Holy Spirit gives a man a view of himself, he is utterly loathsome in his own esteem. One of the cardinals of the olden timeswhen cardinals were sometimes saintshappened to pass by a meadow where he saw a shepherd leaning on his crook, weeping. He stopped to ask the lad what made him weep. The lad replied by pointing to the ground, for just at his feet there was a toad. I was weeping, said he, to think that God should have made me, a creature so infinitely superior to this loathsome reptile at my feet, and that I should have made myself such a creature that this loathsome thing is superior to me, because it has never sinned.

As the cardinal went his way, he said, Verily, has it happened, that the foolish and unlearned enter into the kingdom of Heaven before us, for this peasant has found out the Truth of God. Vipers nor toads are more venomous or more loathsome to men than man must be to God, or would be to himself if he could see himself with the eyes of truth and if the veil of pride were once lifted from his eyes. The image of God in man is all obliterated. We have ashes for beauty, shame for glory, rottenness for health and Hell for Heaven.

6. We close this fearful description by observing *the certain ruin to which this infant was exposed*, as setting forth the sure destruction of every man if Divine Grace prevent not. It is not a question whether man will be lost or not. As to whether man shall enter into the flames of Hell or not, is no queryman MUST perish unless God saves. Every one of us *must* be lost to all eternity, unless the strong arm of the Divine One interferes. There is no one else to nurture this helpless infant. This infant cannot rescue itself. Lost, lost, lost! Howl its requiem, you lost ones who have gone before, for help or hope there is none, unless the Eternal One shall interpose.

I would, dear Hearers, that this strong language, as you may think it, might be felt to be pertinent to your own case, if you are unconverted. I am not selecting special characters and impeaching certain offenders who have been outrageously wicked. I am not now describing only the harlot, or the burglar, or the murdererI am speaking of *everyone of you* by nature, of everyone of you who have not been born again. This is not complimentary language but it ill becomes Gods minister to compliment any man. We must tell you plainly the Truth of God.

You may have been moral, sober, generous, honestphilanthropy may have been as the air you breathe. There may be many good traits in your character that render you amiable to your relatives and friendsbut by nature you are not one whit better than the vilest of the vile. And were your nature permitted to show itself in all its foulness, the black fountain is in your heart as much as in those who are banished from their country for their countrys good. It is only Providence, or the check of society, that keeps it under. You are as much lost and ruined as they.

I know I address many of you who have never fled to Christ for refuge but are on very good terms with yourselves, because in comparison with others, your character is blameless. Let me entreat you by the living God that searches all hearts, to look at yourselves, this morning, in your fallen state. If you live and die as you now are, there can be nothing for your portion but the flames of Hell. God grant that you may be snatched from so terrible a doom. But I see not how this can be unless first you are led to see that you *deserve* this doom and are made to tremble at the evil of sin and the wrath of the Lord.

No doubt, Noah, when he told men they would all be drowned unless they fled to the ark, was thought to be very uncharitable. But it was the true charity which made him warn them. You *must* perish unless you find shelter in Jesus Christ. Your state is so terrible and damnable, that lost you *must be* unless you fly to Gods plan of salvation which He has laid down for lost, ruined, helpless sinners. Micaiah, spoke not good but evil, said the king, but he learned afterwards that Micaiahs hardness and boldness came of *God*, while the smooth things of the false Prophets came from the devil. I do again, then, beseech and entreat you to lay these things to heart.

Ruined Souls, you are self-destroyed, ready to perish, without help, without power! You are cast out and exposed to evils of which you, as yet, are not aware but certain ultimately to make your bed in Hell unless God delivers you. Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time. Confess your sins before Him with broken hearts, weep before Him the tears of penitence, and He can, yes, He

will deliver and bring up His chosen from the depths of destruction and His elect ones from the jaws of Hell. Thus mournfully have we rehearsed the story of human ruin. Let us bless God that we do not end here.

II. We are now to search for MOTIVES FOR GODS GRACE. Brethren, we have a very difficult search before us when we look to this infant which is cast out. Its loathsomeness and its being covered with its own blood forbid us at once to hope that there can be anything in it which can merit the esteem of the Merciful One. Let us think of some of the motives which may urge men to assist the undeserving.

1. One of the first would be, *necessity*. Some men, I do not doubt, are generous from necessity. That is to say they feel it necessary to maintain their reputation, and therefore they are generous before men. Or they gain so much self-esteemand there is a necessity in mans nature to make him seek after thatthat they are willing to be kind that they may be approved within. Not a few are placed in such a position that they could not well refuse to give their help when it is asked of them. But no necessity can ever effect the Most High. The first of all causes must be absolutely independent of every other cause. He acts voluntarily. It belongs to God to say absolutely, I will.

Man may say, I will, but it must always be with bated breath, for the sovereign fiat of God may contradict him. But God is under no necessity. Has He a superior? Who is king over Him? Who dictates counsel to the Most High? Who sits at His bar and gives Him advice and warning and makes Him do according to *his* pleasure? Nor had God any necessity in order to make Himself happy or to increase His glory. The praises of angels were enough for Him. No, even the praise of angels is as nothing in His awful sight. His joy is in Himself.

He finds within His own infinite essence a sufficiency of delight. He needs go abroad for nothing, for He fills all things and He is All in All. If it had been Gods will to leave the human race to perish, He might have done it, and there was none to say to Him, What are You doing? And when He does save man, it is not because there is any compulsion either moral, physical, or spiritual upon Him. He has done as He wills in this great matter of the redemption and salvation of men. O Soul, God is not bound to save you! Man, you are lost and there is nothing that can compel the Almighty to deliver you! If He does it, it must be according to His own good pleasure, to the praise of the glory of His Grace.

2. In this case, there was nothing in the *birth* of this child, in its original parentage, that could move the passerby. We are told in some former verses, your birth and your nativity is of the land of Canaan; your father was an Amorite and your mother an Hittite, both of them belonging to an accursed race. Look unto the hole of the pit from where you are dug. There was nothing in your birth or mine why He should have pity on us. Kings, princes, mighty men boast much of their pedigrees, but the Lord knows nothing of the glory of these family trees and ancestries. No, rather, He leaves the mighty man in the dust, cutting down the high tree, that He may cause the low tree to flourish.

He pours contempt upon princes and knows no respect of persons. All spring from the common race of man, and what is there in our corrupt nature, what is there in us to move the heart of God? Nothing, absolutely nothing. Young man, it is not because your father was godly, that God should be constrained to save you. It is not because your mother was a lady of rank, that the Almighty should stretch out His arm to you. You were conceived in sin, and stained in your very birth. There is, therefore, nothing here that could move the heart of deity.

3. Nor was there anything in this childs *beauty*, for it was loathsome. Men are often affected by beauty. Doubtless Pharaohs daughter preserved Moses because he was a comely child. We know that Ahasuerus chose Esther because of her beauty. And there have been many that have been exalted in the world for their personal attractions. But it was not so with man in Gods sight. The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores.

We are not only sinners, but *sin* itself. How then can sin attract the regard and love of a perfectly holy God? There may be much in us that can make our fellow creatures esteem usthere can be nothing in us as fallen, condemned, ungodlythat can make God esteem us. I know that you who are spiritually taught, will join with me in singing

What was there in us to merit esteem,
Or give the Creator delight?
It was even so, Father, we ever must sing, For so it seemed good in Your sight.

See then, Sinner, you are without form or comeliness, and you have no beauty that He should desire you. What can there be in a worm to gratify the Almighty? The heavens are not pure in His sight and He charged His angels with folly. How much less, then, should there be any beauty in man, that is but a worm, or in the son of man, that is crushed before the moth? Think not that He needs your beauty to excite His love. He can love you though deformed, and love you till He has made you comely by His comeliness, which He shall put upon you.

4. Furthermore, as we have found no motive yet, either in necessity or the childs birth or beauty, so we find none in any *entreaties* that were uttered by this child. It does not seem that it pleaded with the passerby to save it, for it could not as yet speak. So, though sinners do pray, yet when a sinner prays, it is because God has begun to save him. A sinners prayers can never be the cause of his salvation, for, mark you, the Truth of God is that no man ever seeks God firstGod has first sought him and began a good work in his soul, before he ever turns to God.

In some cases, this is very extraordinarily proved. The old writers used to quote the instance of a man who went into a wood, having been an outrageous sinner, with the determination of destroying himself. While he adjusted the rope, some passerby, hearing a sound, came and expostulated with him and the words were blessed to his salvation. Is there any preparation or preparatory process in a man who has come to such a pitch of sin, that he is about to take away his own life, to wash his hands in his own blood? Surely this was Divine Grace.

There were one or two cases in Whitfields history, of men who came into places where he was preaching, with stones in their pockets to pelt him with but who became themselves converted. Was there anything there for the Grace of God to get a hold of, anything to foster, to favor, to nourish the Grace, the Sovereign Grace of the Most High? No, rather, while they were yet without anything whatever that could have cried after God, He was found of them that sought Him not. He called them a people that were not a people, and her Beloved that was not Beloved.

I know some think that the sinner takes the first step but we know better. If he did, it were like the old Romish miracle of St. Dennis, where we are told that after his head was cut off, he picked it up and walked two thousand miles with it in his hand! Whereupon, some wit observed that he did not see any wonder in the mans walking two thousand milesfor all the difficulty lay in the first step. Just so, I see no difficulty in a mans getting all the way to Heaven, if he can but take the *first step*. For all the miracle lies in that first step, the making the *dead soul live*, the melting of the adamantine heart, the thawing of the northern ice, the bringing down of the proud look. This is the work, this is the difficulty. And if man can do that himself, verily, he can do the whole work.

But when God looks upon men to save them, it is not *because* they cry to Him, for they never do and never will cry until the work of salvation is *begun*. They are unwilling and unable to use any entreaty or persuasion that could be cogent to the heart of God. Rather, they abhor the mercy. They run away from the Divine Grace which is offered to them. They reject the Gospel when it is preached. They will not come to Christ that they may have life, but they willfully and wickedly turn their backs upon the Most High. Until He by His strong hand brings them to Christ, saved they will never be. O Divine Grace, O Divine Grace, how wide Your sphere! How glorious are You in meeting the degradation and the sin of man! You show the splendor of Your power in beginning, carrying on, and finishing the work.

5. Yet, further, Brethrenit does not appear that the pity of the passerby was shown upon this child because of any *future service* which was expected of it. This child, it seems, was nourished, clothed, luxuriously decorated, and yet, after all that, if you read the chapter through, you will find it went astray from Him who had set His heart upon it. The Lord foresaw this and yet loved that child notwithstanding. God knew that you and I, though He loved us when there was nothing good in us, after we were saved should still rebel. He knew that we had backsliding hearts. He knew that we should be unbelieving even to the endbut He loved us notwithstanding all this.

He did not *love you* because He foresaw you would be a preacher. Nor *you* because He knew you would be a tract distributor. Nor *you* because He knew that you would be an indefatigable Sunday school teacher. He loved you although He knew that you would be as you are today, ungrateful and unkind to Himcold in your soul, worldly in your spirit. You can today, rehearse experimentally, our last Sundays text, I was as a beast before you: nevertheless I am continually with you.

There was, then, no motive of future service why this child should be blessed, or why God should save man. I do not knowl want to say what I cannot say this morning. I want to exhibit to you *man*, standing as a criminal at the bar, guilty, proved to be guilty even to his very face, yet proudly saying that he is not guilty. A traitor at heart, a base rebel, an ungrateful wretch! I want you to think of him as one upon whom pity seems as if it would be thrown awaynot an object for mercy. One of whom the universe cries, Away with him, away with him, it is not fit that he should live!

And then, I want to show you God in the sovereignty of His Divine Grace, saying, I *will* spare that traitor. He deserves to die but I will spare him. I have no motive for it, except such as is in My own will. There is nothing in him, no reason in him why I should spare him, but I *will* spare him. I *will* prove that I am king forever and ever and the God and Lord of mercy. The only answer that we can give to the question, Why then, does God spare this outcast infant? is this, 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.

How is Jehovah exalted in our midst this morning! My spirit trembles while it labors to exalt the Lord alone. The Lord is King forever and ever, hallelujah! Bow your heads, both Saints and Sinners, and adore Him as King of kings and Lord of lords. Ask not questions, for He gives no account of His matters. Quarrel not with His dominion, for His answer is to you, No but, O Man, who are you that reply against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why have You made me thus? Impeach not His justice, or His justice you shall feel in smiting you. Entreat His mercy, but entreat it as those that have no claim upon Him. Ask Him for it as knowing that if he gives it to you He has a right to give it or to withhold it if He will.

Sinners, behold yourselves this morning, in the hand of an angry God. There you lie before God, like a moth beneath your own fingers. It is as He willsto save or to destroy you. Are you at ease? Will you mock Him? Will you boast and glorify yourselves? Rather, as creatures that are now absolutely under His control and deservedly subject to His rod, bow your heads and cry, God, be merciful to us, sinners! You can save, do it for Your own will and glorys sake, that Your mercy may be magnified and Your sovereignty may be clearly seen.

We have found no motive in the creature, and therefore, we refrain from further search, believing that the fountain and wellspring of mercy is in God Himself. Into *His* reasons we cannot search, lest like Job, we should hear the rebuke of the Lord, Have you entered into the springs of the sea? Or have you walked in search of the depth?

III. But now, we turn to consider THE MANDATE OF HIS MERCY. I said unto you, Live.
First, I want you to notice that this fiat of God is *majestic*. I said unto you when you were in your blood, *Live*; yes, I said unto you when you were in your blood, *Live*. Darkness was upon the face of the earth and thus the Almighty spoke, Let there be light! And light was. Sublime because simple. Without any oratorical embellishments, magnificently sternGod speaks and it is done. So, in our text, we perceive a sinner with nothing in him but sin, expecting nothing but wrath. But the Majestic One passes byHe is making a tour of His dominions, splendidly arrayed, with ten thousand times ten thousand angels at His beck and call.

He looks, and there lies an infant, loathsome, in its blood. He stops and He pronounces the word, the royal word, Live. There speaks a God. Who but He could venture thus to deal with life and dispense it with a single syllable? It is majestic, it is Divine! And mark you, Brothers and Sisters, though the word preached by us may be very rough and ruggedas we confess to you it isthough we know but little of the graces of oratory, yet when God speaks by a minister, there is nothing more Divine under Heaven, nor in Heaven, than the Gospel. When the Lord speaks, even though it is by the unlettered and the ignorant, when through the Gospel He says, Live, to a sinnernot even the angels who bow before the Throne of God ever heard a more Divine sound. Thus says the Lord, you dead sinner, *Live*!
Again, this fiat is *manifold* as well as majestic. When He says, Live, it includes many things. Here is *judicial* life. The sinner is ready to be condemned and executedhis neck is on the block and the axe is gleaming in the sunlightbut the Mighty One says, Live, and he rises pardoned and absolved. The execution is not only stayed, that were but respite the crime is forgiventhe man is to live for years!
It is, moreover, *spiritual* life. The man knew nothing of God, his eyes could not see Christ, his ears could not hear His voice. Jehovah said, Live, and spiritual life was given and we were quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins. Moreover, it includes glory-life, which is the perfection of spiritual life. I said unto you, *Live*. And that word rolls on through all the years of life till death comes, and in the midst of the shadows of death, the Lords voice is still heard, I say unto you, Live! In the morning of the resurrection it is that same voice which is echoed by the archangel, Live, and as the spirits rise to Heaven to be blessed *forever* in the glory of their God, it is in the power of this same voice, I say unto you, Live.
Note again, that it is an *irresistible* voice. When God says to a sinner, Live, all the devils in Hell cannot keep him in the grave. If the Lord should say to a blasphemer here today, Live, that blasphemer *must* become a saint. Saul of Tarsus is on the road to Damascus to arrest the saints of the living God. A strong hand might seize the bridle of his charger and throw him to the ground. But Saul is not to be stopped like that. He will rise from the ground the same Saul, to go to Damascus as blood-thirsty as ever. But see what Divine Grace can do! A voice from Heaven and a light brighter than the brightness of the sun and Saul is crying out, Lord, what will You have me to do? Within three days he is baptized. He becomes a preacher. And Saul that was called Paul becomes a leader in the hosts of the Most High. My Master can do the same today. Mighty to save is He

Tell what His arm has done,
What spoils from death He won,
Praise His dear name alone.
Worthy the Lamb.

We remark again, that it is *all*sufficient. Live, do you say, great God? Why, the man is dead! There is no life in him, but in the *Voice* that bids him live. Live, do you say? By this time he stinks, for he has been dead four days! There is powernot in his *corruption* but in the *Voice* that cries, Come forth! When we preach to sinners and tell them to believe in Christ, do not fancy it is because we think we have any power. No, but because when in Gods name we say, Believe, the power is in the mandate as it comes from our lips, uttered by the Most High. If a minister is not filled with Gods Spirit, then His ministry is an empty dream. But if a minister is, as I conceive him to be, a man who speaks in Gods name, and for the time being is the very mouth of God to mens souls, then there is power in the Gospel as it is preached, attended with the demonstration of the Spirit, to do for the sinner what he can by no means do for himself.

I cry today in my Masters name Thus says the Lord, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall live. Trust my Master bleeding on the tree and you shall be delivered. Rest on the merit of His blood and of His glorious righteousness! Trust in the power of His intercession before the Throne, and despite your lost estate, you shall be this morning saved forever and ever!

We close when we shall have repeated ourselves once more by sayingthis mandate was a mandate of *Free Grace*. I want to lay that down again, and again, and againthat there was nothing in this infant, nothing but loathsomeness, nothing therefore, to merit esteem. Nothing in the infant but inability. Nothing therefore, by which it could help itself. Nothing in it but infancy. Nothing therefore, by which it could plead for itself and yet Divine Grace said, Livefreely, without any bribe, without any entreaty, saidLive. And so when sinners are saved, it is only and solely because God *Wills* to do it, to magnify His free, unpurchased, unsought Divine Grace.

Surely this is a subject which will suit some here, though it will not please others. Proud Pharisees will turn on their heels. That is very high Calvinistic doctrine, says one. My dear Friends, I do not care what it is. I know it is written in the Word of God. I preach very often sermons which get me the title of Arminian and just as often I am charged with Hyperism. I am simply one who seeks honestly to tell you what he believes to be in Scripture and what he believes to be true. And therefore, whether it IS high or low is nothing to me. Is it true? I know the proud Pharisee will say, No. Why, says he, there must be some merit in what we do! Surely we do something! Perseverance in well-doing and so on, surely this will effect much?

You are under the Law and not under Grace. You have not yet learned the A B C of the Gospel. You want to be a saint by the merit of what *you* do, and you will be lost as sure as you are a man unless you look at things in a different light. But I know that the doctrine will be acceptable to those condemned ones here this morning, who have written their own sentence out, who say, I must perish, I have nothing to bring you, O Lord. I have not even a tender heart, I have not even such a sense of need as I want. Lord, I am empty, except that I am full of evil and full of sin, I have nothing that I could put before Your eyes, except that which would excite Your wrath and Your disgust. Great God, if You should not save me I cannot blame You. I lay hold of nothing in myself. But You have said, He that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, has everlasting life. Lord, I venture to believe on Him. You will be true, You will save even me.

Soul, Soul, you may go out of this house light of heart and foot, for your sins, which are many, are forgiven you! In Gods name I pronounce the sentence of absolution on you, if you have thus come to Christ and trusted in the Lord Jesus. There is not a sentence left in Gods Book against you. By His Grace, you are no more dead but you liveno more accursed but beloved. You are no more loathsome but beautifulcovered with Christs righteousness and filled with the Spirit of the living God.

What shall I say to you who are Christians but thisfor the sake of this Divine Graceshow your gratitudelive more like your Master and live more in Gods service. Seek to spend and be spent in Him. Nothing can make a man work for Christ like Free Grace. And those who believe the doctrine of Free Grace and yet are idle, you must surely hold the Truth of God in unrighteousness, for there is no principle so active, so impulsive as this

Loved of my God, for Him again
With love intense Id burn.
Chosen of You before time began,
Id choose You in return.

Finally, Christian, never give up any sinner. Never think that any man is beyond salvation. I charge you by the solemn thought that God looks for nothing in man, and saves only according to the sweet counsels of His own will, bring every man you meet with before God in prayer, plead with every man, preach Christ to every man, tell every man that Christ can save, tell that sinner that whatever there is not in him, Christs power is still the same, that *His* arm is not shortened, neither is *His* ear heavy. And spread the glad news that it is not of the will of man, nor of his blood, nor birthbut by the power of the Spirit of God according to the will of the Most Highthat men are saved. May the Lord add His blessing and do some of His mighty works this morning through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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TWO IMMUTABLE THINGS
NO. 2438

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS DAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1895. *DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 30, 1887.
Yes, I swore unto you, and entered into a Covenant with you, says the Lord God, and you became Mine.
Ezekiel 16:8.

DURING this last summer I took a little journey into the country, as I had an opportunity of preaching and visiting in the region where I lived as a little child and where I afterwards spent some of my school-boy days. Everything was very vividly interesting to me, much more so than it could have been to anybody who was a stranger to the district. Now I want some of you, especially you who love the Lord, to go back in thought to your early days when you were children in Grace. Yes, go back even further than thatto the time of your *spiritual* birththose first hours when your love to your Lord was true and fervent, and everything round about you was fresh and bright and joyous.

Biographies are generally interesting if they are biographies, that is to say, if the events of the persons life are truly told. But I think that the most interesting biography to any man is his own life. Take that book down from the shelf and look into it. You say that you have not kept a diary? Well, perhaps not, but you have one in your memory. You may have read Pepys Diary, or Evelyns Diarythey are interestingbut I want to get you to read your own! Turn over the pages of the book of memory and think of those first times when you sought and found the Savior, when you repented, when you believed, when you yielded yourself up to Jesuswhen He took you to be His and you took Him to be yours! I am sure that this exercise will awaken many happy thoughts and I feel equally certain that it will suggest many regrets. But the happiness will be good for you if it excites your gratitudeand the regrets will be good for you if they deepen your penitence.

I want you, then, to go back for a little time and think of what God did for you, then, and of what He has done for you since. You are called to this retrospect by such a chapter as the one before us, which is Gods own statement of how He dealt with the chosen nation. It is also, in a parable, the Lords declaration of how He has dealt with us. He remembers it and He would have us remember it and, in the words of our text, He reminds us of the Covenant He made with usYes, I swore unto you, and entered into a Covenant with you, says the Lord God, and you became Mine.

Beloved, the time of our conversion, the time when we joyously realized that we were saved, was a covenanting time! The Covenant, itself, as to Gods part in it, was made with Christ on our behalf before the earth was! It is older than the hills, it is as ancient as God, Himself! But, as far as *we* are concerned, the Covenant comes into practical, experimental context with ourselves when we believe in the Lord Jesus, rely upon His atoning Sacrifice and depend upon His promises of Grace. I repeat that converting times are covenanting times. We made a Covenant with God then. We said

Tis done! The great transactions done! I am my Lords, 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 lifes latest hour I bow,
And bless in death a bond so dear!

The Covenant was also on Gods part, for He has promised to save all those who trust Him. And that promise became ours when we trusted His dear Son. All the promises of the Covenant of Grace became promises made particularly to ourselves when we received the seal of the Covenant by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ!

It is a somewhat singular thing that in this chapter God does not say anything about Israels part of the Covenant. He seems to pass that over as though it were never worth mentioning. The nation had so entirely forgotten it and had been so altogether untrue to it, that the whole stress of the chapter seems to lie on what *God* did, how *God* kept the Covenant. Though the sin of the people is brought to their remembrance, yet the Lord does not say to them, You entered into Covenant with Me, but He says, I swore unto you, and entered into a Covenant with you, says the Lord God, and you became Mine. So, at this time, I shall not say much about the Covenant that you made with Goddo not you forget itand do not forget that you have often forgotten it. You covenanted with God that you would be His and you meant it when you made the promise. You know how far you have been true to it, but what I want to remember, myself, and for you to remember, too, is Gods Covenant with uswhat He promised to do for us and what He has done for us! Let this thought dwell in our minds, that it may renew our love to our Lord and make us continually to realize that we are truly His because *He has made a Covenant with us*.

Here, then, is our textYes, I swore unto you, and entered into a Covenant with you, says the Lord God, and you became Mine. My remarks upon it will be, first, that *it was a Covenant freely made.* Secondly, *it was a Covenant entirely of love.* Thirdly, *it was a most sure Covenant*

and, in closing, I will try to show you that *this Covenant involves very gracious consequences*.
I. In the first place, IT WAS A COVENANT FREELY MADE.
The context tells us that this child, with whom God entered into Covenant, was one who could not have had any claim upon Him. It was a Covenant which He made at His own suggestion, out of the greatness of His own love, for the nation of Israel, of which He speaks, *had nothing in its pedigree to suggest it*. The Lord says, Your birth and your nativity is of the land of Canaan; your father was an Amorite, and your mother an Hittite. Yet Jehovah entered into Covenant with that people. And now, if you look back upon *your* pedigree
What was there in you that could merit esteem, Or give the Creator delight?
There are some who do not believe in the depravity of human nature. I must believe in it if I am, myself, a fair specimen of human nature. And every man who has watched his own heart and has any idea of the sin which dwells within him will know that his origin is tainted, that from the very first there is a tendency to evil and only evil and, therefore, that there is nothing in him as to his birth that can command or deserve the favor of God. If God enters into Covenant with unfallen man, man is so insignificant a creature that it must be an act of gracious condescension on the Lords part! But if God enters into Covenant with *sinful man*, he is then so offensive a creature that it must be, on Gods part, an act of pure, free, rich, Sovereign Grace! When the Lord entered into Covenant with me, I am sure that it was all of Gracenothing else but Graceand I think that all of you who know what that Covenant means and can claim an interest in it, will say, In my case, at any rate, it was of Grace and of Grace, alone. It was a Covenant freely entered into by Divine Grace, for our pedigree did not suggest it.
There was also *nothing in our condition to commend it*. This poor child had never been washed or clothed. It was left in all its filthiness to die there was nothing about it to commend it to the attention of the passerby. And what were we by nature? Oh, dear Friends, let us think, with shame and confusion of face, of what we used to be before we knew the Lord
Backward with humble shame we look
On our original!
How is our nature dashed and broke
In our first fathers fall!
We were, not all of us, open, profligate sinnerssome were, however. If I speak of drunks, swearers, fornicators and the like, I may add with the Apostle, And such were some of you; but you are washed. And others of us, who were not suffered to run in those evil ways, yet with our hearts, with our thoughts, with our tempers and with our spirit we sinned grievously in the sight of God. When I remember what a den of unclean beasts and birds my heart was, how strong was my unrenewed will and how obstinate and rebellious against the Sovereignty of the Divine rule, I always feel inclined to take the very lowest room in my Fathers house. And when I enter Heaven, it will be to go among the less than the least of all saints and with the chief of sinners.
Yes, dear Friends, it is only too true there was nothing in our condition to commend us to God, or to induce Him to enter into Covenant with us! It was just because He would do it, because He will have mercy on whom He will have mercybecause when He is showing the greatness of His mercy He feels that He may as well show it where it is most needed! So He looks, not for merit, but for misery! Not for deserving, but for undeserving! According to the riches of His Grace, He abounds in mercy towards the very worst of us, pardoning our sin, passing by our transgression and blotting out our iniquity.

It was, then, a Covenant freely entered into because there was nothing in our condition to commend it.
It was also a Covenant freely made because there was *nothing in our beauty to warrant it*. Indeed, there was a total absence from us of everything that might be reckoned comely and beautiful. Are you now penitent? Yet, *then* your heart was harder than adamant stone! Are you now believing? *Then* you were an unbeliever! Are you now zealous for God? *Then* you were rather zealous *against* Him, or if not, you were quite indifferent to Divine things! Is there any virtue, is there any praise, is there anything of good repute in you? It was not there when God entered into a Covenant with you! If there was any beauty in the wife who is mentioned in this parable, it was after the marriage. But before she was cast out, she was not grown. Whatever there was there was undeveloped and, still worse, unclean! And in that day when Jesus took us to Himself and we took Him to be our Savior, there was nothing as yet apparent of that which His Grace has now worked in usit was totally absent. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, let us praise and magnify that Free Grace that entered into Covenant with you and with me!
That is the first point. It was a Covenant most freely made.
II. But we cannot linger long on any one part of our glorious subject, so we notice, in the next place, that IT WAS A COVENANT ENTIRELY OF LOVE.
Taking our text in its context, we learn that this Covenant was a *marriage Covenant*. It is a very wonderful thing that God should enter into a marriage Covenant with His people, but He has done so. The Lord Jesus Christ has taken upon Himself our Nature and has become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, so that, when Paul is speaking of marriage, he says, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. And then he adds, This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church, which means that Christ has joined Himself to His people and become one in Nature with His chosen henceforth and forever! The Lord Jesus Christ has taken His people to be henceforth as joined unto Him as the wife is joined to her husband! They become one and so does Christ make His people one with Himself. This is a very easy thing to say, but it is an almost impossible thing to compass and understand! Can it really be so, my Soul, that you are wedded to the Son of God? Is it really so that He says, Yes, I swore unto you, and entered into a Covenant with you, and that Covenant is a Covenant of marriage by which He has joined with Him all His people unto His own heart, world without end? Catch that thought if you can, and enjoy all the comfort of itbut give God the glory for such wonderful condescension
On such love, my Soul, still ponder,
Love so great, so rich, so free!
Say, while lost in holy wonder,
Why, O Lord, such love to me?
Hallelujah!
Grace shall reign eternally!
That it was a Covenant, which was meant to be entirely of love is proved by *the way in which it was carried out*. See how it is said, Then I washed you with water; yes, I thoroughly washed away your blood from you, and I anointed you with oil. I clothed you, also, with broidered work, and shod you with badgers skin, and I girded you about with fine linen, and I covered you with silk. I decked you, also, with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon your hands, and a chain on your neck. And I put a jewel on your forehead, and earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown upon your head. And so on. This is a Covenant all of love, for these are all love tokens, love-gifts to the beloved one!
Now, will you go back in thought and recollect when you used to receive those gifts from the Lord? You remember when your ears were hung with earrings. Oh, what *hearing* that was! You did not grumble at the preacher, thenyou enjoyed listening to him whenever you could! You would be up early and work hard so as to get a half-holiday, that you might go and hear the Gospel. Your ears were hung with earrings then! And, oh, how you rejoiced in God as He gave you humility, patience, zeal, love and all the precious jewels out of the Divine case! You hardly thought you had them, but other people could see them, and they told you that they were there. And they would sometimes say, How beautiful God has made you by His Grace! Do you remember that? You cannot have forgotten, I hope, those happy times when love tokens came to you so fresh and frequent! Those evening meditations, how delightful! That sitting up in bed at midnight, enjoying the Presence of your Lord those morning prayers, those quiet walks! Oh, how precious were many texts of Scripture! How delighted you often were with the visits of the Spirit of God when He brought home this and that great Truth to your soul with overwhelming comfort!
I am only reminding you what the Lord has done for you. As for myself, He has been all love, goodness, kindness and nothing else to me. Truly, a blessed Husband have You been unto my soul, O Jehovah! I cannot find fault with You! Neither am I able to find words with which to sufficiently praise You for all the love and kindness You have made to pass before me. Do you not say the same? I think you do. As we sang, just now
Do You ask me who I am?
Ah, my Lord, You know my name.
Yet the question gives a plea
To support my suit with Thee.
You did once a wretch behold,
In rebellion blindly bold
Scorn Your Grace, Your power defy
That poor rebel, Lord, was I.
Once a sinner near despair
Sought Your Mercy Seat by prayer.
Mercy heard and set him free
Lord, that mercy came to me.
Many days have passed since then,
Many changes I have seen.
Yet have been upheld till now
Who could hold me up but Thou?
Let us praise the name of the Lord for the Covenant which, in the way it has been carried out, has proved to be a Covenant all of the Love of God!
And, dear Friends, I would not have you forget that it *must* be a Covenant all of Love which God has made with such creatures as we are, because *it could bring the Lord no profit*. What benefit could He get from us? He may well say, If I were hungry, I would not tell *you*: for the world is Mine, and the fullness thereof. What glory can we bring to Omnipotence? What tribute can we render to Him who is Possessor of Heaven and earth?
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
of what use would they be to Him? No, if the Lord enters into Covenant with us, it cannot be for any gain to Himself! It must be only out of a *desire to benefit us*. Therefore, let us bow in reverent adoration of the unselfish, self-created love of God to us which we have known since that dear hour which brought us to His feet and He entered into Covenant with us and we became His own! Surely I have said enough upon this topic to suggest many a grateful thought within the minds of all Gods people.
III. But now I want to carry you with me to another point. That is, thirdly, IT WAS A MOST SURE COVENANTI swore unto you, and entered into a Covenant with you.
The Covenant which God makes with Believers is *intended to remain forever*. It is not something which may be broken in a few hours, like a childs toysit is an everlasting Covenant. Read that 60th verse Nevertheless I will remember My Covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish unto you an everlasting Covenant. How I love to get among the everlasting things! You know, in Canada, they build palaces of ice in the winter time and very beautiful things they are. But then, when spring comes, where are those palaces? And in summer, the very foundation upon which they were built has melted back into the St. Lawrence. God does not make with His believing people Covenants like those ice palacesHis Covenant stands secure, though earths old columns bow. If God has promised to save youas He has done if you believe in JesusHe will save you in the teeth of death and Hell! Rest you sure of this, and say with David, He has made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure. Here is something to rest uponI swore unto you, and entered into a Covenant with you. He intended it to remain!
And in proof that He intended it to remain, *He ratified it by an oath*. Even among men, where there is an oath, there should be an end of all question. And if Jehovah lifts His hand to Heaven and swears, who shall, after that, dare to suggest that a question is possible? In the day in which we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, He did, as it were, swear unto usSurely, blessing, I will bless you. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. We needed nothing more than the promises of Jehovah to rest upon, but, God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the Immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two Immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us. My Soul, be you full of comfort, for the God who entered into Covenant with you has ratified that Covenant by an oath
His oath, His Covenant and His blood
Support me in the sinking flood!
When all around my soul gives way
He, then, is all my hope and stay!
On Christ the solid Rock I stand
All other ground is sinking sand.
To make a Covenant even surer than by an oath, men were accustomed *to seal it by a sacrifice*. They struck hands and then they said, Let us kill a bullock, let us slay a lamband the blood shall be the token that this covenant is made between us. Now, Beloved, you who believe have the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, to confirm the Covenant of Grace. God cannot break it! If you believe in Jesus, He must save you, by the pledges of His own Sons life and death! If you truly believe that Jesus is the Christ, you are born of God. If you believe that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. If you are trusting in Him, alone, He cannot, He will not cast you away, for the Sacrifice of His Son makes the Eternal Covenant sure. Is not the blood of Jesus called, the blood of the Everlasting Covenant? And herein we see the Covenant most surely established.

I would have you notice, in our text, that the Covenant is *remembered by God*. It is He who says, I swore unto you, and entered into a Covenant with you. He does not forget it. He does not want to forget it. He does not intend to forget it. He says, 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. Behold, I have engraved you upon the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me. The Lord remembers what He did when He swore that He would save His people and when He gave Christ to make the Covenant sure!
Yet once more, this Covenant *will be remembered by Him forever*. I will read again that 60th verseNevertheless I will remember My Covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish unto you an everlasting Covenant. And then the 62nd verseAnd I will establish my Covenant with you; and you shall know that I am the Lord. He made a Covenant with Noah that He would not again destroy the earth with a flood. And He promised to hang His rainbow in the cloud as a token of that Covenantand He has done so to this day. He has not destroyed the earth with a flood and His Covenant, which He has made with the greater Noah, who is our true Rest, stands fast, and shall still stand fast when Heaven and earth have passed away!
I want you to think with deepest gratitude of this wondrous condescension, that God should ever have entered into such a Covenant with you and with me. Why, if I believed what some preach about the temporary, trumpery salvation which only lasts for a time, I would scarcely be at all grateful for it! But when I know that those whom God saves, He saves with an *everlasting* salvation. When I know that He gives to them an *everlasting* righteousness. When I know that He settles them on an *everlasting* foundation of *everlasting* love and that He will bring them to His *everlasting* Kingdom, oh, then I do wonder and I am astonished! Such a blessing as this to be given to you and given to me! ***Pause, my Soul! Adore, and wonder!***
Ask, Oh, why such love to me?
Sit still and meditate till your hearts burn within you because of this amazing love!
IV. I finish by noticing that THIS COVENANT INVOLVES VERY GRACIOUS CONSEQUENCES. Let me read the text againYes, I swore unto you, and entered into a Covenant with you, says the Lord God, and you became Mine. Read those last three words again*You became Mine*.
Beloved, if God has entered into Covenant with us, *we have become the Lords*. Whose were you before? The worlds? Your own? The devils? Well, we will not dispute with the many claimants, but now you can truly say, O Lord our God, other lords beside You have had dominion over us: but by You only will we make mention of Your name.
You became Mine. Do you recollect the spotperhaps it was your own little roomwhere, as a youth you sat, after having long prayed and wept? And at last you felt that Jesus was yours and you sat still, and you said to yourself, Yes, I am His, every bit of me. He has bought me with His blood, I am His. Do you remember those first few days in which you felt half afraid to do anything lest you should grieve that dear Lover of your soul? Then you wanted to do everything that you might please Him whose servant you had become. I remember a verse of Scripture, which, as a young Believer, I often used to repeat, for it was very dear to me. I daresay you love it too. It is thisBind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar. We felt, then, that we were wholly Christs! Do we feel it as much now? You became Mine. To come back to the marriage Covenant of which the Lord speakswhen the husband put the ring upon his brides finger, he said to her, you have become mine. Do you remember when you felt upon your finger the ring of infinite, everlasting, Covenant love that Christ put there? You became Mine. Oh, it was a joyful day, a blessed day! Happy day, happy day, when His choice was known to me, and fixed my choice on Him!

Now, Beloved, *we ought to be the Lords more and more*. Ever since we became His, we have been the objects of His love and mercy. He has done everything for us. I cannot tell you what He has done, nor can I tell you what He has not done, for *everything* that could be desired and wished for, Christ has done for you and for me! This long list which He gives, here, of how His spouse was clothed, and shod, and adorned, and crowned, reminds me of that verse in the 103rd Psalm where the list of benefits reaches its climaxWho crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies. Well now, after having experienced the blessings of this Covenant, we ought to love our Lord Jesus Christ more than ever, and we ought to feel that we are more and more completely His than we ever were in our lives!
If that is our feeling, it will lead us to practically *renew the bond of the Covenant*. You became Mine. After all that the Lord has done for us, let us become His, again! Let us come and yield ourselves up to Him once more. If any of you have backslidden, or grown cold towards your Lord, come and renew your vows unto the Most High. Say, with me, My Savior, I repent not of having yielded myself to You; but I repent that I have not more fully carried out my resolve to be wholly Yours. If I had never trusted and loved You before, I would desire to begin to trust You and love You now, for You are unutterably lovely, You are unspeakably worthy of the confidence of every redeemed man and woman! Let us each come and lay our hands, once more, on that dear head which was bowed with the burden of our sinsand look up into that dear face which has brightened our life so often with its love-glances. And let us now surrender ourselves fully, perfectly, joyfully, over, again, unto Him whose we are and whom we serve. God help you to do it! And you who have never done so, may you come to Jesus this very moment! Your only hope lies in Him. God says by the mouth of His servant Isaiah, Behold, I have given Him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. There is no Covenant between God and man except in Jesus Christ! Come, then, and take Christ as your Savior, and God has sworn to you, and entered into a Covenant with you, that He will never cast you away, but you shall be His in that day when He makes up His jewels. God grant it, for His names sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
EZEKIEL 16:1-3, 6-16; 60-63.

In this very remarkable chapter, God describes His ancient people, Israel, under the figure of an infant which had been cast away, but which He had cared for and tended and upon which He had lavished much love, making it the object of His choice, on which His very heart was set. Yet this specially favored one had gone astray and committed all manner of wickedness. But for all that, the love of God had not been withdrawn. The whole chapter is a graphic picture of the way in which Israel and Judah went after false gods and forsook the only living and true God.

Verses 1, 2. *Again the Word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations.* This is a very necessary command, for unless men *know* their disease, they will not apply to the great Physician. Only he who knows that he is poor will be willing to accept alms. It is, therefore, a necessary part of the duty of Gods servants to make sinners know their evil waysSon of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations.

3, 4. *And say, Thus says the Lord GOD unto Jerusalem. Your birth and your nativity is of the land of Canaan; your father was an Amorite, and your mother an Hittite.* Abraham, the father of the nation, came from beyond the flood. But here, because of the sin of the people, God attributes their birth to the place of their settlement rather than to that chosen and noble man. They had lived so long in Canaan that they had grown to be Canaanites. Their habits were so evil that there was little difference between the Israelites and the Amorites and Hittites whom God had smitten in His wrath. So the Lord says, Your birth and your nativity is of the land of Canaan; your father was an Amorite, and your mother an Hittite. Then, in the fifth verse, He describes the condition of the nation when it was in Egypt, when nobody cared for it.

5. *No eye pitied you, to do any of these unto you, to have compassion upon you; but you were cast out in the open field, to the loathing of your person, in the day that you were born.* You remember that Pharaoh tried to destroy all the male children of the captive Israelites. No mortal eye had any pity upon the downtrodden race in the house of bondage! But God looked down from Heaven in love, pity and Grace.

6, 7. *And when I passed by you, and saw you polluted in your own blood, I said unto you when you were in your blood, Live; yes, I said unto you when you were in your blood, Live. I have caused you to multiply as the bud of the field.* Israel came out of Egypt exceedingly multiplied, a great people! And when they settled down in Canaan, they still increased till they became a numerous and powerful nation. Remember that all this description applies to us *spiritually*. There was a day when we seemed polluted, cast away and left to perishbut God, in great mercy passed by and said unto us, Live.

8, 9. *Now when I passed by you, and looked upon you, behold, your time was the time of love; and I spread My skirt over you, and covered your nakedness: yes, I swore unto you, and entered into a Covenant with you, says the Lord GOD, and you became Mine. Then washed I you with water; yes, I thoroughly washed away your blood from you, and I anointed you with oil.* How wondrously the Lord did all this for us! Our washing and our anointing, we can never forget.

10. *I clothed you, also, with broidered work, and shod you with badgers skin, and I girded you about with fine linen, and I covered you with silk.* All that God could do for Israel, He did. That poor poverty-stricken nation increased and multiplied till, in the days of David and Solomon, it was of high repute among the nations and exceedingly rich and wealthy! Even so has God dealt with usHe has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. We who, a little while ago, were cast out as helpless and worthless, He has greatly enriched with heavenly treasure!

11-13. *I decked you, also, with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon your hands, and a chain on your neck. And I put a jewel upon your forehead, and earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown upon your head. Thus were you decked with gold and silver; and your raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and broidered work.* The work of the Lord Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit have made marvelously glorious broidered work for our spiritual adornment! Well does good Dr. Watts sing

How far the heavenly robe exceeds
What earthly princes wear!
These ornaments, how bright they shine! How white the garments are!
Strangely, my Soul, are you arrayed
By the great Sacred Three!
In sweetest harmony of praise
Let all your powers agree.

13, 14. *You did eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and you were exceedingly beautiful, and you did prosper into a kingdom. And your renown went forth among the heathen for your beauty: for it was perfect through My comeliness, which I had put upon you, says the Lord GOD.* Doubtless, these words apply to Israel, but they are still more appropriate to us when we are covered with the *righteousness* of Christ and made beautiful in *His beauty*!

15, 16. *But you did trust in your own beauty, and played the harlot because of your renown, and poured out your fornications on everyone that passed by; his it was. And of your garments you did take, and decked your high places with divers colors, and played the harlot thereupon: the like things shall not come, neither shall it be so.* As soon as the Israelites grew rich and powerful, they began to build altars to the false gods! The very treasures that God had given them, they desecrated to the making of idols! God calls this a spiritual harlotry, turning aside from the one true God, who was the Husband of the nation, to follow after false gods. It is an evil sign in any of us when Gods blessings are, themselves, made into idols. If you begin to worship your wealth, your health, your children, your learning, or anything that God has given you, this is exceedingly provoking to the Most High! It is a breach of the marriage Covenant between your soul and God!

The rest of the chapter is rather for private reading than for the public assembly. It gives a truly awful picture of the sin of Israel and heaps up most dreadful descriptions of the way in which the people turned aside from God. I confess that after reading to the end of this chapter, I am astonished to think that it should close as it does. It is an amazing instance of the immutable love of God, Turn to the 60th verse.

60. *Nevertheless*Blessed nevertheless!
60, 61. *Nevertheless I will remember my Covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish unto you an everlasting Covenant. Then you shall remember your ways and be ashamed.* Infinite mercy makes men ashamed of their sinfulness. Great pardon produces both humility and holiness. The ungodly think that for God to forgive great sin will be to give a license to it, but the Lord knows that it is not so. He understands that the greatness of His forgiving love will be the cause of the pardoned sinners hatred of sinThen you shall remember your ways and be ashamed.
61-63. *When you shall receive your sisters, your elder and your younger: and I will give them unto you for daughters, but not by your covenant. And I will establish My Covenant with you; and you shall know that I am the LORD: that you may remember, and be confounded, and never open your mouth any more because of your shame, when I am pacified toward you for all that you have done, says the Lord GOD.* Pardon from God for great sin is a silencer to all our pride. We never dare open our mouths, again, because of our shame. Yet the blessed silence of a grateful heart makes true music before the Throne of Godand when the Lord opens our lipsthen our mouth shall show forth His praise.

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THE PRIVILEGED MAN
NO. 813

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 31, 1868, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Then washed I you with water; yes, I thoroughly washed away your blood from you, and I anointed you with oil. I clothed you also with embroidered work, and shod you with badgers skin, and I girded you about with fine linen, and I covered you with silk. I adorned you also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon your hands, and a chain on your neck. And I put a jewel on your forehead, and earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown upon your head. Thus were you decked with gold and silver;
and your raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and embroidered work; you did eat fine flour,
and honey, and oil: and you were exceedingly beautiful, and you did prosper into a kingdom. And your renown went forth among the heathen for your beauty for it was perfect through your comeliness, which I had put upon you, says the Lord God. Ezekiel 16:9-14.

THE root of Israels nation was originally a lone man whose family and dependants formed a small Bedouin tribe wandering throughout the plains of Canaan. God separated and selected Abraham, who was in no way distinct from others in his parentage, and declared that in him and in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed. When the tribe had somewhat multiplied, God found them in Egypt, a herd of slaves helplessly crushed beneath the foot of Pharaoh. They were sorely burdened with labors for which they received no reward. They were without spirit to resent the oppressions of their taskmasters and without power to succeed had the energy been there.

Yet God brought them out of Egypt. He led them through the wilderness, chased out powerful nations before them, settled them in the most fertile country and there multiplied them at such an extraordinary rate, and enriched and endowed them with such power that the little kingdom of Israel became famous among the nations of the earth! And in the days of Solomon its scepter was respected far and wide. The nations of the earth stood still and wondered how so small a monarchy had come to be so exceedingly rich and great. It was entirely through the favor of Jehovah that these great blessings had been received.

He had a favor to Abrahams race. He revealed Himself to them and not to others. He chose them to be His people and made them the custodians of His Law. His worship was kept up among them and while they were faithful to Him they were a happy and a prosperous people whose renown went forth to Tarshish and the islesand the excellence of whose laws and government was respected and admired even by such distant nations as those which were governed by the queen of the South.

The beauty of the nation consisted entirely in what God had done for itits comeliness was a comeliness which Jehovah had put upon it. It was a nation wealthy, intelligent, free and upon the whole, pure and happy so long as it remained faithful to its God. Our business, this morning, is not with that nation, but *ourselves*. Our meditations, to be profitable, must be *personal*. Vainly do we blame departed nations*usefully* may we judge ourselves. Children of God, I shall address myself to you. God has done great things for us of which we are glad. All that God did for His Israel was but a type and shadow of what He has done for His own beloved and redeemed ones whom He has distinguished beyond all men that dwell upon the face of the earth.

I shall ask you, O you sons of God, to contemplate the bounties of the Lord towards His people. And then, secondly, for a short time to draw reflections from your contemplations.

I. Let us, each man for himself, sitting in this house before the Lord, REVIEW THE LORDS LOVING KINDNESS and contemplate the amazing bounties which have come to us from the blessed fount of His Grace. To help your meditations, let me remind you where you were when Divine loving kindness pitched upon you effectually and you knew its power experimentally in your own consciences. You were, as others are, lovers of sin, having no desires towards righteousness and salvation. You had sinned and you continued *in* sin and found delight in sin.

You were defiled, depraved, condemned and ready to perish. Like the infant whom Ezekiel has describedyou lay cast out and forsaken, polluted in your own blood. You had no power to cleanse yourself, neither were there to be found any friends through whom cleansing might possibly come to you. You were both loathsome and helpless. As the loathsomeness necessarily would have involved your eternal ruin, so your helplessness took away from you all hope of eternal safety.

Some of you had plunged into open sin. Others who had been kept from that yet had a den of unclean birds within their hearts. Our past lives will not do to look atour state before conversion is something to be blushed overwe should repent of it in dust and ashes. And yet the eye of Jehovah had fixed itself upon us from before the foundations of the world! And when He saw us ruined, first by Adams Fall, and afterwards by our own practical iniquity, He did not take away that eye of regard nor did His heart change towards us. He loved us, loved us still, loved us when there was nothing in us to lovenothing to evoke His complacency, nothing even that could call forth His benevolencefor our sin was such a counter power against our misery that if our misery might have made Jehovah pity us, our sin must have made Him hate us!

His love was utterly causeless by anything within us, but it sprang up spontaneously from the mysterious wellhead of His infinite goodness. Blessed be God, that when we were lost, and lost forever, Sovereign mercy interposed! Let us consider the list of the favors received in the order in which we find them set forth in the text. According to the Prophet, one of the first gifts of the Divine favor is *washing*. Then I washed you with water; yes, I thoroughly washed away your blood from you. Now, remember, you who have been immersed in the

Fountain filled with blood,

Drawn from Immanuels veins,
remember when you were washed, and thoroughly washed, and sing aloud

Tis from the mercy of our God
That all our hopes begin;
Tis by the water and the blood
Our souls are washed from sin.

But, says the Apostle, and what a blessed but it is, and what a weight of meaning there is in it, But you are washed. He had been giving a very fearful description of what some of the saints had been, Such were some of you, and then he puts this in at the end of it, But you are washed, as if the being washed had taken away whatever defilement might have been there. Remember, Beloved, when you were first washed? Recall the hour when, believing in Jesus Christ, you felt in a moment that you were saved? What bliss was crowded into that hour! Your acceptance in the Beloved was sealed upon your heart by the Holy Spirit! You enjoyed a peace with God which passed all understandingthe result of pardoned sin! Remember that day of blessing, and be grateful!

But I want you to remember that you are washed this morning. You are now in the sight of God as a Believer without a spot, for the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. Do not look upon your cleansing as a thing of the *past*, to be forgotten! You are at this present moment clean every whit in the sight of God through Jesus blood! There is no sin in Gods book recorded against the Believer. Who is he that condemns, now that Christ has died? Oh, perfect justification! How shall I prize you enough? Oh, perfect pardon! What shall I compare with you? These two things put together are enough to make a Heaven upon earth even to the most disconsolate and afflicted of the sons of men. Then washed I you with water.

In this respect we may say that we have been washed twicefirst with the blood by which the guilt of sin is removedand then by the energetic *power* of the Holy Spirit. We have been washed from the impurity and power of sin so that we are clean in a double sense before God. And here is the beauty of it, it is done thoroughly, Yea, I thoroughly washed away your blood from you. Your depravity is not gone, your old nature is not removedit shall be before longbut your old *guilt* is completely gone and your present criminality is utterly blotted out

In your Surety you are free,
His dear hands were pierced for you;
With His spotless vesture on,
Holy as the Holy One.
Oh, the heights and depths of Grace!
Shining with meridian blaze;
Here the sacred records show
Sinners black, but comely, too.

The sins of 20 years ago are drowned beneath the billows of the Red Sea of Jesus atoning blood! The sins of yesterday have shared the same fate, and the sins of today the same. I thoroughly washed your blood from you. Now, Believer, let not the devil rob you, this morning, of a sense of your *complete* cleansing. Remember what you *were*, but at the same time remember you are not now what you once were. Old things have passed away. All things have become new. Jesus Christ has said, I have blotted out your sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud your iniquities. I say *Jesus* has said it, said it to you by His Holy Spirit bearing witness in your heart. Come afresh to the Cross and look up, and as you see those dear wounds, sweet fountains of immaculate perfection, rejoice that it is written, Yes, I washed you with water, I thoroughly purged your blood from you.

The next mercy is *anointing*. Observe in the text, I anointed you with oil. So soon as a man is cleansed he becomes fit for the Lords *service*. One of the first instincts of a forgiven sinner is to become a *servant* in the house of his pardoning God. Listen to David in the 51st Psalm: Then will I teach transgressors Your ways; and sinners shall be converted unto You. Forgiven himself, he desires to be a preacher to others. But before we can serve God we must be anointed to the service. God will have no unanointed priest in His temple. His Holy Spirit is the anointing which He bestows upon every one of the pardoned. Not to me as the preacher, alone, is this anointing given, though I desire to have it more and more for your sakes, but for every one of you is this unction appointed.

You have an anointing from the Holy One. Your eyes are anointed with eye salve that you may see and discern the mystery of fellowship with God. Your hands have been anointed that you may be laborers together with God and you have been anointed in heart, in body, soul, and spirit that your entire man, filled with the indwelling Deity, may be consecrated to noblest ends! I pray God to give His children to feel this anointing more and more. We believe in no priest-craft, no setting apart of any set of men who are to minister in holy things as substitutes for their brethrenbut *all* you who are saints are alike kings and priests unto God.

Though by nature sinners who would have been in Hell but for Divine Grace, you are now made priests to God today to minister before His Throne. There, amidst the fires of Gehennam, would have been your everlasting portion, but there, within the veil where the Glory which excels reveals its radiance, is your proper position today by the rights which Sovereign Grace has bestowed upon you. I washed you with water and I anointed you with oil. Dear Brothers in Christ, I want you to realize these privileges now. As I said about cleansing so, yes, I say againdo not let Satan make you think it to be a myth or that it does not belong to you at this precise instant of time. The reality and present character of Divine blessings is a point never to be forgotten.

Today you are justified. You are altogether without a blot in Gods sight as He sees you in His dear Son. You are without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing as you stand in Jesus. And then at this hour you are anointed to priesthood by the Holy Spirit. Let not Satan tell you that you are not so called and qualified, for as a child of God you are, indeed, a partaker of the Holy Spirit. Go to your knees in prayer as an anointed priest. Go to your Sunday school this afternoon, or street preaching, or whatever else may be your form of ministrygo to it as having an unction from God, an anointing to do the work which the Lord has appointed you to do. In the double blessedness of cleansing as a washed sinner and qualification as an anointed one, rejoice in the Lord your God!

But, my dear Brethren, our heavenly Father stops nowhere when He once begins to lavish forth His mercy! He abounds in His loving kindnesses, and therefore I ask your attention to the next covenant mercyHe *clothes* His people. The Holy Spirit in this passage seems to have exhausted human imagery in order to set forth the sumptuous apparel in which God has been pleased to clothe His people. Four modes of description are used. First, it is said, I clothed you also with embroidered work. This was the work which was worked by the needles of the well-skilled women of Israelmost delicate and cunning work.

Garments intended for glory and beauty, such as the priests vestments, were made by dexterous fingers long accustomed to the needle. Now, when I read that God clothes His people with embroidered work, it teaches me that the righteousness with which God covers His people is a work of labor, of skill, of care, of thoughtnot merely labor (though our Lord Jesus Christ labored well, a very Hercules was He in toil), not rough labor, thoughtless, and unskillednot the labor of the hammer, but of the needle in a fair and well-trained hand. The wisdom of our God was exercised about the way of justifying a sinner! Great thoughts of Jehovah went out about the methods of making unrighteous ones righteous, and causing the unjust to become the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus.

Each stitch of embroidery demands its thought. Each motion of the needle is a matter of care and anxiety. So in every part of the Covenant of Grace, Divine thoughts were abundantly exercised. See how resplendently Gods attributes are all seen in the way of justification! In the robe with which Christ has covered us it is impossible to say which of the Divine attributes are most to be seen. There is His *justice*, for all that the Law demands it receives in the sacrifice of Jesus. His *mercy* is equally manifest, for He passes by transgression, iniquity, and sin. There is His *power* sustaining the Savior, while, at the same time He smites Him. There is His *wrath* boiling forth against iniquity, and His *love* resplendent like a fair jewel in the midst of it all.

It is an *embroidered* work. Stitch within stitch, with many a cunning twist and wise device and dainty piece of curious work. Angels have looked at it and they never saw such embroidered work before! And you and I regard it and we glory that it is matchless! In Heaven as we shall examine it, thread by thread and stitch by stitch, we shall burst forth into fresh songs of adoring praise and say, Indeed, most gracious God, You have clothed us with embroidered work! What sumptuous apparel! What skill! What wisdom! What power! What Grace are blended in the robe of righteousness with which God has covered His people!

Child of God, you are wearing it *today*, and if Jacob puts on Joseph a garment of many colors because he loved him better than his brothers, stand up and think what a garment your heavenly Father has put on *you* because He loves you so much! A garment of embroidered work has He put upon you this day because He loves you more than angels, and more than archangelsfor unto none of these did He ever say

Yes, I clothed you with embroidered work. How far the heavenly robe exceeds,
What earthly princes wear!
These ornaments, how bright they shine!
How white the garments are!
Strangely, my Soul, are you arrayed
By the great Sacred Three!
In sweetest harmony of praise
Let all your powers agree.

Then comes the next thought, and shod you with badgers skin. It would be impossible, at this remote period, to guess what animal is referred to herecertainly not the animal

we call a badger, but some creature found, I suppose, abundantly in the wilderness. It probably had spotted skin, which skin was afterwards dyed a deep purple and used for leather. Badgers skins were used, whatever they were, for the covering of the ark and tabernacle in the wilderness. I suppose the leather made of these skins to have been the softest, best, and most durable to be found, and that the meaning of the passage is just thisI shod you with the best that was to be had.

We know that the Jewish women were accustomed to wear shoes made with very delicate leather dyed with a deep purple color. This, of course, was for daintiness and luxury and it is mentioned to show the great riches of the Jewish people, and the luxuries with which God had endowed them. I use the term *spiritually* thus, today, and bid you mark the riches of the Lords people. Moreover, behold the durability of that righteousness which God has given to us. We have to pass through a wilderness of briers and thorns and our shoes are fit for it. Our Jesus has not given us an embroidered robe for show only, but He has provided us garments which will bear the wear and toil of the pilgrimage to the skies. He has shod us right well.

Sometimes He tells us that our shoes shall be as iron and brass and that as our days are, so shall our strength be. Paul tells us of the preparation of the Gospel of peace with which our feet are to be shod, and now here, the text says, I shod you with badgers skin. Believer, you have the best Grace, the best righteousness, the best assistance that you can possibly imagine in order to bring you safely to the right hand of God at the last! Jesus righteousness is such that, let you tread the desert through, up to the remotest age, still that righteousness shall not be worn out for it is an everlasting righteousness

This spotless robe the same appears
When ruined nature sinks in years.
Nor age can change its glorious hue,
The robe of Christ is ever new.

The figure, then, changes again. The text says, I girded you about with fine linen. May I stop a moment and say to every Believer to try to feel, now by the exercise of faith, that you have this embroidered robe upon you at this moment and that these shoes are on your feet at this instant. Believe in the gifts which the Covenant of Grace secures you, and in Jesus Christ who is made of God unto you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. But to return to the word itself, I girded you with fine linen. That is to set forth the *purity* of the righteousness which God gives to uslinen, white and fairfine linen, the best and most expensive fabric such as was worn by the priests alone.

Child of God, you have on at this very moment, in the sight of God, the righteousness which is of God by faith and this is so pure that God Himself sees no spot in it! It is so precious that if Heaven and earth were sold, such a dress as you wear could not be bought with the price. You are this day arrayed as a priestyou *are* a priest to offer prayer and praise, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Now, do not forget this, or treat it as if I were talking mere poetry or fiction. It is so. I speak a sober fact most true and sure to faith. You do at *this* moment wear the priestly apparel, for you are made of God a priest and a king.

Then the last figure is, I covered you with silk. One scarcely knows what the Prophet here refers to, as silk does not appear to have been used in his time, but something as near to our modern silk, I suppose, as possible. And this was a *royal* fabric, soft and delicate, but rarely seen and only found in imperial courts. I covered you with silk. This may represent the splendor of the saints when they appear in the robes of Christ. An angel, I suppose, must be a glorious sight. But though you would be dazzled at the sight of an *angel*, you would not be half so much surprised as an angel would at the sight of *you* as you stand arrayed in the righteousness of Christ!

I have never read that God is admired in the angels, but I do read that Jesus Christ is to be admired in all them that believe. The glory of the Believer is to be such that even angels, who have been used to supernal splendor, shall be amazed as they look upon the redeemed when covered with the righteousness of Christ! If you but spell this word Jehovah Tsidkenu, the Lord our Righteousness! If you are but to be robed about with the merit of the Redeemer, then I tell you that Heaven shall have no courtier before Gods Throne more sumptuously arrayed than you!

With your Saviors garment on,
You are holy as the Holy One

Thus in the four expressions which indicate skill and care, durability and use, purity and priesthood, delicacy and royalty we have wrapped up a mass of most precious thoughtmay our minds be on the alert for the working out of the thought! How grateful ought we to be to our good God for such distinguished love! But this is not all. He who washes us, anoints us, and clothes us then *adorns* us. Observe how the Holy Spirit, again, seems to labor for expression to set out the ornaments which God has put upon His people, which ornaments, I suppose, represent the Graces of the Spirit, the fruits of the Spirit in the regenerate man. I will not detain you an unnecessary minute over them, but ask you to look at each one with your Bibles open.

I put bracelets upon your hands. The Believer being saved becomes a worker, and when he works with the bracelets of faith and love upon his hands, how fair a worker he becomes! And, Christian, you have this honor. You work for God, trusting in God. You work for God, loving God having no motive to constrain you but that of disinterested affection. You have these bracelets upon your hands. And a chain on your neck. And what is this but the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit? That neck which once would not benda stiff neck, a rebellions neck with a proud obstinate iron sinewbows itself before the Lord and wears the easy yoke of Christ. Blessed are they to whom God has given this golden chain made of many links of humble gratitudea meek and quiet spirit!

This, also, has God given to the Believer. If you have lost it, bemoan yourselfbut certainly it is one of His gifts and, as one of His Beloved, He has bestowed it upon you. Then He speaks of a jewel upon the forehead, or as some read it, the nose-jewel, for it was common with the Eastern women to wear a large golden ring or bow in the nose. Or the text may refer to a jewel which dangled from the hair upon the brow. Now every Believer has this when he is in his right statethis forehead jewel of an open confession of his Lordthis forehead jewel of a holy boldness, a conscience that gives an answer for itself, meekly, but yet without fear of men.

Every Believer has that dauntless courage which could beard the lion in its den for Christcould rush through perils and through toils for Jesus this forehead jewel God has been given to some of us, at any rate. May we always wear it. This is one of the brightest ornaments of Christians before men. When it is compared with the other ornaments it is one of the noblest that a Christian spirit can wear. Nor is the list exhausted. I put earrings in your ears. And there are no earrings more precious than these two which I will let you see. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. That is the best earring to wear in all the world, My sheep hear My voice. God has given His people the earring of discernment, a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. The other is the earring of affection, by which, hearing the voice of Jesus, they know His voice and at once arise and with cheerfulness follow Him. Yes, these are the ornaments of the Christian!

And then it is added, And I put a beautiful crown upon your head. God will not stop halfway. His people shall wear the best of the best and *all* of the best. He will adorn their feet with shoes of badgers skin and He will crown their head with a diadem of beauty. Now, heir of salvation, you are this day one of Gods princes! You may be very poor. You may feel very low spirited. You may have all sorts of troubles to fight with, but you are down in the red roll of the princes of the bloodyou belong to Heavens true aristocracy! Be you who you may, if you are a Believer in Jesus Christ you are not knighted, nor made a baron, or a peer, but you are actually taken into the royal family itself! You are a *king*, and you shall reign with Jesus Christ forever and ever! To him that overcomes will I give to sit upon My throne, even as I have overcome and am set down with My Father upon His Throne.

See your dignity, Christian. I say nothing to make you proud, but I would say much to make you glad in the Lord and to make you rejoice in the mercies which He has given you! There is nothing which you could wish for, when in your spiritual senses, which you do not already possess. All your capacious powers can wish is given you in the Covenant of Grace. If imagination should take her utmost stretch and fly upon the wings of the morning to the uttermost ends of all conception, yet could she not compass nor dream of what God has prepared for them that love Him! Only the Spirit can reveal to you these depths of mercy, these treasures of loving kindness, these mountains of mercy, these hills of frankincense! You are rich to all the intents of bliss! You are rich to the full measure of Heaven and earth for all that that Covenant can give is yours today by Promises which are yes, and amen, in Christ Jesus, to the glory of God by us.

I am a poor speaker on such a theme as this, and though I have tried to entice you so far as I can into this river of Divine goodness, I have only led you up to your ankles. Gods Spirit could take you far deeper, for all the mercies you have received are only just the beginnings of what are coming! Well did we sing just now

Glory to God for all the Grace I have not tasted yet.

That is the larger part of the Gracethe Grace to come. The present is good, oh, how good! But the *future* is better, ah, how much better! Beyond the river there comes the best of all. Our wine does not grow weaker towards the end of the feastHe has kept the best wine until the last. And, oh, what will it be to drink at the table of the King Eternal, draughts of His blessed love, in the place where sin and trouble shall never come to intervene and break our peace?

O Brothers and Sisters, wait awhileyour day shall come and your enemies shall be beneath your feet, and Satan shall be trampled there and you

Far from a world of grief and sin

With God eternally shut in,
shall know what God has done, and forever has intended to do for His beloved ones!

II. Thus have I, as well as I could, set before you food for contemplation. Now, I want to DRAW TWO OR THREE REFLECTIONS FROM THIS and we will have done. The first is thissitting down before the Lord in quiet this afternoon, reading this passage, turning over sentence by sentence, I think the emotion of the soul would express itself in words like theseAnd what am I? And what is my fathers house that You have brought me here? And why this to me? Why me, Lord? Me?

Depreciate Divine mercies and you will not marvel that you receive themappreciate them at their proper estimate and you will wonder and weep, and wonder and love, and wonder and adore that ever such an unworthy thing as *you* should be so singularly favored! I will not linger over the reflectionthat is for your closet rather than for my pulpit. But the next one is thisWhat a wretched return have we made to God for these amazing benefits bestowed! There are some parts of the earth where the soil is so fruitful, that to quote the language of a certain writer, you have but to tickle it with the hoe and it laughs with plenty. But there are other soils where you must plow and plow, and plow, and fertilize and use all arts to get but handfuls, after all.

Surely these last soils are very like ourselves. God has done great things for us and we have done little things for God. I took up on the Alp side a glistening stone one day and I noticed that the whole heap of stones which had been broken up for mending the roads was like the one which I took upand in it there were sparkling pieces of gold! Everyone could see that there was gold in the stone and we asked the geologist if it were not so. Yes, all the stones with which they mend the road had gold in them!

Well, but why not extract the gold? Because it was in such miserably small quantities that it would never have paid for the extraction. Really, this is very much like ourselves. If there *are* some good thing in us, it is in such small quantities and seems to be imbedded in such hard quartz, that Gods great machinery of Divine Grace seems to be a waste of power, if I may so speak, when we compare the results in us with the effort which God puts forth towards us. I know there is no waste and in the end He will show that the means were only commensurate with the result. But so far as we now go, and can see of it, think of Christ sweating the great sweat of blood! Think of Him afterwards going up and yielding Himself to die the death on the Crossthe Incarnate God dying for the sins of men!

And the result of it iswhat? A member of a Church, a wealthy man, who, when there is a collection, gives a four-penny piece. Did you ever see such a step from the sublime to the ridiculous as that? And yet it is so. Yes, and then take the bestthe best of us. You smile because I put it in that shape, but conceive God Himself coming here on earth, bleeding and dying, and the most earnest man is the result. There is still a fall, a wretched, miserable fall from what God did down to what the most earnest of us can do for Him!

This is a thing to be bemoaned and to be grieved over! For such is the debt we owe to God that if we spend all the strength we have morning, noon and night, and wear ourselves out in the Masters serviceand had 50 such lives to give and ended them all at the stakeyet still the sacrifice were as *nothing* compared to what is due to the infinite majesty of the love of God! I lead you to a reflection which is more sad than this, and that reflection is, How base, then, in the light of this amazing mercy does our *sin* appear! I have read of one who was extremely poor and who was helped by a Christian manhelped again and again, and yet when the officers were out searching after the Protestant Christian, the man, to betray him for the sake of the reward, was the neighbor who had constantly eaten at his table and who had been helped by his charity!

This was brutal, that he who was so much under obligation should yet become a traitor! And yet it was only a *neighbor*. Your case is worse, Believer, for you are a *friend* and moreyou profess to be a *child* of God, to be in union with Christand yet have you been a traitor to Jesus! O sweet Lord of my heart, and monarch of my soul, with precious blood You have sealed me as Your own. And fool that I am, that I should cast my eyes on other beauties, beauties did I call them?other *shams*, other painted *Jezebels*! Wretch that I am to wander thus in search of vain delights, to seek after earthly joys, to set my soul on earthly loves and let my Lord and Savior go!

O you virgin souls that follow the Lamb wherever He goes, may you never wander from your spiritual chastity as some of us have done. O you whose delights are with Him still, who in the garden of nuts and among the beds of spices have beheld His face and seen those eyes which are like the fishponds of Heshbon by the walls of Bath-rabbimyou that have been enchanted with His Presencecling to His garment! Keep His company and let no enchantment of the world induce you to desert Him!

But we, O what shall we do? Though like Peter we have denied Him, yet like Peter we can say, You know all things, You know that I love You. Jesus, believe not our words, but believe our *actions* this morning. Look not askance upon us because of our ill manners! Forget the past and clasp us to Your breast anew. Into Your precious blood cast the multitude of our offenses and forgive us freely and graciously. Once again let the flames of Your love flash into our hearts till our hearts, also, grow warm, and then never, never let them become chilled again! Let us be fastened to the Cross, bound with cords even to the horns of the altar that we may be Yours in full fellowship, sweet service and growing conformity all the days of our life!

Now, Beloved, the practical result, if what I have said is carried out, will be most blessed. But to push it home I would ask, what is there that any of us can do this morning for Christ? Since we have received so much, what can we give in return this morning? It shall be that some of you will say, He shall have the sweet cane which I have bought with money, and the fat of my sacrifices. If I cannot speak for Him, I will give to Him. I will let Him see that I love Him, for like the holy women, I will minister unto Him of my substance. Others of you will say, I cannot do that, but I will speak a good word for Him this day. I will go to the school, or to the street, or to the Prayer Meeting, or to the Bible class and I will try to speak to someone about his soul. If I may but paint my Master in lovely hues so that *one* heart shall be enchanted with Him, I hope He will accept what I shall try to do.

Now make that a resolution, that this day *something* shall be done by you for Christ. And another will say, Alas! I cannot speak, I shall have no opportunity, but I will get me to my chamber and I will there speak with God on Christs behalf, and I will not let Him go except He bless me, and the Church, and all the cause and kingdom of my Lord. Ah, Beloved, Christ will take of you anything that comes from your heart, whatever the gift may be! However feeble, and weak, and insignificant it may seem to others, it shall be rich and comely to Him if it comes from your *heart*. You owe *all* to Him. What will you render to Him? What will you do more than others? Do it not to *earn* anything, or seek a *reward*, but because He has loved youlove Him and serve Him in return!

God give you to give the ready answer and the acceptable answer, and may He accept it, for Jesus sake. I wish, this morning, you *all* had a share in these mercies. Some of you have not. The mercy is that the door is not shut. Whoever believes on the Son of God has everlasting life. Trust Jesus, and you shall be saved!

Come naked, and adorn your souls
In robes prepared by God,
Worked by the labors of His Son,
And dyed in His own blood.
Great God, the treasures of Your love
Are everlasting mines,
Deep as our helpless miseries are,
And boundless as our sins.
The happy gates of Gospel Grace
Stand open night and day,
Lord, we are come to seek supplies,
And drive our needs away.

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HOW SAINTS MAY HELP THE DEVIL NO. 264

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JULY 24, 1859, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.
That you may bear your own shame and may be confounded in all that you
have done, in that you are a comfort unto them. Ezekiel 16:54.

IT is not a comfortable state to be at enmity with God and the sinner knows this. Although he perseveres in his rebellion against the Most High and turns not at Gods rebuke, but still goes on in his iniquity, desperately seeking his own destructionyet is he aware in his own conscience that he is not in a secure position. Hence it is that all wicked men are constantly on the look out for excuses. They find these either in pretended resolutions to reform at some future period, or else in the declaration that reformation is out of their power and that, acting according to their own nature, they must continue to go on in their iniquities. When a man is willing to find an excuse for being Gods enemy he need never be at a loss. He who has to find a fact may find some difficulty. But he who would forge a lie may sit at his own fireside and do it. Now, the excuses of sinners are all of them false. They are refuges of liesand therefore we need not wonder that they are exceedingly numerous and very easy to come at.

One way in which sinners frequently excuse themselves is by endeavoring to get some apology for their own iniquities from the inconsistencies of Gods people. This is the reason why there is much slander in the world. A true Christian is a rebuke to the sinner. Wherever he goes he is a living protest against the evil of sin. Hence it is that the worldling makes a dead set upon a pious man. His language in his heart is, He accuses me to my face. I cannot bear the sight of his holy character. It makes the blackness of my own life appear the more terrible, when I see the whiteness of his innocence contrasting with it.

And then the worldling opens his eyes and labors to find a fault with the virtuous. If, however, he fails to do so, he will next try to invent a fault. He will slander the man. And if even there he fails and the man is like Job, perfect and upright and one that feared God and eschewed evil, then the sinner will, like the devil of old, begin to impute some wrong motive to the Christians innocence. Does Job serve God for nothing? said the devil. He could find no fault with Job whatever, his character was untainted and unblemished. But, says he, he keeps to his religion for what he gets by it. I reckon it to be a glorious accusation when we are falsely charged with being religious for the sake of gain. It shows that our enemies have no other charge that they can bring against us. They have ransacked all the flies of their calumny and they can find nothing tangible

and this is the last they can bringan imputation upon the motive of the man who has no other motive in all the world than to glorify his God and win sinners from destruction.

In this, then, let us glory. If sinners slander us, it is because we make them uneasy. They see that our lives are a protest against themand what can they do? They must somehow or other answer the bill which we have filed against them in Heavens chancery and they do it by issuing a rejoinder against us and bringing us in as defendants in the case. We glory in thisthat we are defendants who can prove our innocenceand we are not ashamed to stand before the bar of God to have our motives tried. There is much, I say, to cheer us in the fact of such a libel. We know the work is done. We are sure our shots have told on their armor when they are driven to return on us their calumnies and the venom of their wrath.

Now we know that they feel the might of our arm, now we know we are not like they, mere driveling and dwarfs. They have felt our might and against it they kick, they foam, they spew forth their wrath. In this, I say, we glory. We have smitten them hard, or else they would not rise against us in this fashion.

Alas, alas, however, sinners have not always to use calumny and lies. It is too true that the Church has given a real bona fide cause to the wicked for excusing themselves in their sinthe inconsistencies of professors. The lack of a pious heart and the absence of devout earnestness have given sad grounds to the ungodly to justify themselves in their sin. It is upon this melancholy subject that I am about to enter this morning. And may God grant unto all His people who shall feel convicted in their consciences, the spirit of mourning and contrition, that they may vex themselves before God and confess this great iniquity that they have done, namely, that they have comforted sinners in their sin by their own inconsistency and have justified the wicked in their rebellion by their own rebelling and revolting.

This morning I shall deal thus with the subject. First, I shall point out the factthe different acts of Christians which have helped to comfort sinners in their sin. And then, secondly, I shall observe the consequences of this evilhow much the world at large has been injured by the deeds of professed followers of Christ. And then I shall come with a solemn warning bringing out the great battering ram, to dash against these refuges of lies and moreover crying with a loud voice to those who are the faithful servants of Christ to withdraw their hands and no longer to assist in keeping up the Jericho in which the wicked have entrenched themselves.

I. First, then, it shall be my sad and melancholy business this morning to show certain facts which it were dishonest to deny, namely, that THE ACTS OF MANY OF CHRISTS FOLLOWERS HAVE BEEN THE CAUSE OF JUSTIFYING AND COMFORTING SINNERS IN THEIR EVIL WAYS.

1. And first I would observe that the daily inconsistencies of the people of God have much to do in this matter. By inconsistencies I do not exactly mean those grosser crimes into which, at sad and mournful periods, many professors fall. But I mean those *frequent inconsistencies* which become so common, indeed, that they are scarcely condemned by society.

The covetousness of too many Christians has had this offset. Look, says the worldling, this man professes that his inheritance is above and that his affection is set not on things on earth, but on the things of Heavenbut look at himhe is just as earnest as I am about the things of this world. He can drive the screw home as tightly with his debtor as I can. He can scrape and cut with those that deal with him quite as keenly as ever I have done. No, Beloved, this is not a mere tale. Alas, I have seen persons held up to commendation as successful merchants, whose lives will not bear the test of Scripture, whose business transactions were as hard as griping, as grasping, as the transactions of the most worldly. How often has it happened that some of you have bent your knee in the sanctuary and have said, Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors, and one hour afterwards your finger has been almost pressing your thumb through the jugular vein of some debtor whom you had seized by the throat!

The Church of Christ appears to be as worldly as the world itself and professors of religion have become as sharp in trade and as ungenerous in their dealing as those that have never been baptized into the Lord Jesus and have never professed to serve Him. And now what does the world say? It throws this in our teeth. If it is accused of loving the things of time and sense, it answers, And so do you. If we tell the world that it has set its hopes upon a shadow, it replies, But we have set our hope upon the self- same thing in which you are trusting. You are as worldly, as grasping, as covetous as we are. Your protest has lost its force. You are no longer witnesses against uswe are accusers of you.

Another point in which the sinner often excuses himself is the manifest worldliness of many Christians. You will see Christian men and women as fond of dress and as pleased with the frivolities of the age, as any other persons possibly could bejust as anxious to adorn their outward personsso as to be seen of men. They are just as ambitious to win the praise which fools accord to fine dressing, as the most silly fop or the most gaudy among worldly women. What says the world, when we turn round to it and accuse it of being a mere butterfly and finding all its pleasures in gaudy toys? Oh, yes, it says, we know your cant, but it is just the same with you. Do you not stand up and sing

Jewels to me are gaudy toys,

And gold but sordid dust?
And yet you are just as fond of glittering as we are.
Your doctors of Divinity pride themselves just as much in their D. D. as

any of us in other titles. You are just as punctilious about terms of honor as any of us can be. You talk about carrying the Cross. But we do not see it anywhere, except it is a golden cross sometimes hanging on your bosom. You say you are crucified to the world and the world to youit is a very merry sort of crucifixion. You say that you mortify your members and deny yourselvesyour mortification must be suffered in secret, for it is

but very little that we can see of it! Thus the worldling casts back to our challenge, declaring that we are not sincere and thus he comforts himself in his sin and justifies himself in his iniquity,

Look, too, at the manifest pride of many professors of religion. You see members of Christian Churches as proud as they possibly can be. Their backs are as stiff as if an iron rod were in the center. They come up to the House of God and it is a Christian doctrine that God has made of one flesh all nations that dwell upon the face of the earth, but the Christian is as aristocratic as anybody else, just as proud and just as stiff. Is the Christian clothed in broad cloth? How often does he feel it a condescension to own a smock frock! And how often do you see a sister of Christ in satin, who thinks it something wonderful if she sees a fellow-member in an unwashable print. It is of no use denying it. I do not think that the evil is so common among us as it is in some Churches. But this I know, that there are respectable Churches and Chapels in which a poor man scarcely dares to show his face.

The pride of the Church surely has become almost as great as the pride of Sodom of old. Her fullness of bread and her stiffness of neck has brought her to exalt herself. And whereas it is the real glory of the Church that, the poor have the Gospel preached unto them, and that the poor have received the Word with gladness, it becomes now the honor of the Church to talk of her respectability and of the dignity and station of her members and of the greatness of her wealth. What, then, do worldlings say? You accuse us of pride, you are as proud as we are. You the humble followers of Jesus, who washed His saints feet? Not youno, you would have no objection, we doubt not, to be washed by others, but we do not think it likely that you would ever wash ours. You, the disciples of the fishermen of Galilee? Not you. You are too fine and great for that. Accuse us not of pridewhy, you are as stiff-necked a generation as we ourselves are.

Now, these are only mentioned among us as inconsistenciesnot as sins. Sins they verily are. And they are such sins that they restrain the Spirit of God from blessing the Church. Sins, too, they are that render the wicked callous in

their sins, blunt the edge of our rebukes and prevent the Word of God from working in the hearts of men.

I might mention another sad fact with regard to the Church which often stings us sorelythe various enmities and strifes and divisions, that arise. You tell the worldly man that Christians love each other. Ah, says he, you should go over to Ebenezer or to Rehoboth and see how they love each other. Dont talk of leading a cat and dog life! Look at many of your Churches. See how the minister is treated and how the deacons are in arms and how the members hate one another. They can scarcely hold a Church meeting without abusing each other! How often is this proved to be true in many Churches! And then the worldling says, You tell us that we bite and devour each other and that our wars and fights come from our lusts. Where do *your* wars and fights come from? You tell us that our anger and wrath are the effect of sin that dwells in uswhat causes your divisions and your strifes? In this way, you see, the testimony of the children of God is rendered invalid and we help to comfort sinners in their sins.

2. Now it is my mournful duty to go a step further. It is not merely these inconsistencies, but the glaring crimes of some professed disciples, that have greatly assisted sinners in sheltering themselves from the attacks of the Word of God. Every now and then the cedar falls in the midst of the forest. Someone who stood prominent in the Church of God, as a professed follower of Jesus, turns aside. They go out from us because they were not of us. For if they had been of us, doubtless, they would have continued with us, but they went out from us, that it might be manifest that they were not of us. We have wept over high professors becoming drunkards. We have seen mighty men at religious public meetings becoming scoundrel bankrupts. We have had it dashed in our faces, dozens of times, that religion often becomes a cloak for fraud and that when the world has trusted a religious man with its wealth, that religious man has carried it off with him and has not been found at the proper time.

Oh, this is the great curse of the Church. I was thinking only yesterday, with much sorrow in my heart, of the present age and I could not but come to the conclusion that all the burnings of Pagan tyrants, that all the tortures of Popish executioners, that all the bloody deaths to which Gods people were ever put, in any age of the world, have never done so much hurt to the cause of Christ as the inconsistencies of professors of the present time. It was about three years ago I think, that failures among religious men seemed to be the order of the day and our papers literally teemed with accusations against the Church of God. O my Brethren, let us not talk of these things, except with mourning and tears. Wrap yourself in sackcloth, O Church of Godput away your laughter and cast ashes on your head, for the crown of your glory is departed, your garments are stained and the filthiness of your garments witnesses against you.

O Church of Christ, your Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, but now their visage is blacker than coal and their hands are defiled with iniquity. Remember the time of your purity, when your priests were glorious and your sons and daughters were clothed in royal apparel? How are you fallen! How are you cast down from the high mountains! Your princes are clothed in rags. The veils are plucked from the faces of your daughters and you yourself have become disconsolate and a widow by reason of the iniquity of your sons and of your daughters. Woe unto us, for your glory is departed, your sun is covered with thick darkness and your stars withhold their light. The crown is fallen from our headwoe unto us that we have sinned.

My Hearers, my soul has carried me away. Breathless and panting I return to my humbler but not less earnest style. Remember how vast your powers for mischief! Your ministers may preach as long as they will. But you undo their preaching if you are unholy. If you are inconsistent in your lives, Paul, Apollos and Cephas might preach with power, but they have not half the power to build up that which you have pulled down. You are

the mightiest workmen, you professors of religionyou can undo infinitely more than we can accomplish.

And now I pause and relieve the shadow of this subject with something which, I fear, is in the sight of God equally vile. How often do the people of God comfort sinners in their sins by their murmurings and their complaints? Oh Beloved, we are too much in the habit of covering our faces with sadness, on account of our temporal trials and too little in the habit of weeping on account of the failings of the Church of God! How frequently do you meet with a true Christian full of unbelieving cares! Ah, he says, All these things are against me. He has food and raiment, but he is not content with it. He has more than that, but his store is a little diminished and he is very cast down and he has no faith and cannot trust the Lord. Oh, says the worldling, see these Christians. They talk about faith, but their faith is not half so much service to them as my desperation is to me that hardens my heart and makes me stand up against affliction a great deal better than their faith in Gods Providence can do. Why, just look at these saintsa driveling set of crying creaturesthey never have either peace or joy.

They are everlastingly pulling long faces and talking through their noses about their sad trials and troubles. They never have an hour of happiness. Who would be a Christian? I dont want to be converted, says the worldling. Why should I pluck out the sunbeam from my eye and take the smile from my brow? Why should I profess to follow a God whose servants only worship him by weeping and never offer any sacrifice but that of groans and sighs and murmurs? Might not a wicked man come in oftenwhen Christians are grumbling together about the badness of the times, about the high price of commodities and the low rate of wages and so forthand might he not say, Yes, I can see your God treats you very badly. If I were you Id strike and have nothing to do with Him? And he would go away laughing and saying, Ah, Baal treats me better. I get more pleasure in this world than these Christian people do. Let them have their brave Heaven to themselves, if they likeIm not going sniveling through this world with them. Let me have joy and rejoicing while I may. Dont you think that in this way you and I have done a world of damage to the cause of Christ and may have helped to comfort sinners in their iniquities?

One other point and I will have done with this. Perhaps the greatest evil has been done by the cold-heartedness and indifference of religious professors. I charge you not, O Church of God, with inconsistency. I lay no crime at your door now. It is with another fault I charge youbut one as grievous. I pray you, plead guilty to it, for you will but speak the truth and then I pray God that this your guilt may be cleansed and that you may offend Him no longer with this, your evil. The Church of God at the present age is cold and lukewarm and lifeless, compared with what it used to be. When I was preaching in Wales this week, I could not but observe the power which attended the ministrywhen there was a living congregation and an earnest company gathered together to hear the Word of God.

We have here become accustomed to sit in a kind of solemn silence to hear the Gospel. Not so in Wales. There is to be heard the voice of acclamation-every person expresses the feelings of his soul in audible prayers and cries to God. And at last, when the Spirit has descended, you hear the loud cries of Gogoniant,Glory to God. As each precious sentence drops from the lips of the preacher, it seems to be taken up and fed upon by the people while they shout aloud for joy. I believe it is a great improvement on our English congregations and some of our English preachers could not go on in their dull style, if sometimes the people had a chance of either hissing them or cheering them on.

That, however, is but an index of the cold state of the Churches. We are a phlegmatic, cold nationeven Scotch divines are more alive than we arethey speak the Word of God with more earnestness than many of our ministers do in England. Cold as we think the north is, yet has even it become warmer than we are. And now, what says the world to all our coldness? Why, it saysAh, this is the kind of religion we like, says the worldling; we dont like those raving Methodists. We cant stand them. We dont like those earnest indefatigable Christians of the kind of Whitfield oh, no, they were a raving set of folks. We dont like them. But we like these quiet folks. Yes, says the worldling, I think it is quite right that every man should go to His Church and his Chapel on a Sunday. But I never could go and hear such raving as Mr. So-and-So gives.

Of course you could not. You are an enemy to God and that is why you like a Laodicean Church. That very Church which the world likes best is sure to be that which God abhors. The world says, We like everything to go on smoothly. We like a man to go to his own parish Church and hear a good, solid, substantial sermon read. We like to go up to the meeting house and hear a sober, eloquent Divine. We dont like any of this furious preaching, any of these earnest exhortations. No, of course you like that of which God has said, You are neither cold nor hot. God hates such and that is why sinners love it. But what effect does all this have upon the worldling? Why, just this. He says, I like you, because you dont rebuke me. I like that kind of religion, because it is no accusation against me. When I see a Christian hot and in earnest about being saved, he says, it rebukes my own indifference.

But when I see a professed Christian just as indifferent about the salvation of men as I am, why, then I say, it is all a farce, nonsense! They dont mean it, the minister does not care a bit about whether souls are saved or not and as for the Church, they make a great deal of noise every now and then at Exeter Hall, about saving some poor blacks far away, but they dont care about saving us. And so a worldling wraps himself up and goes on his way in his sin and his iniquity and perseveres, even to the last declaring all the while that religion is but a sham, because he sees us careless in solemn matters and cold concerning everlasting realities. Thus I have, mournfully in my own soul, set forth the plan whereby

Satan comforts sinners in their sins, even by means of those who ought most sternly to rebuke them.

II. And now for the second pointTHE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS EVIL. And here I wish to speak very pointedly and personally to all of you who are professors of religion. And I do hope that you will take every point to yourself, in which you must feel that you have been and are guilty. Friends, how often have you and I, in the first place, helped to keep sinners easy in their sin, by our inconsistency? Had we been true Christians, the wicked man would often have been pricked to the heart and his conscience would have convicted him. But having been unfaithful and untrue, he has been able to sleep on quietly, without any disturbance from us. Do you not think, my dear Brothers and Sisters, that you have each been guilty here?that you have often helped to pacify the wicked in their rebellion against God?

I must confess myself that I am guilty. I have labored to escape from the sin, but I am not clean delivered from it. I pray each one of you makes a full confession before God, if by your silence, when sin has been committed before your eyes, or by a smile, when a lascivious joke has been told in your hearing, or if by a constant indifference to the cause of Christ you have led sinners to sleep more securely in the bed of their iniquities. But to go further still. Do you not think that very often, when a sinners conscience has been roused, you and I have helped to give it a soporific draught by our coldness of heart? Hush! Master Conscience, says the sinner. But he will not be still, but cries aloud, Repent, repent. And then you, a professing Christian pass by and you administer the laudanum draught of your indifference and the sinners conscience falls back again into its slumber and the reproof that might have been useful is entirely lost upon him.

I am sure that this is one of the great crying sins of the Churchthat we are not now the witnesses of God, as we should bebut often quiet the witness of conscience in the souls of men. Look now to your livesI am speaking personally to each onelook at yesterday and the days that went before and I ask you and I solemnly charge you to answer that question. Have you not often assisted, in the first place, to keep mens consciences quiet and afterwards to send them to sleep when they have been aroused?

Furtheris it not possible that often sinners have been strengthened in their sin by you? They were but beginning in iniquity and had you rebuked with honesty and sincerity, by your own holy life, they might have been led to see their folly and might have ceased from sin. But you have strengthened their hands. They have gone forward confidently, because they have said, See, a Church member leads the way. So-and-So is not more scrupulous than I, says such an one. I may do what he does And so you have helped to strengthen sinners in their sins. No, is it not possible that some of you Christians have helped to *confirm* men in their sins and to destroy their souls? It is a masterpiece of the devil, when he can use Christs own soldiers against Christ. But this he has often done.

I have known many a case. Let me tell a story of a ministerone which I believe to be true and which convicts myself, and therefore I tell it with the hope that it may also waken your consciences and convict you, too. There was a young minister once preaching very earnestly in a certain Chapel and he had to walk some four or five miles to his home along a country road after service. A young man, who had been deeply impressed under the sermon, requested the privilege of walking with the minister, with an earnest hope that he might get an opportunity of telling his feelings to him and obtaining some word of guidance or comfort. Instead of that, the young minister all the way along told the most singular tales to those who were with him, causing loud roars of laughter and even relating tales which bordered upon the indecorous. He stopped at a certain house and this young man with him and the whole evening was spent in frivolity and foolish talking.

Some years after, when the minister had grown old, he was sent for to the bedside of a dying man. He hastened there with a heart desirous to do good. He was requested to sit down at the bedside and the dying man, looking at him and regarding him most closely, said to him, Do you remember preaching in such-and-such a village on such an occasion? I do, said the minister. I was one of your hearers, said the man, and I was deeply impressed by the sermon. Thank God for that, said the minister. Stop! said the man, dont thank God till you have heard the whole story. You will have reason to alter your tone before I have done. The minister changed countenance, but he little guessed what would be the full extent of that mans testimony.

Said he, Sir, do you remember, after you had finished that earnest sermon, I, with some others walked home with you? I was sincerely desirous of being led in the right path that night. But I heard you speak in such a strain of levity and with so much coarseness, too, that I went outside the house, while you were sitting down to your evening meal. I stamped my foot upon the ground and said that you were a liar, that Christianity was a falsehood, that if you could pretend to be so in earnest about it in the pulpit and then come down and talk like that, the whole thing must be a sham.

And I have been an infidel, said he, a confirmed infidel, from that day to this. But I am not an infidel at this moment. I know better. I am dying and I am about to be damned. And at the bar of God I will lay my damnation to your chargemy blood is on your headand with a dreadful shriek and one demoniacal glance at the trembling minister, he shut his eyes and died. Is it not possible that we may have been guilty thus? The bare idea would make the flesh creep on our bones. And yet I think there are few among us who must not say, That has been my fault, after all. Are there not enough traps in which to catch souls, without your being made Satans fowlers to do mischief?
Has not Satan legions enough of devils to murder men, without employing *you*? Are there no hands that may be red with the blood of souls beside yours? O followers of Christ! O Believers in Jesus! Will you serve under the black prince? Will you fight against your Master? Will you drag sinners down to Hell? Shall we(I take myself in here, more truly than any of you)shall we, who profess to preach the Gospel of Christ, by our conversation injure and destroy mens souls?

III. Thus I think I have expounded the solemn consequences of this fearful evil. And now I come, in conclusion, and I pray God to help me, while I deal earnestly and solemnly with you, AND BRING OUT THIS GREAT BATTERING RAM, TO BEAR AGAINST THIS VAIN EXCUSE OF THE WICKED.

Among this great congregation, I have doubtless a very large number of persons who are not converted to God and who have continually made this their excuse, I see so much of the inconsistency of professors that I do not intend to think about religion myself. My Hearer, I conjure you by the living God, give me your ear a moment, while I pull this vain excuse of yours to pieces. What have you to do with the inconsistencies of another? To his own master he shall stand or fall. What will it better you, if one half of all the professors of religions be sent to Hell? What comfort will that be to you, when you shall come there yourself? Man, will God require the sins of other people at your hands? Where is it said that God will punish you for what another does? Or do you imagine that God will reward you because another is guilty? You are surely not foolish enough for that!

I ask you, what can you have to do with anothers servant? That man is a servant of God, or at least professes to be. If he is not so, what business can it possibly be of yours? If you should see twenty men drinking poison, would that be a reason why you should drink it? If, passing over London Bridge, you should see a dozen miserable creatures leaping off the parapet, there would be a good argument why you yourself should seek to stop them, but no argument why you should leap, too. What if there are hundreds of suicides? Will that excuse you, if you shall shed your own blood? Do men plead thus in courts of law? Does a man say, O Judge, excuse me for having been a thief, there are so many hundreds of men that profess to be honest that are as big thieves as I? You will be punished for your own offenses, remember, not for the offenses of another. Man! I bid you, look this in the face. How can this help to ease your misery? How can this help to make you happier in Hell, because you say there are so many hypocrites in this world?

But, besides, you know well enough that the Church is not so bad as you say it is. You see some that are inconsistent. But are there not many that are holy? Do you dare to say there are none? I tell you, man, you are a fool! There are many bad coins in the world, many counterfeitsdo you, therefore, say there are no good ones? If you say so, you are madfor the very fact that there are counterfeits is proof that there must be realities. Would any man think it worth his while to make bad sovereigns if there were no good ones? It is just the quantity of good ones that passes off the few false coins. And so no man would pretend to be a Christian unless there were some good Christians. There would be no hypocrites if there were not some true men. It is the quantity of true men that helps to pass off the hypocrite in the crowd.

And then again, I say, when you come before the bar of God, do you think that this will serve you as an excuse, to begin to find fault with Gods own children? Suppose you were brought before a king, an absolute monarch and you should begin to say, by way of appeal, O king, I have been guilty, it is true, but your own sons and daughters I do not like. There are a great many faults in the princes of the blood. Would he not say, Wretch! you are adding insult to wickedness. You are guilty, yourself, and now you do malign my own children, the princes of the blood? The Lord will not have you say that at last. He has pardoned His children. He is ready to pardon you. He sends mercy to you this day, but if you reject it, imagine not that you shall escape by recounting the sins of the pardoned ones. Rather this shall be an addition to your sin and you shall perish the more fearfully.

But come, Man, once againI would entreat of you with all my might. What? Can you be so foolish as to imagine that because another man is destroying his own soul by hypocrisy, that this is a reason why you should destroy yours by indifference? If there are thousands of untrue Christians, so much the more reason why I should be a true one. If there are hundreds of hypocrites, this should make me more earnest to search myself and should not make me indifferent about the matter. O Sinner! You will soon be on your dying bed and will it comfort you there to think, I have rejected Christ, I have despised salvation, I am perishing in my sins, and to add, But there are many Christians who are hypocrites? No, death will tear away that excuse. That will not serve you.

And when the heavens are in a blaze, when the pillars of the earth shall reel, when God shall came on flying clouds to judge the children of men, when the eternal eyes are fixed upon you and like burning lamps are enlightening the secret parts of your belly, will you then be able to make this an excuseGood God! It is true, I have damned myself, it is true, I have willfully transgressedbut there were many hypocrites? Then shall the Judge say, What have you to do with that? You had nothing to do, to interfere with My kingdom and with My judgeship. For your own offenses you are lost. For your own rejection of Christ you shall perish everlastingly.

And now I conclude, by addressing the people of God with equal solemnity and earnestness. My dear Hearers, if I could weep tears of blood this morning, I could not show too much emotion concerning this most solemn point. I do not know that this text ever struck me before yesterday, but I no sooner noticed it than it came home to me as an accusation. I plead guilty to it and I pray for forgiveness. I only wish that a like power may attend it to you, that you may feel that you have been guilty, too.

O Friends, can you bear the thought that you may have helped to drag others down to Hell? Christ has loved you and pardoned your sins. And will you push others downward? And yet if you are inconsistent and es

pecially if you are cold and lukewarm in your religion, you are doing it. Well, says one, I dont do much good, but I do no hurt. That is an impossibility. You must be either doing good or evil. There is no borderland between truth and sin. A men must be either on land or in the water. And you are either serving God or serving Sataneach day you are increasing your Masters kingdom, or else diminishing it.

I cannot bear the thought that any of you should be employed in Satans camp. Suppose there ever should be an invasion of this country by France. The bells rings from every Church steeple, the drum is sounding in every street and men are gathering at every market-cross. Peaceful men spring up to soldiers in an instant. Multitudes are marching away to the coast. When we come near it we behold a troop of soldiers who have climbed our white cliffs and with bayonets fixed they are marching against us. We, with a tremendous cheer, rush on against them, to drive them back into the sea which girds our beloved country.

Suddenly, as we rush forward, we detect scores of Englishmen marching in the same ranks with our foes and seeking to ravage their own country. What should we say? Seize these traitors. Let not one of them escapeput them all to death. Can Englishmen take the side of Englands enemies? Can they march against our hearths and homes, betray their fatherland and take the side of the tyrant Emperor? Can this be? Then let them die the death! And yet this day I behold a more mournful spectacle yet. There is King Jesus marching at the head of His troops. And can it be that some of you, who profess to be His followers, are on the other side? That professing to be Christs you are lighting in the ranks of the enemy carrying the baggage of Satan and wearing the uniform of Hellwhen you profess to be soldiers of Christ?

I know there are such hereGod forgive them! God spare them. And may the deserters yet come back, even though they come back in the chains of conviction! May they come back and be saved! O Brothers and Sisters, there is enough to destroy souls without usenough to extend the kingdom of Satan without our helping him. Come out from among them; touch not the unclean thing. Be you separate. Church of God! Awake, awake, awake to the salvation of men! Sleep no longer. Begin to pray, to wrestle, to travail in birth. Be more holy, more consistent, more strict, more solemn in your deportment! Begin, O soldiers of Christ, to be more true to your colors and as surely as the time shall come when the Church shall thus be reformed and revived, so surely shall the King come into our midst and we shall march on to certain victory, trampling down our enemies and getting to our King many crowns, through many victories achieved.

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THE HEART FULL AND THE MOUTH CLOSED
NO. 1289

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

And I will establish My Covenant with you; and you shall know that I am the Lord: That you may remember, and be ashamed, and never open your mouth anymore because of your shame, when I am pacified toward you for all that you have done, said the Lord God.

Ezekiel 16:62, 63.

A VERY extraordinary chapter this 16th of Ezekiel! A minister could scarcely read it in publiche certainly would not like to explain its metaphors to a general audience, nor are we called upon to do so. To read it in private is another thing. And to have it read for you by the Holy Spirit and to be made to see and to *feel* its meaning, not merely as describing the Israelites, but as very much setting forth *yourself*, is a very different matter. Believe me, it is a lesson which, if it is well learned, will never be forgotten. It is a part of the Holy Spirits business to convict us of sin and when He takes a chapter like this and puts us through our paces, verse by verse, and makes us eat the bitter herbs which each verse containsand as He makes us feel as if we were drinking the water into which the dust of our idols had been cast when they had been broken and ground down, like the golden calf of the Israeliteswhen He makes us feel the grit between our teeth in every drop we drink, I say it is a lesson well worth receiving and one that is likely to stick by us all our days.

There are two very amazing things in this chapter. Which is the more amazing is hard to tell. The first is the extraordinary *sin of Israel*. God speaks of it in the strongest imaginable language. He represents Judahs sin as being greater than the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, though both Sodom and Gomorrah had been destroyed for their abominations. He compares Judahs backslidings to the lewdness of a woman who forgets her marriage vows and sins blatantly with many lovers, adding filthiness to filthiness. And so He makes sin to appeal exceedingly sinful, as a violation of the hearts love to God and the souls chastity towards the Most High. A very dreadful thing is sin as set forth in this chapter!

The other amazing thing is *Gods Grace*how, when He began with Israel, He found her like an infant cast out in her blood, naked and unwashed. And He took her up in all her filthiness and said to her, Live, and washed, cleansed and clothed her. He hung her ears with jewels and when she grew to riper years she turned aside from Himturned His mercies into occasions of provocation and made His blessings to be instruments of sin. He describes Himself as pardoning her again and again and yet she continued to invent new sins, looking down, all the while, upon her sisters Sodom and Gomorrah and reckoning herself very superior to them. And yet she was behaving worse then they and going deeper and deeper into rebellion against the Lord.

Yet His mercy follows her. His love still pursues her and He makes the chapter to culminate in mercy with such words as theseNevertheless I will remember My Covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish unto you an everlasting Covenant. And I will establish My Covenant with you; and you shall know that I am the Lord: that you may remember, and be ashamed, and never open your mouth anymore because of your shame, when I am pacified toward you for all that you have done, said the Lord God. Two words, if you can learn them, will teach you the deepest practical wisdom*sin and Grace*. No one ever measured either of themexcept One, and He, when He measured them, was in a bloody sweat and poured out His soul unto death.

George Herbert quaintly sings
Philosophers have measured mountains,
Fathomed the depths of seas, of states, and kings. Walked with a staff to Heaven, and traced fountains, But there are two vast, spacious things,
The which to measure it does more behoove: Yet few there are that sound them
Sin and Love.

Only our suffering Lover, the Lord Jesus Christ, knows the two to their perfection. May we be helped to enter a little further into the double secret while we commune together. The first exercise to which I shall invite you is thislet us think of *the condition into which the Grace of God has brought all Believers*. God is pacified towards them. When I am pacified toward you for all that you have done, said the Lord God. Then, secondly, let us think of *the knowledge which has been imparted thus to all Believers*they know the Covenant, they know the Lord and they know themselves. And they are made to remember and to be ashamed. Finally, in the third and principal place, let us dwell upon *the silence which, from now on and forever is induced in all Believers*. You shall never open your mouth anymore because of your shame, when I am pacified toward you for all that you have done.

I. So, then, first of all, let us review THE BLESSED CONDITION INTO WHICH EVERY BELIEVER IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST HAS BEEN BROUGHT BY THE SOVEREIGN ACT OF GODS MERCY. He has been brought into such a condition that God can say to him, I am pacified toward you for all that you have done. The Hebrew word which here sets forth forgiveness and pardon properly signifies to

cover a thing with that which adheres and sticks to the thing coverednot with dry dust or leaves, which could be easily removedbut with glue or pitch, so that the thing hidden cannot easily be brought to sight again.

The same word is used concerning Noahs ark. You shall pitch it, or cover it, within and without with pitch. All the planks were to be covered with the pitchnot with a filmy paint that might barely color them, but with a thick pitcha sticky substance which would adhere to the substance of the wood and penetrate it and cover it altogether. When God forgives our sin, He covers us as completely as the wood of the ark was covered within and without with pitch. Our sin is covered and hidden right away from His observation. Child of God, I beg you to think of this for a moment! God is pacified towards you because your sin is coveredall of ityes, it is all gone.

As far as God is concerned, your sin has ceased to be. He laid it on Jesus Christ, your Substitute, and He took it and bore the penalty for itno the thing, itself, He, as your scapegoat, carried your sin right away and it is lost in the wilderness of forgetfulness. Into the depths of the sea He has cast your iniquities. In His own tomb He has buried your offenses. What said the Scripture? He has finished transgression and made an end of sin. Grand work! *Made an end of it*. And if there is an end of it, why there is an end of it and it has gone! This day, O believing child of God, there is fulfilled towards you that gracious wordIn those days, and in that time, said the Lord, 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.

Through faith in Jesus, your transgressions are all removed as far from you as the east is from the west. The depths have covered your sins there is not one of them left. The Lord is pacified for all that we have done so that no ground of quarrel remains. O Believer, God is pacified towards you, for your sin is covered! It is put away, all of it and altogether! Since you have believed in Jesus Christ, your sin has not become dimly visible neither by searching may it be seen as a shadow in the distance, but God sees it no more, forever! He has not merely taken away some of its results, some of the fiercer judgments that might have broken forth had not Christ intervened, but He has utterly removed all the penal consequences of it.

The sin is covered in the most emphatic sense. God has turned away all the fierceness of His anger and you may say, O God, I will praise You, for though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away and You comfort me. The many, the countless hosts of sin that you have committed since your childhood are all scattered as a cloud and the one black sin, which cost you more regret than many scores of others, has been removed as a thick cloud! The one repeated sin which grew into a habit which seemed as though it mastered you completely and brought you into utter bondageit, too, has died into the tomb of the great Substitute. They are all goneno enemy remains. In the sepulcher of Christ they are buried never to rise. Not one of these dead things shall live, for the efficacy of the death which slew them is eternal!

They cannot rise against you from the grave. No, not one of them, while sun and moon endureno, while God endures, for He said itThey shall not be mentioned against you anymore, forever. Who can lay anything to the charge of Gods elect? It is divinely sweet to think of this! God is pacified towards His people for all that they have done, altogether pacified, for their sins have ceased to be! And this is not occasionally true, but *always* truenot only so in happier moments, when we enjoy a sense of it, but *always*, whether we have a sense of it or not!

The standing of a Believer does not depend upon *his* recognition of his standing. There are times when, if he could have all the world for it, he could not read his title clearno, he could not spell the capital letters of that title. There are times when he sees his sin, but cannot see his pardonyet he is pardoned for all thatpardoned while self-condemned! The

Israelites, when they were inside their houses, could not see the blood sprinkled on their doorposts. How could they? By what strange process would they be able to see the blood outside the door while they sat within at the table? No, and it was not *their* seeing the blood that saved them, for if you turn to the Book of Exodus you find the Lord saying, When *I* see the blood I will pass over you.

God always saw the bloodthat was the main point in the matter and, therefore, it was sprinkled where the destroying angel could see it as he flew upon his errand of wrath. Glory be to God, when I cannot see the blood of Christ, myself, my God can see it! If I have ever looked, by an act of faith, to the Lord Jesus, I am saved! If I am resting in Him, I am forgiven. And when my eye of faith is dim and my sense of rest in Christ is overloaded with a yet deeper sense of my own unworthiness, my standing is still not altered, my security is not affected, the pacifying of the Lord towards me is not changed one jot or tittle. At all times, in the dark as well as in the light, when I am downcast as well as lifted up, the Lord is pacified towards His people.

I would to God that the Lords people grasped this more fully and lived in the power of it more completely! May God grant we may! O my Soul, sinful and unworthy though you are, there is a peace established between you and your God which never will be brokena league which never will be violated! God has thoughts of peace towards you. Does not the word so mean? When I am *pacified* when I am *peace*-ifiedwhen I have made peace towards you. God thinks of nothing but peace towards His children. Peace, peace, He said. He is the God of peace, the fruit of His Spirit is peace. The very name of His Son is peace! The Heaven to which He is bringing us is everlasting peace and even now the peace of God which passes all understanding keeps our hearts and minds through Jesus Christ!

The Believer goes forth with joy and is led forth with peace. His heart, his mind, his conscience are filled with peace towards God. There is peace, there is nothing but peace, between my soul and God! Oh, what a joyous thought this is! Grasp it, Christian, and let your spirit exult in it! And all this, remember, is written in our text concerning a people who had plunged into wondrous sins! I have already remarked that I could not explain all that God has said about Israel in this chapterit would be improper. Nor do I think any man ought to try to tell another all the evil which he has seen in himself. Sometimes we tell to our fellow Christians about our own sense of unworthiness, but you are not always speaking to edification.

It has happened to me, sometimes, that the Brother to whom I have spoken of myself has not believed a word I have said. He has looked me in the face and he has said, You are not well, I fear. I am sorry to see you so low in spirits. Indeed, I only spoke the truth and did not tell him one-half of the unworthiness I felt. But he did not know the wormwood and the gall, nor ought I to have wished to make him drink of my cup. That same Brother, perhaps, has come to me with his story of his own failures and transgressions and sinsand then it has been *my* turn to wonder. I have looked at him and I have saidBless you! I wish I were half as good as you are and half as faithful in my Masters service. Every man must bear his own burden. My friend does not know my humiliation before God, neither do I see any unworthiness in my friend compared with to what he sees and feels.

We need not tell our neighbors all that we feel about ourselves anymore than this chapter can ever be explained to every carnal ear. But oh, Brothers and Sisters, no man living has ever exaggerated his own sin or thought too meanly of himself! There does not live beneath Heaven any man whose sense of sin is as deep as the sin really is! I find, when I am talking with enquirers, and they are overburdened with a sense of sin, that the only thing to say to them is, It is all true, every bit you are saying. Oh, but, they say, you do not know. No, I say, nor yet do you. You are 10 times worse than you think you are. Oh Sir, but I feel myself to be utterly lost. Yes, and so you are. You are only feeling the truth. But I feel as if I were driven to despair. And so you ought to be, for if you are looking to yourself, there is nothing but despair for you.

Do not interrupt the young convert when he begins to say that he is distressed by a sense of sin. And if he describes sin in dreadful terms, let him go on to do so, for the more he abhors sin, the better. The trembling penitent is near the truth, for his sin is, indeed, great and terrible. If you make him out to be a *little* sinner, you will next offer him a little Savior, a little Christ and a little Gospel. No, let him go on with that sense of sin. I would even pray God to make him feel it more and more! Meanwhile it is your privilege to present to him an infinite Atonement and a God willing and able to forgive. Tell him that God sent not His Son into the world to save the righteous, or to call those to repentance who have no sin to be repented of.

Tell him that the whole scheme of redemption is so magnificent because it deals with an infinite evil and it is made to a grand scale because the mischief it has to deal with is hideous beyond all conception. If a man feels sin to be unutterably horrible, so much the better. Do not try to get low thoughts of sin, but be humbled in the dust, for then Christ is glorified. The greatness of the sin reveals the greatness of the redeeming sacrifice and the direful nature of the disease declares the Divinity of that Physicians skill who is able to put it all away. Child of God, return with grateful restfulness to the memory of your complete deliverance from the wrath of God due to sin! God is pacified towards you concerning all your sin thus described in all its heinousness, hideousness and horror. Whatever conception of it you have now obtained, and it may be a very, very alarming one, yet in all its terribleness God is pacified towards you concerning your sin! Although your conception may fall far short of the truth, yet, as far as that whole truth about sin is concerned, God is pacified towards you in the Person of His dear Son.

I wonder what Gods thought of sin is. He has thrown some little light upon it in this chapter, but when He hung up His dear Son upon the tree, *then* He declared sin to be a monster, indeed! When God, Himself, bore the pangs of death that He might save His creatures from sin. When all the waves and billows of sins stormy deep rolled over the Incarnate God and when He said, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? what must His thoughts have been concerning sin! But God never thought

worse of sin than it is. He only thought the truth and it is as sin is in its truthand as Jesus felt it in its truth when He bore it on the treeit is as in that true idea of sin that He has put it all away and He is pacified towards us today.

Come, dear children, come into your Fathers bosom, He is pacified towards you. Come back, you wanderers, come home, you troubled ones! The great and glorious God, who is exceedingly angry at sin, whose whole Nature boils like a cauldron against everything that is evilis nevertheless pacified, completely pacifiedeven towards the ungodly and the guilty, through Jesus Christ our Lord! And when you come believing in Him who died for the ungodly and resting in Him who was a Sacrifice for sinners, you shall feel that He is pacified towards you and all is well. There is our blessed standingGod help us to rejoice in it!

II. We pass on, secondly, to notice WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED IN THE PROCESS OF REACHING THIS PEACEFUL STANDING. We have learned three things. I do not say that all Christians have clearly discovered them, I wish they had. But I do know some Christians who have learned these very points thoroughly. First we have learned *salvation by a Covenant*. I will establish My Covenant with you. He who knows how to pronounce the word, covenant, is on the road towards being a thorough theologian! Salvation by Covenant! The thought is charming, for we were lost by a Covenant.

Father Adam stood for us and represented us in the old Covenant of Works. If Adam will keep that Covenant, he and all his children shall be blest. Alas, our foundation was too frail! Our first parent was not able to bear the responsibility of the Covenant and, therefore, he felland we all fell in him to our fatal cost. Some have inquired, Was this just? Do not raise that question, because that is the *loophole* of your hope! The devils, when they fell, fell each one for *himself*, and so they could never rise again! But we fell by *another* in a Covenant made with Another. Here, then, was the way to restore us again!

As we sinned *representatively* it was possible for us to satisfy the Law by a Representative! Here was the opening for the way of salvation! By a second Covenant Head, man may be redeemed, and therefore Jesus Christ comes, the second Adam, and God makes a Covenant with Him, which Covenant runs thusIf He will bear the penalty of sinif He will keep the Law, then all that are in Him shall be delivered from every sin! And the righteousness of the second Adam shall be imputed to them and they shall be loved and blessed as if they were righteous. Oh, matchless mystery of love! Have you ever learned this?

Some of you young people who have lately been converted, have you ever learned the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace? Have you seen what it is to be *in* Christ and *accepted in* Christ because the Lord has made Him to be a Covenant for His peoplea Leader and Commander to His people? And have you nestled down beneath our Lords perfect Atonement and His perfect Righteousness, and said, These are mine, for He is my Adam and I am in Him. And God saves me now, not because of what I did or am, but because of what my Covenant Surety was and is. I am saved through Him. My standing is in Him? He who understands this Covenant has learned something very full of consolation, for he knows that it is a Covenant which he cannot break, for it was not made with him, personally, but made *for* him in his great Substitute and Surety, Christ Jesus.

Christ has not broken the Covenant and only He could do so. He kept it and, therefore, the promise is sure to all His people. And it is a Covenant ordered in all things, and surea Covenant from which God will never turn aside. My Covenant I will not break, He said, nor alter the Word that has gone out of My lips. HE has sworn by Himself, because He could swear by no greaterby two immutable things wherein it is impossible for God to lie, that He might give strong consolation to the heirs of the promise. Certain Brethren tremble when they hear us thus discourse upon the Believers privilege and security, but we cannot help that. Isaac lives at home and rejoices in his birthright and if Ishmael and his mother love slavery better, they must have it.

Nevertheless, what said the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondsman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. As for those who are the children of the promise and inherit through the promise, their name is Laughter, as the name of Isaac was. And they shall rejoice, for they are the true heirsneither shall they ever be driven out, for in Isaac was the seed to be called forever. So said the Lord, and so shall it stand. It is a blessed thing to learn the Covenant of Grace!

The next thing we have learned while reaching our happy condition of peace with God is the lesson that *Jehovah is, indeed, God*. Read those solemn words, You shall know that I am the Lord. To be saved in a way that makes us know that God is God is to be taught aright. I believe that this is one of the lessons least known throughout the Church and in the world it is not known at all. That God is God is easy to say but hard to *know*. I learned it when the Lord brought me to Himself and I have been learning it more and more in many ways as He has taught me and brought me to bow before Him. I have learned His *justice* and if ever I hear men talking about the injustice of everlasting punishment for sin, I have found no echo in my conscience to that observation because, if I could be lifted up into Gods place, I feel that the very first thing I should have to do would be to eternally condemn such a guilty thing as I myself have been and am.

As I have judged my own soul, I have had to pronounce over it that very sentence which God pronounces over all the ungodlyDepart from Me, you workers of iniquity. I have had to say, Amen, in my soul to all the Divine denunciations of evil. I have thus, in my conscience, learned that He is a just God, and thus has one of the great attributes of Deity been known to me. I have also been made to learn *His sovereignty*. I remember the time when I thought that if God saved everybody in the world but me I could not blame Him. I have to come to His feet and feel, I have no rights, and make no claims.

Shaking my hands free of anything like an appeal to what I am as His creature, or as His servant, I have felt that I have forfeited all the rights of creatureship by my sin and I have put myself absolutely at His disposal, beseeching Him to reveal His undeserved favor to me. My ears have even

been tutored to find music in that awful declaration, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But, oh, this doctrine does not seem to be known by a large number of people! They will not come to itthey cannot bite the dust nor bow so low as that. Man is a noble creature and his rights must be considered. God must deal alike by all.

Many are these proud and arrogant boasts, which, to my soul, read like blasphemy! And yet men calling themselves *Christian ministers* give utterance to them! This I know, that He is God and does as He pleases with His Grace. He taught me this before He stretched out the silver scepter and said, I am pacified towards you. And oh, how we have to learn *His power*. The power of God is seen by the natural eye, in some measure, in storms and tempests, but, believe me, it is never seen with the *inner* eye by any man so well as when the Lord overcomes his sin! He has seen his sin and he has felt no more able to grapple with it than the sear leaf with the hurricaneand yet the Lord has suddenly stopped the fury of that sin and delivered the man, so that he has saidNow I know that You are God, for who but God could have done this for me? Who but Yourself could have chained my imperious passions and broken the iron yoke from off my neck? Then has the man felt the Omnipotence of Jehovah!

Above all we learn that precious word, *God is Love,* but there is no understanding it until you are actually broken down under a sense of sin and are led to see that your sin deserves the hottest Hell. Then, when you hear the Lord say, But, nevertheless, for My own sake have I forgiven you, and through Jesus Christ My Son have I put all this sin of yours away: it shall never be mentioned against you anymore, foreverthen the eyes look up and says Love! I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You! Such love! Such matchless love! Such amazing love! One cannot talk about it without longing to get away to some secret place to pour out your soul before God with tears instead of words, to think that He should forgive so freely, so richly and so completely forgive!

If you would know the Godhead, you must behold it in the Person of Jesus Christ while you look up to Him and see Him through your tears. In Him you see yourself crucified as a rebel and a traitor, deserving nothing but wrath. And then in Him you see God over all exalted, dispensing mercy, not because of mans merit, or even because of mans prayers or tears, or anything like goodness in manbut simply because He wills to do itto display the majesty of His stupendous Grace in passing by transgression, iniquity and sin.

The third lesson which is connected with our deliverance is this, That you may remember and be ashamed. We have learned *ourselves*. To remember and to be ashamedthat is not comfortable. Who likes to remember and be ashamed? Some of you good people can remember your whole lives, but you do not feel at all ashamed. Why should you? With so much of your own excellence to glory in, why should you be ashamed? But, remember, if the Lord is ever pacified towards you, you

will remember and you *will* be ashamedso that no good can come from the selfcontentment which you are so loath to lose. You will be ashamed if ever you are pardoned. You will be ashamed at being unable to discover any excuse for your sin.

Once you could have found 20 excuses and had your choice of them. But now that the Lord has forgiven you, you cannot find *one*. And as you turn them all upthose old excuses of yourthose fig leaves of yours with which you once hoped to cover your nakedness, you despise them and think you never saw such flimsy things! You are doubly ashamed to think that you ever invented such excusesashamed to think that you could have been such a fool as to dream that there was any reason in your excusesthat what made sin worse should have seemed to you at any time to make it better! You are ashamed, now, to think how it was that you lived all those years in sin and unbelief.

I was utterly amazed to think that I had not believed in Jesus Christ long before. Was that allto trust in Christ? Why, I had been going all round the world to *do* something and *feel* something, and *be* something and there it wasI was to be *nothing*! Christ was to be *everything* and I was to be thus saved! I was just to take salvation freely as a gift to me. I was ashamed. I could not invent an excuse for having remained in unbelief, though until the Lord was pacified with me I stubbornly said, You know I cannot believe. I had hosts of excuses, while I was unforgiven, but they were all gone when Mercy forgave me.

Have you ever tried to put two things straight before your eyesyour own life and Gods Characteryou before God and God before you? Have you not felt that you could not look at them both, for you were ashamed and could not comprehend them? You used to say, Oh, that sin was the result of my upbringing, that was the product of bad example. Or you passed it off by saying, Ah, I made a mistake that time. Now that you are saved your conduct seems to you to have been *all* mistakes, *all* blunders, *all* mischiefs, *all* bad, *all* horrible! You are ashamed, do not know what to say, you cannot defend yourself. Oh, what a blessed thing it is when a man is so ashamed that he cannot speak for himself anymore, but leaves Jesus Christ to speak for himwhen he is so ashamed that all he can do is to sit still and admire, and wonder, and adore, and love, and bless, and praise, and magnify God for such unexpected mercy!

Why was I made to hear Your voice,
And enter where theres room,
While thousands make a wretched choice, And rather starve than come?

Why, did You love *me*? Why did You bear with *me* so long? Why was I gently led to yield myself to Your sway? Why were *my* eyes opened? Why was I not left to willful blindness as others were? I thought once I could have explained it, but now I cannot, for it is past finding out. O God, I am ashamed. Your very love confuses me as much as my sin does. I am in a maze, I am perplexed, I am astounded! Thus is the Word fulfilled. You shall remember and be ashamed. My Brothers and Sisters, I hope the Lord, when He brought you to know Himself, taught you these three thingsyour standing in the Covenant, His own Glory as the God of that Covenant and your own less-than-nothingness as He utterly perplexes and astounds you, both *with* your guilt and with *His* mercy. **III.** The last thing is thisTHE SILENCE WHICH IS FOREVER INDUCED. You shall never open your mouth anymore because of your shame. It takes a great deal to fill a mans mouth and almost as much to shut it. Some mens mouths never will be filled till the sexton gives them a spade full of dirt, for their greed is insatiable and half the world would not be enough for them. Some mens mouths never will be stopped except by the coffin lid. Their motto is, While I live Ill crow. And so they will, for boasting is bred in their bones and it will come out of them. Though they have nothing to boast of, yet as long as they breathe, they will brag.

But when God saves a man, He takes means to end his self-exaltation most effectually, so that he will never open his mouth anymore in his own praise. He stops him from all boasting about what he is and what he has been and what he thinks he shall be. If you find any man talking about how excellently he has lived and what a commendable person he has been, you may be sure that God has never been pacified towards him! When a man cries, But is not our morality something? Is there not a great deal to be said in favor of those who are sober and righteous?you may know that God has never been pacified towards that man, for if it were so, he would never open his mouth anymore about his morality.

He would be as ashamed of his morality as other men are of their outward sins, for he would see it to be a poor imperfect thing at best. Our morality is a very pretty thing when people look at it who are in the blindness of Nature. But when we bring our morality under the microscope and look at it as *God* looks at it, what a horribly immoral thing this so-called morality is! You begin to look below the surface and you discover that a certain man refrained from outward sin, not because he would not have delighted to do wrong, but because he was a little too shrewd and did not want to injure his own interests. He was not such a fool as to fall into vulgar sin, that is to say, his *selfishness* saved him.

Sometimes the man who did actually transgress had more generous impulses than the other who did not sin, because his sneaking selfishness kept him within the lines of outward consistency. When you come to look at very much of morality, it will not bear inspection. It is a very pretty thing, like the moss and the fungus growing out of putriditya very pretty thing until you understand where it came from! If any man who believes himself to have been moral and sinless will only begin to look at the *reasons* why he has been so innocent, and search himself, he will often discover that inside all that purity of his there has been a mass of pride, selfconceit, self-seeking, indifference to God and every detestable thing imaginable! When the Lord shows a man all this and casts him down into the ditch till he abhors himselfand then cleanses him in the precious blood till He is pacified towards himhe will never open his mouth about that matter anymore!

Neither will a man who has been cleansed in this way open his mouth anymore against Divine Sovereignty. It seems to some minds to be a very fine thing to talk about the rights of moral agents and rail at all idea of the Lord exercising the prerogatives of *Kingship*. They love to go to the verge of blasphemy to show that they are not so foolish as to be Calvinistic. When the spiritual dandy hears the Biblical doctrine that he has sinned against God and that if he is to be saved it must be all of Grace, he is too fine a fellow to believe the Truth of God! He does not want to enter Heaven like a criminal, or to receive pardon like a convict! He inclines to a more genteel Gospel.

Now, if the Lord is pacified towards that man, you will never hear another word of that sort from him. Oh, no, he will say, let the Lord live forever and let Him be King. He is the man above all others who loves to hear of God as absolute! He knows how gracious, how strong, how truly good He is. He has heard the language of Paul ringing in his heart as well as in his earsNo, but O, man, who are you that replies against God? And he has answered, I dare not reply, for I am less than nothing! And I would not reply if I could, for I love God and I bless His name. One of the sweetest notes that ever falls upon that mans ears isThe Lord reigns. He loves to think that Jehovah reigns and if it were in his power to restrict His reign and abridge His absolute authority, he would not do so. He wishes Him to be King forever and sit as Lord upon the floods, world without end! In that matter, then, the mans mouth it shut forever.

So, also, dear Friends, this way of salvation shuts a mans mouth as to all murmuring and complaining against God upon any score whatever, for, says he, If the Lord has pardoned me, let Him do what He wills with me. Our proud flesh exalts itself against the will of the Lord and says, It is hard that you should always be poor when you would have done so much good with money. It is hard that you should be so often ill while you are so useful. It is hard that you should have so little talent, when God knows that if you had great abilities you would have been so zealous and led the van in the Church of Christ, for you love Him so much.

Ah, dear Friends, but when Grace forgives us we never talk so! We say, No, my Lord, I am so unworthy that if You favor me to be a doorkeeper in Your house I will be grateful for it. If I am permitted, at the last, to get inside the gates of Heaven to sit among Your children, as the meanest of them, I shall be forever grateful to Your mighty love and bless Your gracious name. I have no quarrels to pick with You. I have no demands to make of You. Not as I will, but as You will. If I can glorify You on a bed of sickness, I will lie there and cough to Your Glory! If I can glorify You in a mud cottage, I will dwell there and starve on a few pence a week to Your Glory! If I can honor You in rags, or in the poorhouse, so let it be. Yes, if in death it will honor You for me to have a paupers funeral or none at all, so let it be. I belong to You from this day forth. I am such a sinner, so forgiven and so indebted to Almighty Grace that I can never open my mouth anymore to find fault, for You have dealt so kindly and so lovingly with me.

May that spirit rest upon you, beloved Friends. Now, I wish I could hope that all of you had tasted of the Grace and love of God as some of us have done. But I dare not flatter you. I fear that many of you are utter strangers to this matter. It ought to encourage everyone here who has not found peace with God, to hear us tell of what we feel of our own sinfulness, because, Sinner, where one sinner gets through, there is room for another! If there is a prison door and that door is broken down and one gets out, another man who is in the same prison may safely say, Why

should I not escape, too?

Supposing we were all beasts in Noahs ark and we could not get down from the ark to the ground except by going down that slanting ramp which most of the painters have sketched when they have tried to depict the scene. Well, we must go down that ramp. Are you afraid? Are you, sheep and hares, afraid that the ramp will not bear you up? Listen, then! I am an elephant and I have come down out of the ark over that ramp and, therefore, it is sure that all of you who are smaller than I am can come down, too. There is strength enough to bear up the hare and the coney, the ox and the sheep, for it carried the elephant! The way down has been trod by that heavy, lumping creatureit will do for you, whoever you may be.

Ever since the Lord Jesus Christ saved me, I made up my mind to one thing, namely, that I should never meet another person who was harder to save than I. Somebody said to me, once, when I was a child, when it was very dark and I was afraid to go out, What are you afraid of? You wont meet anything uglier than yourself. Surely as to my spiritual condition that is true! I never did meet anything uglier than myself and I never shall. And if there is a great, big, black, ugly sinner here, I say, Sinner, you are not uglier than I was by nature, and yet the Lord Jesus Christ loved *me*! Why should He not love *you*, too? I tell you, that though Jesus Christ is Omniscient, and it is saying a great thing to say what He could not see, yet I do venture to say that Jesus Christ could not see *anything* in me to love.

What if He cannot see anything good in you? Then we are on a par and yet I know He loves *me*, why not *you*? That He loves me I know. Bless His name, I know He loves me and I love Him, too. If He loved me when there was nothing in me to love, why should He not love you when there is nothing in you to love? Oh, turn that ugly face towards the lovely Savior and trust Him! I put it in a pleasant way and you smile, but I want to get it into your *hearts*. I want some poor, trembling sinner to say, I shall remember that. I do think myself an ugly sinner, but I will come to Christ and trust Him.

If you do, you will never regret it, but you will bless God forever and ever, and so shall I! And when we get to Heaven we will talk about it and we will say, Here we are, a pair of huge, horrible sinners. We came to Jesus Christ and He took us in and, blessed be His name, we will praise Him as long as ever we live. That we will, I guarantee you! Do you not feel sure of it? God bless you, for Christs sake.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONPsalm 51. *HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK51, 546.* Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.

Sermon #3494 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

DIVINE DESTRUCTION AND PROTECTION
NO. 3494

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 1916.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

And all the trees of the field shall know that I, Jehovah, have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish. I, Jehovah, have spoken and have done it.
Ezekiel 17:29.

CAN your minds fly back to the time when there was no time, to the day when there was no day but the Ancient of Days? Can you speed back to that period when God dwelt alone, when this round world and all the things that are upon it had not come from His hand? When the sun flamed not in its strength and the stars flashed not in their brightness? Can you go back to the period when there were no angels, when cherubim and seraphim had not been born and, if there are creatures older than they, when none of them had as yet been formed? Is it possible, I say, for you to fly so far back as to contemplate God aloneno creature, no breath of song, no motion of wingGod Himself alone, without another? Then, indeed, He had no rival! None, then, could contest with Him, for none existed. All power, and glory, and honor and majesty were gathered up into Himself. And we have no reason to believe that He was less glorious than He is now, when His ministers delight to do His pleasure, nor less great than now, when He has created worlds on worlds and thrown them into space, scattering over the sky, stars with both His hands! He sat on no precarious throne. He needed none to add to His power. He needed none to bring Him a revenue of praise. His AllSufficiency could admit of no lack. Consider next, if you can, the eternal purpose of God that He would create. He determines it in His mind. Could any but a Divine motive actuate the Divine Architect? What must that motive have been? He creates that He may display His own perfections! He does beget, as it were, creatures after His own image that He may live in themthat He may manifest to others the joy, the pleasure, the satisfaction which He so intensely feels in Himself. Certain I am His own Glory must have been the end He had in view. He would reveal His Glory to the sons of men, to angels and to such creatures as He had formed in order that they might reflect His honor and sing His praise!

You are not ignorant, my Brothers and Sisters, of the fact that sin entered into the world. You know that the Creation, which had been harmonious as a Psalm in Gods praise, voluminous and exhaustive as a book in which He revealed His own Characterthis Creation, once exceedingly fair, became foully marred. Rival instincts were produced and rival interests were set up. Mans will stood up against Gods willmans profit against Gods honormans device against Gods counsel. Eve took of the accursed fruit and Adam partook of the same and, from that day on man became a rival to God, just as Satan, aforetime, had rebelled against the blessed and only Potentate and usurped authority. From the time when Satan fell, Gods purpose was to break down everything which set itself up in opposition to Him. From that day till now, no matter how great, how lofty, how apparently excellent a thing might be, it has been the rule with God to pull it down if it did not stand in Him and for Him! Yes, and wherever He has looked, no matter how mean a thing may have been, how low, how degraded to outward appearance, it has been Gods constant rule to lift it up if it stood in Him and for Him! Or if, by the lifting up of the humble, He might throw scorn upon the haughty, He would thereby magnify His own absolute right to exercise Sovereign control and to do with men as He willed.

Oh, that I could commend the words of some of the mighty masters of song, or that I had an angels voice, so much rather would I hymn this high majestic theme than speak of it in listless prose! But I cannot rise to the awful heights of this incomparable design! I contemplate it with awe not unmingled with admirationthe Eternal God withstanding everything that opposes itself against Himthrusting down the mighty from their seats, plucking off crowns from the heads of princes, degrading the escutcheons of nobles, trampling in the mire the fine linen and the scarlet of the rich, setting at nothing the wisdom of the wise, divesting the philosopher of his toga, rending in pieces the robes of the priest, and pouring contempt upon everything that vaunts pretension or arrogates prestige in defiance of His sacred prescriptive, irrevocable lordship! There is no power or permanence, no warrant or worth in any claim to greatness or goodness independent of God, or antagonistic to Him. My conceptions are too dwarfish, my language is too feeble to compass the grandeur of this theme. Its truth commends it and its usefulness enhances itit bows the heart before God and convinces us that only then are we in a fit state to be filled with His fullness, to live in His life, to be wise with His wisdom and to be glorious in His Glorywhen we are emptied of our own conceits. Mine, however, will be a more practical lesson at this time. And I shall use more homely words than that nobler subject might have demanded.

I THINK I see a great forest which reaches for many a league. The trees are of divers growths and of various ages. Some of them are very lofty. Here a towering cedar and yonder the storks have made their nests among the tall fir trees. There are stout oaks that laugh at storms, and elms that will not be twisted with the tempest. See how they rival each other! And there are lowlier treessome bearing fruit, though scarcely seenothers, like the vine, creeping upon the groundso obscure they can hardly be observed. It is a strange forest in which trees of every clime are to be found. Some green, verdant, laden with blossoms and with fruit. Others dead, dry, withered, with scarcely here and there a leaf. It is the evening, the cool of the day. The Lord God who visited the fair garden of Eden is come to walk in this forest. Along those deep glades, amidst that thick shade, the Almighty appears. He comes. How do I see Him? He bears in His hands an awful axe and He passes His finger along its edge to see that it is sharp. Strong is the arm that wields it. Howl, cedars, if once He lifts that axe against you! What does that Woodsman mean to do? Wait, and let us hear Him speak. Oh, you trees of the field, be silent before the Lord! Clap not your hands until we have heard Him speak. The trees of the field shall know that I, the Lord, have brought down the high treebeware, you towering cedars! That I have exalted the low treetake courage, you lowly vines! That I have dried up the green treewail, you verdant elms! And have made the dry tree to flourish hope, you withered boughs! I the Lord have spoken, and have done it. Let the trees be silent before the Lord, for He comes to judge them, and He judges them with much jealousy. That forest I have before my eyes. Now men, like trees, appear to me in the vision. While I gaze on this dense mass of people listening to my voice, let me interpret the Mighty Woodsmans words to you. There are four notes of which we shall speak, one after the other. May God sanctify the emblems to our profit, touching our ears and teaching our hearts, that we may rightly understand what the Lord says to the trees of the forest.

I. THUS SAYS THE LORD, THE TREES OF THE FIELD SHALL KNOW THAT I, THE LORD, HAVE BROUGHT DOWN THE HIGH TREE.
Look over history and you will see that everything gigantic in stature and colossal in dimensions, whatever has been great to human apprehension, grasping at earthly fame, has become an object for Gods penetrating arrows and a subject for His withering blight. A grand idea of universal monarchy flashed upon the mind of man. He would build a tower, the top of which would reach to Heaven! What did the Lord do with this fine scheme? I will come down, He said, to Babel, and see if it is altogether as they have said. Then He touched their tongues and confounded their language, and scattered the imaginations of their hearts and so He laughed them to scorn, and left them to be a laughingstock to all generations! Then came the great power of Egypt. Pharaoh said, Am I not lord of Thebes, with its hundred gates, and with its myriads of brazen chariots? Have I not a mighty host of cavalry? Who is equal to me? I speak, and the nations tremble. When the king hardened his heart, how did Jehovahthe King of Kingsget Himself honor from Pharaoh and his hosts? You did blow with Your wind; the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters. Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider has He cast into the sea! In later years Babylon set herself up as a queen. I shall be a lady forever, said the gay metropolis of the earth, the mighty city of Euphrates. I sit alone. I shall see no sorrow. Behold, she decks herself out with scarlet! She arrays herself with silk! All the nations of the earth are quiet when she arises nor is the sound of a whisper heard when the voice of her command goes forth! But where are you, daughter of Assyria, where are you, now, O daughter of Chaldea? Where is the crown which once circled your brow and adorned your head? Go, mark a heap of rubbish and of desolate stones! Hear the hooting of the owls and the howling of the dragons, as each one calls to his fellow in the midst of a desolation which cannot be repaired! How are you fallen from Heaven, Lucifer, Son of the Morning! Thus God breaks in pieces with His right hand everything arrogant and supercilious that dares to assert greatness apart from His endowment, or to presume on authority other than He delegates! I might prolong the strain. I might tell you of Rome and all the boastings of that Imperial mistresspoint to her faded charms and tell of her decay and her decadence. I might lead you back to Sennacherib and all his hosts overthrown, or recite the story of Nebuchadnezzar, driven out from the abodes of men and feeding as the beasts. I might show you lesser kings, kings of Israel, brought exceedingly low until they who had sat on the throne as princes pined in the dungeon among slaves! To multiply instances would be only to confirm the general current of history and illustrate the fact that the Lord, even the Lord of Hosts, always cuts down the high tree, humiliates the creature that exalts itself and suffers no flesh to glory in His Presence! That is the law of His government.
The question arises, how does it concerns us? Doubtless it opens a sad prospect to those who are lifted up with pride, or inflated with selfopinion. Are there any among you who boast in heraldry a long succession of illustrious names which has ennobled your pedigree? Some people seem to think that the world is hardly good enough for them to tread upon, as if they were made of china, while other men are molded but of common clay! They look down upon the public as an ignoble herd and speak of the masses as the many-headed, and the great unwashed. Such a man will play the parasite to his own dear self, passionately cherish his own conceits and petulantly hold that whatever belongs to him is better than anyone else can procure for love or money, be it his house, or his horse, the water from his well, or the wine from his cellar! At his wit let all inferiors laugh! To his greed let all who would receive his patronizing nod do obeisance. In stately isolation he will acknowledge no rival. Do you know, man, that in one respect you have a veritable preeminence?you may fairly challenge all your fellows for one whose disposition the Lord hates more than He abhors yours! Among the seven abominations, your order ranks highest. No liar or murderer can claim a preeminence over you in vice so long as the Proverbs stand. Before long the heel of the Almighty shall be lifted higher than your haughty head! He will cast you down, be your look ever so proud, for the Lord has purposed it to stain the pride of all glory, to bring into contempt all the excellence of the earth!
There is, *again, an arrogance of mind, of judgment, of opinion*, just as ignorantif not quite so grotesqueas his who dreams that his birth is of higher caste and his blood of richer hue than other men! Humanity in the bulk is the idol of some peopleand yonder I see the man who quotes himself as an illustrious specimen. He does not believe in the total depravity of human nature. Judging by himself, the statement that the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint, is a myth! Or if it were ever true of a faithless Jew, it never was a fair indictment against such an orthodox Christian as he is! No, no, he has kept the Law. He feels that in all things he is blameless. He has not erred, neither will he humble himself before the word that God speaks to us. In the opinion of such, the Gospel that we preach is very good for harlots, thieves and drunks, but it is of no use to the righteous, for they have put down their own names among those who need no repentance! Admirable in their conduct, their temper amiable and their disposition generous, a salvation by Free Grace would be wasted on them! The Lord will abase you, be you man or woman, whoever you may be! He will shame you! The axe is ready to be laid at your root even now! Your goodness is not Gods goodness, and your righteousness is not Christs righteousnesstherefore shall the moth consume it, and it shall be eaten away. Or it is my friend yonder, a working man, who says, Well, I work as hard as anybody. I bring up my children as well as I can. I have nothing from the parish, and if I see a poor mate out of work, I always subscribe my mite, though I have not much to give awaycan it be right to tell *me* that I am not in a fair way of going to Heaven? Ah, the Lord will deprive you of such boasting, for He will bring down all these high trees! You that have any righteousness of your own, whether you are rich or poorthe same word applies to you all! What matters it whether you are born of princes, or the offspring of beggarspride will nestle in any heart and presumption will take advantage of any circumstances!
Perhaps I may address some person who says, Well, I am a member of the orthodox and true church. I have been baptized and I have been confirmed after the most proper manner. I receive the Lords Supper on all fit and proper occasions. The clergyman from whom I take the sacrament has received Apostolic ordination. How tasteful the architecture of our church! How decorous the congregation! How enchanting the music! There are none of your rough wild notes that give vent to the feelings. Our organ is the perfection of mechanism and it is played with the utmost skill! Our sacred singers perform their parts with reverent taste. Our litanies are wailed out in plaintive tones. We do the thing in the right style and as I am a member of a branch of a Catholic church, I hold myself to be an heir of eternal life. From your towering imaginations, O man, you shall speedily totter! God will cast you down as surely as you live! No boasting, even of our orthodoxy, or of our attention to religious formalities shall ever be allowed to abide His judgment. The Lord has set His face against all boasting and all confidences, other than a trust in the Cross and a holy reliance on the finished work and righteousness of Jesus Christ!
Or shall it fare better with another class? There is our friend who says, Well, well, I do not believe in forms and ceremonies, but, mark you, I always judge and weigh everything. He estimates himself as *an independent thinker.* He is bound by no precedents, fostered by no creeds, and considers that he is amenable to no judgment but his own. He acknowledges no lord but his own conscience, no duty but such as he prescribes himself! And as for wisdom, he looks with indifference on all things whatever that his private judgment has not endorsed. Moreover, he doubts the Inspiration of the Bible and has his misgivings as to the authenticity of some parts of it. He indulges a little suspicion as to the Deity of Christ. And as to the Doctrines of Grace, he professes much intelligence, but he exhibits gross negligence. Strong in his self-assertion, he makes light of the Word of God and the will of God, while he holds Prophets and Apostles in little esteem. Ah, well, Sir! God is against you! He will make a fool of you one of these days, if you are so wise as to exalt yourself above His Revelation! The world shall see your folly. I tell you, captious questioner, that the Lord will bring you down. Tut, tut, tut, I do not believe in any of these things, exclaims the successful merchant, I say the best thing is to push ahead on ones own account! I mean to save money, to get rich, to rise in the world as others have done who have made capital of their own wits and taken care of their own interest. This is the religion of many peopletheir creed being that God will help those who help themselves! In their account, the highest wisdom is to attend to this world, and as for the world to come, the best policy is to ignore it! To the statutes of the Lord they give no heed. Evidently you see no need to depend on God. With a stout pair of arms and a good clear brain, you are confident you can make your own way in the world. Will you prosper, Sir? I tell you, no, for God is against you! The Lord will bring you down. Whether it be strength of limbs and lungs, force of brain and intellect, cunning works or scheming plans you rely upon, He will lay you level with the dust before long! You shall know that he who exalts himself against his maker makes a sorry adventure. Disaster and everlasting confusion are your inevitable fate!

II. FURTHERMORE THE LORD SAYS, I WILL EXALT THE LOW TREE.
Here is a word of comfort to some who especially need it. You remember Joseph in the dungeon, Israel in Egypt, Hannah in the family of Elkanah, David when Samuel would have passed him by, Hezekiah when Sennacherib rebuked him. Are not all these instances of God exalting the low tree? We have no time to speak on them, though they are well worthy of attentive study. But rather now let us ask, Where are the low trees here among ourselves? Who are they? The low trees are *those poor in spirit who think others better than they are, themselves*. Who, instead of carving their names high, are willing to have them written low because they feel they have nothing of which to glory, nothing wherein to boast. The low trees are the penitents, those who take their stand afar off with the publican and say, God, be merciful to me, a sinner! You who feel your own weakness to do anything right. You who are conscious of your own worthlessness and afraid that God will never hear your prayers. You who are bowed down low with a sense of guilt and hardly dare to look up to the place where His Honor dwellsyou are the low treesyou are such as God exalts! You, too, who tremble at His Word when you see the threat and fear lest it should be executed upon you. When you hear the promise, you hardly think it possible that it can belong to youyou are low treesGod shall exalt you! You who feel your ignorance and are willing to be instructed. You who are modest as children and ready to sit at the feet of Jesus. You who have been broken in pieces until you feel that a crumb of mercy would be more than you deserve and are willing to take any dole He is pleased to giveyou are the low tree. *And you that are despised, who walk in darkness* and see no light, slandered for Christs sake, reproached with crimes you never committed. You of whom the world is not worthy, though the world accounts you to be unworthy of its esteemyou are the low trees and God shall exalt you! God grant us Grace to humble ourselves under His mighty hand! The Lord exalts the low trees. Is there a soul among you who is ready to despaira low tree so low that it can only compare itself to a bramble bush? Well, God dwelt in a bush! You may think that if He should have mercy upon all other men, yet He must make an exception of you, so aggravated are your offenses, so depraved your disposition and so alien to anything good! Oh, bless the Lord! He exalts the low tree! If this voice can now reach any humble, fearful, broken-hearted soul, even though that soul should say it is too good to be true, yet, in Gods name, let me assure you it is Gods message to you! Rejoice, yes, sing unto your God, for He will lift up the poor from the dunghill, while He casts down the mighty from the seats of their pomp and their places of power!
III. THE LORD HAS ALSO DECLARED THAT HE WILL DRY UP THE GREEN TREE.
Whether that green tree is high or low, it does not matter. If it is green in itself, He will cut it down. Mark you, a man may be as high as Heavenif it is God who makes him high, he will stand! But if he is high in creature strength, and creature merits, and creature glory, he shall be brought down! And a man may be low without merit, if he is merely mean, paltry and pitiable, not worth a straw. That is not the spirit of lowliness that God blesses! In like manner, a man may be green because he is planted by the rivers of Gods Living Waters. That is healthy enough, but those who are like the green bay tree of the Psalmist, trees growing in their own soil, never transplanted by Grace, *green in the verdure of worldly prosperity* and taking all their delight in earthly thingsthose are the trees God will dry up! Many I know of this kind! They profess to be Gods people and they say, Well, I never have any anxiety about my eternal state. I do not see why I should ever have any doubts or fears. I have no pricks of conscience. This green tree boasts that its leaves never fade, that its evidences are always bright. They have no changes. Therefore they fear not God. They have not been emptied from vessel to vessel. They have no cares. They walk confidently, they talk arrogantly, they smile disdainfully at some of Gods people who groan over their infirmities and bemoan their sins. Perhaps they go the length of protesting that they have no vices and do no wrong! Or they will say, Why, as for me, I have overcome my bad habits and made amends for my youthful follies and indiscretions. And if I have any faults, they are only such as are natural to men, and they do not cause me any trouble. He will even turn round and rail on this wise, I cannot think how some of Gods people can do as they do! No, he is such a blessed, heavenly-minded hypocrite, that after he has condoned his own crimes, he condemns other peoples customs! Therefore he holds up the severity of his judgment as a proof of the integrity of his character. He makes broad fringes on his own garment and he cannot think how good men can wear such narrow fringes on theirs. He has a wide phylactery and he cannot imagine how a godly man can wear a smaller one! He prays an hour and a half at the corner of the streethe cannot imagine that any man is godly who prays for ten minutes in his closet! He sounds a trumpet and gives away three halfpence to the poorhe cannot understand people when they give away ten pounds, or a hundred pounds in the cause of religionhe thinks they must have mercenary motives! He might stand up and say, Look at me if you want to see what a man should be, how a Christian should live, and what his manner, conduct and conversation should be! Behold the man who counts himself the paragon of perfection! Have you ever met with such green trees? I have. These people feed without fear and mock without motive. They laugh at the idea of Pauls apprehension, when he said, I keep under my body, lest, after having preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. They think such fears inconsistent with the Doctrine of Final Perseverance, though in this they are mistaken! A man may know that a true Believer will persevere and yet be very much afraid that he shall not himself hold out because he may suspect himself whether he is a true Believer at all! This green tree is never troubled about the futureit is all right with himhe has launched upon a smooth, deceitful sea, and he believes it will be calm until he gets to the other side! As for human weakness, he knows nothing at all about that. He hears Gods children crying, Who shall deliver us from the body of this death? and he looks shocked!
The professor, too, who boasts his deep experience, is like this green tree. Young Christians he frowns athe does not like young people. No, he would not have many young people in the church because they might adulterate it, and bring down its spiritual tone. As to Doctrine, he is profoundly learnedhe can divide a hair, between the west and southwest side, and he censures at once the man who does not

understand all the points! He understands more than the Bible reveals! He has improved upon the Scriptures and those who cannot get up to his standard, he despises. As for the poor, and meek, and sickly among the people of God, he, one of the strong ones, pushes them on either side and will give them no rest. Never a man yet had anything to boast of as his own, but God was sure to dry him up! Let your life be as green as an emerald, it shall be brown as March dust before long! You seek sap and nourishment from yourselves. The spiders webhow soon it is blown away! Well it may, because it comes out of the spiders own bowels. Everything that comes out of self and lives on self, and hangs on self, and fattens on self, no matter how green it may be, verily, verily, it shall be dried up! Lastly

IV. THE LORD MAKES THE DRY TREE TO FLOURISH.

There are some dry trees to be pitied in their present condition, yet to be congratulated on their prospects. I would not say a word to encourage doubting, but I would say a great many words to *encourage doubters*. How many of Gods people may be fitly compared to a dry tree! They have little joy. *They have not got to full assurance*. They are afraid to say, My Beloved is mine, and I am His. Every night, before they go to bed, they feel such consciousness of sin that they can hardly sleep. They feel themselves so weak that where others go and think nothing of it, they dare not trust themselves. They are afraid to risk temptation. Sometimes they are so conscious of their own weakness that they do not exert themselves as they oughtand hence their low spirits, their melancholy and their mourning. They think they are of no use to the Church. They are half inclined to suspect it was a mistake for them to be baptized, and that they were to blame for uniting themselves with the people of God. Oh, they say, if I am a lamb, I am the sickliest of the whole flock. Were I an heir of promise, would I feel the assaults of sin as I do? Or would I be so much the prey of indwelling corruption and become so dry and withered? When they retire to the closet to pray, they can hardly utter a word. They come to the assembly of Believers and though they do sing with their lips, the heart cannot sing as it would. There are times, too, when walking home they say, I go where others go, but I get no comfort! If I were really the Lords, would I be thus? If I did trust Christ, should I ever be so languid? Brothers and Sisters, if it is of your own bringing about that you are thus dry, I do not offer you any comfort! But if the Holy Spirit has led you to see your weakness, your nothingness, your deadness, then I am glad you have been brought to this pass, for God will cause the dry tree to flourish! When we are weak, then are we strong! The death warrant is gone out from God against everything that is of the creature. All that is of natures spinning must be unravelednot your bad nature, only, but your good nature! Not your vices, only, but your virtues! Not your sins, alone, but your graces! All these must be contemned and despised so far as you venture to put them in the place of Christ! You must cry, Away with them! Away with them, as if they were so much dung and dross! Christs blood, only, for our hope, the Spirits work only for our life! Here let us stand and we shall be safe. The dry tree, by Divine Grace, shall flourish! The green tree, deserted by the dew of Heaven, shall dry up! The low tree, fostered by the Lord, shall mount even to the stars! The high tree, cut down by the axe of judgment, shall lay outstretched along the plains of ruin forever!

I think I see the Last Great Day. There is a greater forest than this this is but one corner of it. I see that forest stretched over sea and land, over mountain and valley. It is a forest of men! There stand the Pharisees, the self-righteous, the tyrants, the autocrats of haughty dispositions, the men of profound intellect with lofty brows, the men that questioned Gods government, the infidels who said, Atheos, and denied His being! I see the high trees that towered to such an elevation and attracted so much admiration. And there, too, are the low trees contented to be low, for Christ of Nazareth was lowly. He, whose disciples they are, came riding on an ass even in the day of His highest earthly triumph. And now I hear the trumpet ring exceedingly loud and long. Through the glades of that vast human forest the sound comes ringing broad and clear, Smite! Smite! Smite! And let all the high trees fall! O God, what a crash!

He smote great kings and slew famous kings, for His mercy endures forever. He smites. What? Another crash? The orthodox who rested in their orthodoxy, and the self-righteous men and women fall there! Yonder the philosophic atheist, and here the scoffing skepticthere the haughty persecutor, and there, again, the pompous priest and pretentious ceremonialist! Gather them in Tophet, ordained of old, pile them together, cedar upon oak, and elm upon fir, gather them together! Pile them on, pile them up! Let the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, come upon the mighty pile. It is the funeral pyre of the giants. There lies the dead body of sin and here comes the living spouse of sinto be sacrificed upon that same pile. Her name is Pride. She comesthey clasp. The great transgression and the evil imagination! Together they lie down and the flames arise. Now the cedars, full of resin, give forth their flame! The sparks go up to Heaven and the flames even unto the Throne of God, while I hear the voices of multitudes singing, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, for You have judged the great temptress, even Pride, and You have given her up to be burned with fire! But what of you, what of you who will be firewood to that great burning? What of you, proud sons of men, who will be fuel to that flame? Turn, turn you! Fly to Christ and then you shall stand in the judgment, and join in the anthem, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Be wise now, therefore, O you kings! Be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him. Oh, that we all may be found among the humble not the haughtyin our present life, and that we may be gathered among the blessed, not destroyed among those whom the Lord abhors, in our future destiny!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
ISAIAH 1:1-9.

Verses 1, 2. *The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amos, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Ezekiah, kings of Judah. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD has spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me.* The good and gracious God, having been treated ungenerously, makes His appeal not to men who, themselves, are guilty, but to the very heavens and earth, calling on the silent stones of the field, the trees of the forests and the stars of heaven to judge between Him and His rebellious children. I have nourished and brought up childrentaken a nurses interest in them, shown a parents love to them, and they have rebelled against Me.

3, 4. *The ox knows his owner, and the ass his masters crib: but Israel does not know, My people do not consider. Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.* More brutish than the brutes are men when they forget their God! The dog follows its masters heels, but man will not be obedient to his Lord. The ox knows his owner and gives some sign of recognition when he sees him, but, alas, the ungodly sons of men know not the God who made them, feeds them, keeps them alive!

Where are you, oh backslider? Mingling once again with the people of God, let these words come home to you! There is a, Thus says the Lord in the Prophets words to themand thus says the Lord to you! You have gone away backward, provoking the Holy One of Israel to anger!

5. *Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint.* It was of no use chastising these people. They only sinned the worse for all the afflictions that were sentand when the fire of affliction does not melt the iron heart, what can do it? Why waste the fuel upon them? You will revolt more and morethe whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. They had been smitten, they had been afflicted till the whole nation, through and through, had been brought low. Their head and heart had been made faint. And, oh, there are some that have passed through many trials and are none the better! They have seen poverty and yet they go again to the sin that first brought them to it. They feel in their very bones the result of their transgressions, and yet they hug in their bosoms the serpent that has stung them!

6. *From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises, and putrefying sores. They have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.* The whole land of Israel was so destroyed through sin, it was like a body that is covered with sores that have not been touched by the surgeons hand. Yet they did not repent.

7, 8. *Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: strangers devour your land in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers.* A mere shanty run up during the grape season, wherein the persons who took care of the vineyard found shelter from the rain.

8. *As a besieged city.* For the same purpose.

9. *Unless the LORD of Hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we would have been as Sodom, and we would have been like unto Gomorrah.* Yet, though they were reduced to this, they kept on with their sins! It really seems as if men would suffer anything for their sins rather than give them up. It is not always the pleasure of sin which seems to fascinate, but the very bitterness of sin seems sweet to some.

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 #1795 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

PLEADING AND ENCOURAGEMENT
NO. 1795

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 17, 1884, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? says the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?
Ezekiel 18:23.
For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, says the Lord God: therefore
turn yourselves, and live.
Ezekiel 18:32.
As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked: but that the wicked turn from his ways and live: turn you, turn you from your
evil ways, for why will you die,
O house of Israel?
Ezekiel 33:11.

SIN, having a thorough possession of the human heart, entrenches itself within the soul as one who has taken a stronghold speedily attends to the repairing of the breaches and the strengthening of the walls, lest, haply, he should be dislodged. Among the most subtle devices of sin to keep the soul under its power and prevent a mans turning to God is the slandering of the Most High by misrepresenting His Character. As dust blinds the eyes, so does sin prevent the sinner from seeing God aright. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. But the wicked only see what they *think* to be God and that, alas, is an image as unlike God as possible!

They say, for instance, that God is unmerciful, whereas He delights in mercy. The unfaithful servant in the parable was quite sure about it and said most positively, I knew that you were an austere man, whereas the Nature of God is as opposite to overbearing and exaction as light is from darkness! When men once get this false idea of God into their minds, they become hardened in heart. Believing that it is useless to turn to God, they go on in their sin with greater determination. Either they conceive that God is implacable, or that He is indifferent to human prayers, or that if He should hear them, yet He is not likely, in the least, to grant a favorable answer. Men darkly dream that God will not attend to the guilty and the miserable when they cry to Him; that their prayers are not good enough for Him; that He expects so much from His creatures that they cannot even pray so as to please Himthat, in fact, He seeks a quarrel against us and is a taskmaster who will grind all He can out of us.

Being themselves slow to forgive, they judge it to be highly unlikely that the Lord will pardon such sins as theirs. As they will not smile on the poor or the fallen, they conceive that the Lord will never receive unworthy ones into His favor. Thus they belie the Host High! They make Him who is the best of Kings, to be a tyrant! He who is the dearest of friends, they regard as an enemy! And He whose very name is Love, they look upon as the embodiment of hate! This is one of Satans most mischievous devices to prevent repentance. As in the old times of plague, they fastened up the house door and marked a red cross upon itand thus the inhabitants of that dwelling were sealed unto deatheven so the devil writes upon the mans door the words, *no hope*, and then the sick soul determines to die and refuses admission to the Physician. No man sins more unreservedly than he who sins in desperation, believing that there is no pardon for him from God.

An assault where the watchword is, No quarter, usually provokes a terrible defense. The pirate who is hopeless of pardon becomes reckless in his deeds of blood. Many a burglar in the old times actually went on to murder without remorse because he thought he might as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb. When a man believes that there is no hope for him in the right way, he determines that he will get what he can out of the *wrong* way. And if he cannot please God, he will, at least, please himself. If he must go to Hell, he will be as merry as he can on the road and, as he puts it, he will die game.

All this comes of a mistaken view of God! Do you not see the likeness between sin and falsehood? They are twin brothers! Holiness is truth, but sin is a lie and the mother of lies! Sin brings forth falsehood and then falsehood nourishes sin. Especially in this fashion does falsehood *maintain* sin, by maligning the God of Love. He is a God ready to pardon and by no means hard to be moved to forgivenesswhy do men stand off from confessing their wrong and finding mercy? He is not a God who takes pleasure in the miseries of menwhy do they think so ill of Him? His ear is not dull to the cry of sorrow; His heart is not slow to compassionate distresson the contrary, He waits to be graciousHis mercy endures forever. He delights in mercywhy will men run from Him? God is love immeasurable, love constant, boundless, endless

Who is a pardoning God like Thee?
Or who has Grace so rich and free?
Part of our business as ministers of Christ is to bear witness to the loving kindness of the Lord against the falsehood with which sin dishonors

His goodness. I desire to do so, this morning, and to do it in right down earnestin the hope that those of you who are convicted of sin may, this day, be able to rest in the mercy of Godeven that exceeding mercy which He has revealed in Jesus Christ, His Son. I have been very much struck with several letters which I have received this week from deeply-wounded souls. God is at work among us with the sword of conviction. I have felt a great degree of joy in receiving these letterspainful as they are to their writersthey are very hopeful to me. I am sorry that any persons should be near despair and should continue in that condition, but *anything* is better than indifference!

I am not sorry to see souls shut up in the prison of the Law, for I hope they will soon come out of the prison-house into the full liberty of faith in Christ. I must confess my preference for these old-fashioned forms of convictionit is my judgment that they produce better and more stable Believers than the modern superficial methods. I am glad to see the Holy Spirit overturning, throwing down, digging out the foundations and making you like cleared ground, that He may build upon you temples for His praise! How earnestly do I pray that the Lord may make of these convicted ones, champions for the doctrines of Free Grace, comforters for His mourners and consecrated servants of His Kingdom! I look for large harvests from this deep subsoil plowing. The Lord grant it, for His names sake!

I can see in several who have written to me that their main idea is erroneous, that they have fallen into a wrong notion about God. They do not conceive of Him as the good and gracious God which He really is. This error I am eager to correct. Listen to me, you mourners! I desire to tell you nothing but the sober Truth of God. God forbid that I should misrepresent God for your comfort! Job asked his friends, Will you talk deceitfully for God? And *my* answer to that question isNever! I would not utter what I believed to be falsehood concerning the Lord, even though the Evil One offered me the bait of saving all mankind thereby!

I have noticed in certain Revival Meetings a wretched lowering of the Truth of God upon many points in order to afford encouragement to menbut all such sophistry ends in utter failure! Comfort based upon the suppression of the Truth of God is worse than useless! Lasting consolation must come to sinners from the sure Truth of God, or else, in the day when they most need it, their hopes will depart from them as the giving up of the ghost. I will therefore speak to you the Truth in its simplicity concerning the blessed God, whose servant I am. I beseech you no longer to persevere in your slander of His infinite love. Oh, you that feel your sin and dare not put your trust in your forgiving God, I pray you to learn of Him and know Him aright, for then shall that text be fulfilled in you They that know Your name will put their trust in You. May the Holy Spirit come, now, in all His brightness, that you may see God in His own light! As for me, I feel my duty to be one in which nothing can avail me but that same Spirit. Chrysostom used to wonder that any minister could be saved, seeing our responsibilities are so greatI am entirely of his mind. Pray for me that I may be faithful to mens souls.

Notice that in each one of my texts the Lord declares that He has no pleasure in the death of the wickedand in each following passage the statement is stronger. The Lord puts it first as a matter of question. As if He were surprised that such a thing should be laid at His door. He appeals to mans own reason and asks, Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? says the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live? Oh, Souls, can you really think that God desires your *damnation*? Can you be so demented as soberly to believe such a calumny? Will such a theory hold water for a single minute? After all the goodness of God to multitudes of rebellious men, can you allow such a dark thought to linger in your mindthat God can have *pleasure* in mens being sinners and ultimately destroying themselves by their iniquities? Your own common sense must teach you that the good God is grieved to see men sin, that He would be glad to see men of a better mind and that it is sad work for Him to punish the finally obstinate and impenitent! He cries most plaintively Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate. He puts it here as a question of wonderment, that men should so grossly malign Him as to think that the God of Love could have any pleasure in mens perishing by their sins.

But then, in the next place, in our second text, God makes *a positive assertion*. Knowing the human heart, He foresaw that a question would not be enough to end this matter, for man would say, He only asked the question, but He did not give a plain and positive statement to the contrary. He gives us that clear assurance in our second textI have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, says the Lord God: therefore turn yourselves, and live. When the Lord speaks, He is to be believed, for He is God that cannot lie! We know that this speech of His is authenticit comes to us by an Inspired Prophet, concerning whose call by God we entertain no doubt whatever. Let us, then, believe it heartily. If I were to state this as *my own* opinion, you might do as you please about believing it. But since God says this, then we claim of you all, as Gods creatures, that you believe your Creatorand that this statement be never questioned again. Where the word of a king is, there is powerpower, I trust, to silence all further debate upon the willingness of God to save!

But still, as if to end, forever, the strange and ghastly supposition that God takes delight in human destruction, my third text seals the Truth with the *solemn oath* of the Eternal. He lifts His hand to Heaven and swearsand because He can swear by no greater, He swears by Himself not by His Temple, nor by His Throne, nor by His angels, nor by anything outside of Himself! He swears by His own life! Jehovah, who lives forever and ever says, As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked: but that the wicked turn from his ways and live. The man who dares to doubt the *oath* of God will be guilty of an arrogant presumption which I would not like to impute to any of you! Shall God be perjured? I tremble at having even suggested such a thing! And yet, if you do not believe the Lords own oath, you will not only have made Him a liar, but you will have denied the value of His oath when He swears by His own life!

What He thus affirms must be truelet us bow before it and never entertain a doubt about it. Most miserable of all men that breathe must they be who will dare to attack the veracity of God, when God, to confirm their confidence, puts Himself upon an oath! Let us hear the voice of the Lord in its majesty, like a peal of distant thunderAs I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked: but that the wicked turn from his ways and live. I invite your earnest consideration of this utterance thus given in the form of a *question*, an *assertion* and a solemn *oath*.

I. And I notice, first, the assertion that GOD FINDS NO PLEASURE IN A SINNERS DEATH. Really, I feel ashamed to have to answer the cruel libel which is here suggested, yet it is the English of many a mans doubts. He dares not come to God and trust Him because he darkly dreams that God is a terrible Being who does not wish to save himwho is unwilling to forgive him and unwilling to receive him into His favor. He suspects that God finds some kind of terrible delight in a souls damnation! That cannot be! I need not disprove the falsehood. God swears to the contrary and the falsehood vanishes like smoke. I will only bring forward certain evidence by which you who are still under the deadly influence of the falsehood may be delivered.

First, *consider the great scarcity of Gods judgments among the sons of men*. There are people who are always talking of judgments, but they are in error. If a theater is burnt down, or if a boat is upset on the Sabbath, they cry, Behold, a judgment! Yet churches and meeting houses are burned, and missionaries are drowned when upon the Lords own business! It is wrong to set down everything that happens as a

judgment, for, in so doing, you will fall into the error of Jobs friends and condemn the innocent. The fact is there are but few acts of Divine Providence to individuals which can definitely be declared to be *judgments*. There are such things, but they are amazingly rare in this life considering the way in which the Lord is daily provoked by presumption and blasphemy!

It was a judgment when Pharaohs hosts were drowned in the Red Sea. That was a judgment when Korah, Dathan and Abiram went down, alive, into the pit. There were judgments later on in the Church of God when Ananias and Sapphira fell dead for lying against the Holy Spiritand when Elymas the sorcerer was blinded for opposing Paul. Still, these are few and, in later days, the authentic instances are equally rare. Does not the Lord Himself say that judgment is His strange work? Among His own people there is a constant judgment of fatherly discipline, but the outer world is left to the gentle *regime of mercy*. This is the age of patience and long-suffering. If God had taken any pleasure in the death of the wicked, some of you who are now present would, long ago, have gone down to Hell! But He has not dealt with you after your sins, nor rewarded you according to your iniquities. If God were constantly dealing out judgment for lying, how many who are now here would, by this time, have received their portion in the burning lake! If judgments for Sabbath-breaking had been commonly dealt out, this city of London would have been destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah!

But God reserves His wrath till the Day of Wrath. He winks at mans obstinacy, for this is not the place of judgment, but of forbearance and hope. The fewness of visible deeds of judgment upon ungodly men in this life *proves* that God takes no delight in them. And then, secondly, *the length of Gods long-suffering before the Day of Judgment, itself, comes,* proves how He wills not the death of men. The Lord spares many guilty men throughout three-score years and ten, bearing with their ill-manners in a way which ought to excite our loving gratitude. Youthful folly is succeeded by manhoods deliberate fault and that by the persistence of mature yearsand yet the Lord remains patient! Some of you have rejected Christ after having heard the Gospel for many yearsyou have stifled your conscience when it has cried against youand you have done despite to the Spirit of God. You have rebelled against the Light of God and have committed greater and yet greater sinbut God has not cut you down!

If He had found pleasure in your death, would He have allowed you to live so long? You have cumbered the ground, not two or three years, as the barren fig tree did, but two or three *scores* of years you have stood fruitless in the vineyard of Godand yet He spares you! Some have gone beyond all this, for they have provoked God by their open unbelief and by their abominable talk against Him, His Son and His people. They have tried to thrust their finger into the eye of God! They have spit in the face of the Well-Beloved and persecuted Him in the person of His people! Yet the Lord has not killed them on the spot, as He might justly have done. Have you not heard His sword stirring in its scabbard? It would have leaped forth from its sheath if Mercy had not thrust it back and pleaded, O you sword of the Lord, rest and be quiet! It is only because His compassions fail not that you are favored with the loving invitations of the Gospel. Only because of His Infinite patience does Grace still wrestle with human sin and unbelief. Let us each one cry

Lord, and am I yet alive,
Not in torments, not in Hell?
Still does Your good Spirit strive
With the chief of sinners dwell?
Tell it unto sinners, tell,
I am, I am out of Hell!

Furthermore, remember *the perfection of the Character of God as the moral Ruler of the Universe*. He is the Judge of all and He must do right. Now, if a judge upon the bench were known to take *delight* in the punishment of offenders, he ought to be removed at once, for it would be clear that he was thoroughly unfit for his office. A man who would take pleasure in hanging, or imprisoning, would be of the foul breed of Judge Jeffreys and other monsters, from whom, I trust, our bench is forever purged! But if I heard it said that a judge never pronounced the sentence of death without tears; that when he came home from the court and remembered that some had been banished for life by the sentences which he had been bound to deliver; he sat in a moody, unhappy state all the evening, I should say, Yes, that is the kind of person to be a judge. Aversion to punishment is necessary to justice in a judge!

Such an one is God, who takes no pleasure either in sin or in the punishment which is the consequence of sinHe hates both sin and its consequenceand only comes, at last, to heavy blows with men when everything else has failed. When the sinner must be condemned, or else the foundations of society would be out of course, then He delivers the terrible sentencebut even then it is with unfeigned reluctanceand He cries, How can I give you up? The Great Judge of All seems to descend from the Glory of His Judgment Seat and show His more familiar face to you in the text, as, in effect, He cries, I have judged, and I have condemned, and I have punished; but, as I live, I find no pleasure in all this. My pleasure comes when men turn unto Me and live.

If any further thoughts were necessary to correct your misbelief, I would mention *the graciousness of His work in saving those who turn from their evil ways*. The care which the Most High has taken to produce repentance, the alacrity with which He accepts it and the abounding love manifested to returning prodigals are all indisputable evidences that God finds no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but in their salvation! To prevent the death of the wicked the Lord devised a plan of salvation before all worldsand those who accept that plan find that the Lord has provided for them a Substitute in the Person of His own dear Son, who is, indeed, Himself, and that in His Person, God Himself, has borne the penalty due to sinthat thus the Law might be solemnly honored and the Divine Justice vindicated. The Lord has gone up to the Cross and bled His life away there, that God might be just and yet the Justifier of him that believes in Jesus! Does not this prove His delight in salvation? The Holy Spirit comes on purpose to renew the heart and take the stone away from itthat men may become tender and penitentdoes not this show that God delights to save? The whole resources of the Godhead go forth with spontaneous delight for the salvation of those who turn from their sin.

Yes, they go forth *before* men turn, to turn them that they may be turned! God is even found of them that sought Him not and He sends His Grace to those who cried not after it! As if God were indignant that such a charge should be laid against Him that He delights in the death of any, He preferred to die, Himself, upon the Cross rather than let a world of sinners sink to Hell! To prove the desire of God that men should live, His Son abode for more than 30 years on this poor earth as a Man among men! And His Holy Spirit has dwelt in men for all these centuries, bearing all the provocations of an erring and ungrateful people! God has proved Himself in multitudes of ways to be not the Destroyer, but the Preserver of men. He that is our God is the God of salvation. Salvation belongs unto the Lord.

Thus would I try to vindicate the ways of God to men. When men are to be tried for their lives, if their friends are able to do so, they come to them in prison and say, It is a very hopeful thing for you that it is not Judge So-and-So, who is terribly severe. You are to be tried before the kindest man on the bench. Many a prisoner has plucked up courage at such news and oh, poor Sinner, you who dare not trust God, let me chide you into hope by reminding you that Love sits embodied on the Throne of Judgment this day! And that He who must and will condemn you, if you turn not from your sins, nevertheless will find no pleasure in that condemnation, but will be loath to make bare the axe of execution. Will you not turn to Him and live? Do not His compassions beckon you to make a full surrender and find Grace in His sight?

II. But now, secondly, GOD FINDS NO ALTERNATIVE BUT THAT MEN MUST TURN FROM THEIR WICKED WAYS OR DIE. I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked: but that the wicked turn from his ways and live. It is one or the otherturn or burn! [Read sermon #106, Volume 2, *Turn or Burn* at http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols1-3/chs106.pdf] God, with all His love to men, cannot discover any third coursemen cannot keep their sins and yet be saved. The sin must die or the sinner must die! Be it known to you, first, that when God proclaims mercy to men upon this condition, that they turn from their ways, *this proclamation is issued out of pure Grace*. As a matter of bare right, repentance does not bring mercy with it. Does a murderer receive pardon because he regrets his deed? Does a thief escape from prison because, at last, he comes to be sorry that he was not honest? Repentance makes no available amends for the evil which is donethe evil still remains and the punishment *must be executed*. It is of Grace, then, that I am permitted to say, Turn you, turn you from your evil ways.

It is because at the back of it there is a great Sacrificeit is through an all-sufficient Atonement that repentance becomes acceptable. The Son of God has bled and died, and made expiation for sin! And now He is exalted on high, to give repentance and remission of sins. Today the word of the Lord is, Repent and believe the Gospel. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. This is not according to the Law, which gives no space for repentance, but it is a pure matter of Grace! God saves you, not because of any merit in your turning, but because He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy. And He has decreed to save all who turn from the paths of evil.

Note, next, that *if there is no repentance, men must be punished, for on any other theory there is an end of moral government*. The worst thing that could happen to a world of men would be for God to say I retract My Law. I will neither reward virtue, nor punish iniquitydo as you like. Then the earth would be a Hell, indeed! The greatest enemy to civil government among men is the man who preaches *universal salvation*salvation apart from a change of heart and life. Such teachers are a danger to national orderthey remove the foundation of the commonwealth! They practically say, Do just as you like. It may make a slight difference to you for a little while, but it will soon be over and villains and saints will share an equal Heaven. Such talk is damnable! I can say no less. If there is to be a government at all, it is necessary that sin should not go unpunished. Leniency to the dishonest is cruelty to those whom they injure. To save the murderer is to kill the innocent! It were an evil day for Heaven and earth if it could once be proven that God would reward the depraved in the same way as the sanctified! Then would the foundation be removed and what would the righteous do? A God who was not just would be a poor Ruler of the universe!

Yes, my Hearers, sin must be punished! You must turn from it or die because *sin is its own punishment*. When we talk to you of the fire that never can be quenched and the worm that dies not, we are supposed to mean those *literal* things, but, indeed, these are figuresfigures representing something more terrible than themselvesthe fire is the burning of a furious rebellion in the soul and the worm is the torture of a neverdying conscience. Sin is Hell! Within the heart of disobedience there lies a world of misery. God has so constituted us, and rightly so, that we cannot long be evil and happy. We must, if we go wrong, ultimately become wretched. And the more wrong we are and the longer we continue in that wrong, the more assuredly are we heaping up sorrow for ourselves throughout eternity! Holiness and right produce happiness, but iniquity and wrong must, by a necessity of Nature which never can be changed, produce tribulation and anguish. It must be so. Even the Omnipotence of God cannot make an impenitent sinner happy. You must turn from sin, or turn to miseryyou must either renounce your sins or else renounce all hope of a blissful eternity. You cannot be married to Christ and Heaven until you are divorced from sin and self!

I believe that *every mans conscience bears witness to this* if it is at all honest. There are consciences of a very curious kind about at this time abortionsand not true consciences at all. I find men deliberately acting upon crooked policy and yet they talk of truth and holiness! Yet every conscience that is not drunk with the mixed wine of pride and unbelief will tell a man that when he does evil he cannot expect to be approved that if he neglects to do good he cannot expect to have the same reward as if he had done the goodthat, in fact, there must be in the nature of things, a penalty attached to crime! Conscience says as much as that and now God, Himself, who takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, puts it to youyou must repent or perish! If you go on in your evil ways, you must be lost. There must be a turning from sin or the Most High God can never look upon you with favor. Do you hear this? Oh, that you would let it sink into your heart and work repentance in you!

III. This leads me on to the third point which is a joyful oneGOD FINDS PLEASURE IN MENS TURNING FROM SIN. Read the passage againAs I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked: but that the wicked turn from his ways and live. Among the highest of the Divine joys is the pleasure of seeing a sinner turn from evil! God *delights* in those first thoughts which men have towards Himself when, being careless up to then, they, all of a sudden begin to reflect upon their ways and consider their condition before God. He looks with pleasure upon you who have before been wild and thoughtless; who, at last, meditate upon Eternity and weigh the future of sin and judgment. When you listen to those inviting Words, Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near, God is pleased to observe your attention.

When you begin to feel, I am sorry for my sins; oh, that I had never committed them! He hears your sighs. When your heart is sick of sin; when you loathe all evil and feel that though you cannot get away from it, yet you would if you could, then He looks down on you with pitying eyes. When there is a new will springing up in your heart, by His good Gracea will to obey and believethen, also, the Father smiles. When He hears within you a moaning and a sighing after the Fathers house and the Fathers bosomyou cannot see Himbut He is behind the wall listening to you! His hand is secretly putting your tears into His bottle and His heart is feeling compassion for you. The Lord takes pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy. Mark that last characterthe man has only a little hope, but the Lord takes pleasure in him! When yet the good work is only in the twilight, God is as pleased with it as watchmen are pleased with the first beams of morning light! Yes, He is more glad than they that watch for the morning!

When, at last, you come to prayer and begin to cry, God be merciful to me, a sinner, God is well pleased, for here He sees clear signs that you are coming to yourself and to Him. His Spirit says, Behold, he prays! And He takes this as a token for good. When you unfeignedly forsake sin, God sees you do it, and He is so glad that His holy angels spy out His joy! I am sure that God watches the struggles of those who endeavor to escape from old habits and evil ways. When you try to conquer vile thoughts; when, at the end of the day, you sit down and cry over the days failures because you did not get as well through the day as you hoped to do, the Lord observes your desires and your lamentations. Just as a mother tenderly watches her child when it begins to walk and smiles as she sees it toddling from chair to chair, and puts out her finger to help it, so does God take pleasure in your early attempts after holiness, your longing to overcome sin, your sighs and crying to be delivered from the bondage of corruption.

God says, I taught Ephraim to go, taking them by their arms, and in the same way He is teaching you. I will tell you what pleases Him most of all, and that is when you come to His dear Son and say, Lord, something tells me that there is no hope for me, but I do not believe that voice. I read in Your Word that You will cast out none that come unto You, and lo, I come! I am the biggest sinner that ever came, but Lord, I believe Your promise. I am as unworthy as the devil himself, but Lord, You do not ask for worthiness, but only for child-like confidence. Cast me not awayI rest in You. Without faith it is impossible to please God, but it gives God a Divine pleasure to see the first grain of mustard seed of faith in a poor, turning sinners heart! Oh, I wish you would think of this, you that keep on condemning yourselves! When you write me those letters full of self-condemnation, you please meand if you please me, I am sure you please God much more, who is so much more tender than I can ever be, though I would gladly try and humbly imitate Him.

How I wish I could bring you to trust my Lord, this morning, and end those cruel doubts and fears!
Artful doubts and reasoning be
Nailed with Jesus to the tree.

Gods great convincing argument is His dying, bleeding Son. Oh, you chief of sinners, turn to Him, and God will have pleasure in your turning! Do you not know that all these thoughts towards Him are breathed into you by His Spirit? All those regrets for sin, those desires after holiness and especially your trusting in Christ, hoping in His mercyall are *His work*they would never have been found in your soul if the Spirit had not put them there! If I saw a fair flower growing on a dunghill, I should conclude that a gardener had been there, some day or other, and had cast seed upon the heap. And when I see your soul commencing to pray, hope and trust, I say to myself, God is there! The Holy Spirit has been at work there, or else there would not have been even that feeble trust, that faint hoping. Be of good courageyou are drawing near to a gracious God!

During the rest of your life, when you go on fighting with sin and when you consecrate yourself to Jesuswhen you wash your Saviors feet with your tears and wipe them with the hairs of your head with the Magdalene, or when you break your alabaster box of myrrh and pour it on the Masters head with Marythe Lord has great pleasure in you for Jesus sake! He takes no pleasure in the groans and cries of Hell, but in the repentance of sinners He has joy! The fires of Hell give Him no delight, but penitents smiting on their breasts and Believers beholding Christ with tearful eyes are a royal spectacle to Him! It must be soHe swears itand it must be true. Cease your quibbling and believe unto eternal life!

IV. Lastly, since He has pleasure in mens turning to Him, GOD THEREFORE EXHORTS TO IT AND ADDS AN ARGUMENT. Turn you, turn you from your evil ways for why will you die, O house of Israel? He perceives His poor creature standing with his back to Him, looking to idols, looking to sinful pleasures, looking towards the city of destruction and what does God say to him? He says, Turn! It is a very plain direction, is it not? Turn! Or, Right about face! That is all. I thought, says one, I was to feel so much anguish and so much agony. I should not wonder if you *do* feel it, but all that God says is, Turn! You now face the wrong way! Turn and face the right way. That turning is true repentance. A changed life is of the essence of repentance and that must spring from a changed heart, from a changed desire, from a changed will. God says, Turn! Oh, that you would hear and obey!

Notice how He puts it in the present tenseTurn you, turn you, not tomorrow, but *now*! Nobody will be saved tomorrowall who are saved, are saved today. *Now* is the accepted time. Turn! Oh, by the infinite mercy of God, who will enable you to turn, I pray you turn from every evil, from every self-confidenceto God! No turning but *turning to God* is worth having. If the Lord turns you, you will turn to Him, and to confidence in Him, *alone*and to His service and His fear.

Turn you, turn you. See, the Lord puts it twice! He must mean your good by these repeated directions. Suppose my man servant was crossing yonder river and I saw that he would soon be out over his head and so, in great danger? Suppose I cried out to him, Stop! Stop! If you go another inch you will drown. Turn back! Turn back! Will anybody dare to say, Mr. Spurgeon would feel pleasure if that man were to drown? It would be a cruel cut. What a liar the man must be who would hint such a thing when I am urging my servant to turn and save his life! Would God plead with us to escape unless He honestly desired that we should escape? I think not. Every sinner may be sure that God takes no pleasure in his death when He pleads with him in these unrivalled words, Turn you, turn you; why will you die? There is what the old divines used to call an ingemination, an inward groaning, a reduplication of pleading in these words, Turn you, turn you. He pleads each time with more emphasis. Will you not hear?

Then He finishes up with asking men to find a reason why they should die. There ought to be a weighty reason to induce a man to die. Why will you die? This is an unanswerable question in reference to *eternal* death. Is there anything to be desired in eternal destruction from the Presence of the Lord and the glory of His power? Can there be any gain in losing your own soul? Can there be any profit in going away into everlasting punishment? Can there *possibly* be anything to be wished for and desired in being cast into Hell where your worm dies not and your fire is not quenched? O Souls, be not unreasonable! Do not neglect this great salvation! It must be the most awful thing in all the world to die in your sins why do you choose it? Do you desire shipwreck? Why hug that rocky shore and tempt destruction? Will you eat the poisoned dainties of sin because they are sugared with a little present pleasure? In the end, the gall of bitterness will fill your heart.

I am no flatterer! dare not be, for I love you and would persuade you to turn unto the Lord. There is a flower which always turns to the sun oh, that you would, in the same manner, turn God! Why turn away from Him? WHY? is a little word, but how much it takes to answer its demands! WHY do you continue in sin? WHY do you refuse to believe your Savior? WHY will you provoke God? WHY will you die? Turn round and say, Oh, God, I cannot bear to perish everlastingly and, therefore, I cannot endure to live in sin. May Your rich Grace help me! Oh, that you would trust in the Lord Jesus! Repose in Him and in His finished work, and all is well!

Did I hear you say, I will pray about it? Better trust at once! Pray as much as you like *after* you have trusted, but what is the good of unbelieving prayers? I will talk with a godly man after the service. I charge you first trust in Jesus! Go home alone, trusting in Jesus. I should like to go into the Enquiry Room. I dare say you would, but we are not willing to pander to popular superstition! We fear that in those rooms men are warmed into a fictitious confidence. Very few of the supposed converts of Enquiry Rooms turn out well. Go to your God at once, even where you now are! Cast yourself on Christ, now, at once, before you stir an inch! In Gods name I charge you, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, for, He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONEzekiel 33. **HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK912, 558, 202.**

THE BOND OF THE COVENANT
NO. 1840

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, MAY 10, 1885, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, says the Lord God. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the Covenant: And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against Me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and you shall know that I am the Lord.
Ezekiel 20:34-38.

THIS striking utterance was given forth by that renowned Seer, Ezekiel, at the time when the Israelites, scattered in every country, had begun to forget their nationality. They judged it prudent and wise, as much as possible, to disguise their distinctive character and melt their race into the Babylonian or Chaldeanand become like the heathen. But God, who chose His people of old, would not have it so, and He interposed with this striking passageAnd that which comes into your mind shall not be at all, that you say, we will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone. The Lord tells them that He had them for a people and He meant to hold them for a people. Whether they delighted in it or not, He would not let them go! He pronounced a solemn oath concerning themAs I live, says the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you.

They shall no more become Babylonians than of old He would suffer them to become Egyptians. This passage, which I have taken for a text, may very truthfully be regarded as a threat of terrible judgment upon erring Israelas much as if the Lord had said, You of the house of Israel, whom I have made to be the type of My spiritual people, you shall be Mine. And if you wander from Me, I will distinguish you by special punishments. Therefore I now threaten you with special judgments. If you will attempt to mix yourselves up with the Gentiles, I will deal with you with a startling severity, such as I have never shown unto the heathen. Your sins are greater, your privileges greater and so shall your chastisements be greater. You, only, have I known of all the nations of the earth, therefore I will punish you for your iniquities.

Dear Friends, it is a dreadful thing to profess to belong to the people of God! It is a matter of great privilege if it is *true*, but if it is a lie, it is an awful thing involving sevenfold judgment! God will cause His professing people to be distinguished from other men and they that come in among them, who are not truly of them, shall be so dealt with that both the ears of him that hears thereof shall tingle! Special severities will overtake apostate professorstherefore they had better know what they are doing. You cannot trifle with the Christian faith! You cannot be a traitor and quietly glide awayyou shall be marked as the son of perdition! You shall be known like Judas, as one for whom it would have been better that he had never been born! A profession of Christianity, without the real possession of it, will turn out to be a mantle of fire to him who puts it on! Such is the run of this passage.

But at the same time, reading between the lines and considering the verses very carefully, another reading is suggestedGod, if He does not show distinguishing judgment, will display distinguishing Grace. Without twisting the passage at all, I will use the whole of it as setting forth that peculiar favor which God intends to exhibit towards His own chosen and of which they shall be the subjects, to the praise of the glory of His Grace. I see within this threatening black cloud, a bright light of infinite mercy, a silver lining of love! A golden thread of Grace runs through these threatening verses, for the Lord speaks of *taking away the rebels* from among His people but, all along, when He addresses the remnant of His people, His tone is that of *Grace*.

He solemnly threatens judgments, but these are preparations for mercy. He preaches to them, by the Prophet, concerning mercy and judgment blended in effectual working for salvation. Lovingkindness underlies and overlays His wrath. He puts on a frown in order to smile. He deals harshly with His chosen, that He may deal safely with themkilling them, that He may make them alivepiercing them with the arrows of conviction, that He may pour in the wine and oil of His healing comforts! The central part of my text is this*I will bring you into the bond of the Covenant*. I want briefly to explain what that means. Our second subject shall be *the method which God often pursues with men when He is bringing them into this bond of the Covenant*. By terrible things in righteousness He saves those whom He determines to bring to Himself!

When we have spoken upon that matter, our third point will be *the ultimate design of it all*of His severity in leading them by so stern a way and of His love in bringing them into the bond of the Covenantthe design is, You shall know that I am Jehovah. Judgment and mercy are both intended to make men know, in their inmost souls, that He who thus deals with them is, indeed, the living God.

I. First, then, the MEANING OF BRINGING MEN INTO THE BOND OF THE COVENANT. If we take the passage as referring to the work of Grace, it signifies *that they shall know under what Covenant they stand*. Beloved, there is scarcely a more important question for all of us than thisunder which Covenant do we live? Are we under Law or under Grace? By the very fact of our creation, we are under bonds to our Maker to love and serve Himand this is a form of the Covenant of Works. In serving God, we should have found happiness. In rebelling against Him, we have found sorrow. Thus the Covenant which was bound up with the very nature of things had its sanctions of reward and penalty.

Without being strictly defined in words, the foundation of it was laid from the first. But God put it into words when He dealt with us in Adam, our first Covenant-head. He was forbidden to eat of the fruit of one special tree and he was warned that in the day in which he should eat of it, he would surely die. This Covenant was speedily brokenman being in honor, continued not. Our whole race in Adam broke the Covenant and fell from its high estate. There we lie by nature, condemned under the Covenant of Works. Set forth, as that Covenant is, in the Ten Commandments of the Law, it is as terrible as it is pure. The commandment is holy, just and good, but we constantly violate it. The perfect Law has been broken by all of usby some it has been violated openly by wanton, willful acts of rebellionby *all* of us it has been broken in heart and will. He that breaks one link has broken the chain. He that is guilty of one command is guilty of the whole Lawfor it is one and indivisible.

Now, you that are under the Law, hoping to be saved by your own works, see where you areas many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse, for, cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the Law, to do them. Whatever excellencies you may haveand you have many in the sight of *men*yet if you are under that Covenant of Works, your comeliness is turned into corruption! This do and you shall live, is no promise to you *now*, seeing you have failed to do! It becomes to you a curse because of your transgressions. But there is another and a better Covenant, which is not a Covenant of Works at all, but of free, rich, Sovereign Grace. It was made of old with Christ, the second Adam, our better Covenant-Head. Its tenor was on this wise *He* shall obey the Fathers willactively and passively *He* shall do and suffer the will of the Most High. And, in doing so, He shall save those whom the Father has given Him! A great multitude inherit the reward of Christs perfect obedience for, being chosen by God and having the Lord Jesus to be their Representative, they are made to live by His fulfilling and honoring of the Law.

The great question for each one isAm I under that New Covenant? Am I under that Covenant of Grace and peace?that Covenant ordered in all things and sure? You can answer that question by this oneAre you in Christ Jesus? Are you resting wholly on Him, alone? If so, mark thisthe Lord has said, by His servant Isaiah, I have given Him for a Covenant to the people. If you have Christ, you are in the Covenant of Grace! If you are trusting in Him, God has made an everlasting Covenant with you, ordered in all things and sure, concerning which we read in your hearing, just now, both in Jeremiah 31 and in Ezekiel 36. Dwell on those Covenant promises! A new heart, also, will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. And again, And I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me.

Oh, the blessedness of being under such a sure Covenant! This is what is aimed at, that God may bring His own from under the Law and place them under the Covenant of Grace. Though as yet they care nothing about it, He will bring them to know and realize that they are standing in the Covenant of Grace, with Christ as their Covenant-Head. The drift of the inward work is to lead them to accept the gift of God and so to come into the bond of the Covenant.

They shall, secondly, be *led to see how this Covenant binds them to God*. If you are in this Covenant, you belong to God and He will have you, for the Christ will not shed His blood in vain, nor pay a ransom price for that which He will not possess. He will keep to Himself the spoil which He has taken from the hand of the mightyand His Father will give Him to see of the travail of His soul and to be satisfied. If you are in this Covenant, you belong to the Lord forever and neither shall it be possible for you to be your own, or to be the devils. You are the sheep of His pasture and the people of His handand He will keep you as the apple of His eye and preserve you as the jewels of His crown. You are bound to Him if you are in the Covenant of Gracedo you wish to break this Covenant? Do you wish to depart from the solemn obligations which that Covenant of love casts upon you?

Though this Covenant is not of works, it produces more works than the Covenant of Works ever could, for, being saved by Grace, it is written, Sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the Law, but under Grace. Grace, and the *gratitude* which comes of it, form a firmer bond to hold the soul from straying than the hope of reward can possibly do! It is stronger than the fear of Hell. O, mighty Grace, you hold us with the cords of a man from which we never desire to escape! We are the Lords people and He is our God! He holds us and we hold to Him. He is our Husband and our hearts are knit to Him. The bond of the Covenant unites us to the thrice holy God and none shall break the sacred union.

To come under the bond of the Covenant means, also, *to come under the discipline of the Covenant,* for they that are in gracious Covenant with God will find that He deals with them as with sons and, inasmuch as He loves them, they shall know the truth of that Word of GodAs many as I love I rebuke and chasten. If they break My Covenant, He says, I will chasten them with the rod of a man. And again, You, only, have I known of all the nations of the earth, therefore I will punish you for your iniquities. If you enter into Covenant with God and you turn aside, even in little matters, you shall soon discover that the Lord is a jealous God! If you disobey God, He will make sin bitter to you. He will not let you transgress as other men dogoats may wander with impunity, but the sheep may not! God reserves the ungodly unto the day of judgment, but judgment begins even now at the house of God! His fan is in His hand and He will thoroughly purge His floor if He purges nothing else! You cannot be in Covenant with God and yet be left alone in your transgressions, for it is to the reprobate that He says Let him alone, he is given unto idols.

The mark of Gods people is that if they sin they smartand if they wander they are whipped back. Despondency, sickness, bereavement, loss and even temporal death may fall upon the chosen as visitations of God to deliver them from the power of Satan! So, you see, it is Gods design to bring His people to know their Covenant standing, to see how the Covenant binds them to their God and to feel that this holds them under a holy discipline such as God does not exercise upon the mass of mankind, but only upon a people near unto Him.

Further, this coming under the bond of the Covenant means, surely, that *they yield to its restraint*. I do not know how to give a better expression to what I mean than by quoting the lines we often sing

Oh to Grace how great a debtor
Daily Im constrained to be!
Let that Grace, now, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.

Can Grace ever be a *fetter*? Oh, yesit is the most blessed of all fetters, for it holds us fastand yet never violates our liberty! It binds the very heart in *willing* captivity. This is the bond of the Covenant. Oh, says one, I do not want to be under any bond. Then, in all probability, you are bound by the chains of self-will. In Grace you can be under bonds, yet not in bondage. I am in the bonds of wedlock, but I feel no bondageon the contrary, it is a joy to be so bound! The bonds of love and the cords of a man cause no chaffing. The bond of Grace is a marriage bond, inviting us to Him whom we love above all, even the altogether lovely Bridegroom of our souls! It is our joy to look up to our Covenant-Head and obey Him in all things!

This bond holds us back from doing what it would be to our injury to do. It restrains us from sinning against God. Instead of wishing to be free of this bond, we desire to realize it in its most stringent formby being crucified with Christnailed up hands and feet so as to be incapable of following the wandering wishes of the unregenerate nature! O, that we were utterly incapable of sin! Would God we were bound to holiness as with belts of steel! I hope many of you feel the blessed restraint of Covenant relationship, so that you cry with Joseph, How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? The love of Christ both restrains and impels us because we thus judge that if One died for all, then all died, and that He died for all that they which live might not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them and rose again! Blessed bond of the Covenant! Oh, to wear its easy yoke and bow before its gentle scepter! The heart is never so free as when it is brought into complete captivity to the love of God. The true freedom of the will is freedom from sin. O, Lord, truly I am Your servant! You have loosed my bonds; and now I cry, Bind the sacrifice with cords, even to the horns of the altar!

But surely, it means, also, *the security of the Covenant*I will bring you under the bond of the Covenant, must mean, I will bind you to the Lord Jesus, your Surety and Bondsman, and He shall secure you forever. This Covenant is everlasting, a Covenant of Salt, hence we sing

This bond shall never break,
Though earths old columns bow!
Our sure foundations never shake,
Were one with Jesus now!

One with Jesus we shall always be, for who shall separate us? That is a blessed phrase which speaks of our soul being bound up in the bundle of life with the soul of the Lord our God. This is what the Covenant has done for usit has made us so one *with* Christ and *in* Christ; so one with the eternal Father, that it is written, I will never leave you nor forsake you. Bound by everlasting bonds, who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord? I cannot linger longer over this precious Truth of God, but surely it is an unspeakable privilege to be brought into such a Covenant bond! I trust many of you know by experience what it means.

How earnestly do I pray that some who have been strangers to this matter may begin to spell it out this morning. Oh, you whom God means to save, I trust He has brought you into such a condition that you would give your eyes to come from under the Covenant of Works, since there is no salvation there! You feel it must be Grace, alone, that can save such unworthy creatures as you are and, though you cannot, as yet, see spiritual truth, you are longing and looking out for some ground of hope in the infinite loving kindness and long-suffering of God in Christ Jesus. Well, be of good cheer, for I am going to talk to you, now, about the way in which God deals with many whom He brings under the bond of the Covenant!

II. This is our second head. THE EXPERIENCE OF SOME IN COMING UNDER THE BOND OF THE COVENANT. I do not want to be mistaken. I believe that many are brought under the bond of the Covenant by very simple and gentle means, especially those who sweetly yield to the gentle drawings of the Holy Spirit. Very early in life some are brought to Jesus with little terror or distress of mind. Let them be very grateful for it. If you come to Christ, I do not care how you come, for I am sure you could not have come at all if the Father had not drawn you and if He *has* drawn you, there is no mistake in your method of coming! If you have tasted but little of the bitterness of sin because you have been kept from it by preventing Grace, do not raise a question on that account. Though you may not have been made to sit and sigh in the blackness of darkness, it is enough if you now see the great Light of God. The Lord, in great tenderness, brings many of His children to Himself early in the morning, so early that they enjoy a long and blessed day in His serviceand they are strangers to those broken bones which come of a long sojourn in the enemys camp.

These Israelites to whom Ezekiel spoke had gone very far into sin, as far as they could gothey had been false to their promises, wicked in their lives and rebellious in heart against their God. With many of this character, the Lord deals with a singular severity of love. He strikes them with a sword, for only so can their sins be slain. Of those processes of Grace we will now speak.

To begin, will you follow me in the text at the 34th verse? Here were a people whom God had chosen to be His own, but they had ignored that choice and had said to themselves that they would be like the families of the countries, to serve gods of wood and stone. Many among those whom the Lord has chosen in His secret purposes are saying to themselves, We will never belong to those religious people; we will never be called cants, hypocrites, Methodists, or Presbyterians. They have a perfect horror of being ridiculed for Christs sake! These persons are, for the present, perfectly satisfied to take their lot with the multitudedistinguishing Grace has no charms for them. Hear, then, what God will do with such if He means to bring them under the bond of the Covenant!

First, *He will cause them to come out from their present company*. I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out. You do not *mean* to leave your present settlement, but you shall come out of it once and for all. You shall feel yourself to be as a speckled bird among your former associates. The Lord will make you to loathe the amusements which are now your delightand the lusts of the fleshwhich you now follow after as the fish hastens to the bait, shall become abominations to you! You shall find in your old sins such death and corruption that you shall turn from them as a man turns from a rotting carcass. God can readily enough accomplish this by ways known to Himself. Your old friends will not miss you and, what is more, they will not desire you to return to them! You shall be so miserable that they will be glad to be rid of you! As the wounded stag retires into the depths of the forest to bleed and die, alone, because those which are not wounded roughly push at it with their horns, so it shall be with youyou shall prefer solitude to the galling words of the ungodly.

If the Lord has chosen you and you have chosen sin, He will deal with you with a strong hand and an outstretched armand make you know His fury against evil. His love to you shall show itself in wrath against your sin. You shall come to think of God as angry with the wicked every day, for so He is. You shall hear that sentence sounding in your ears, If he turns not, He will whet His sword. He has bent His bow and made it ready. What is more, you shall not only read the words, but you shall feel the arrows of vengeance sticking fast in you, till you long to escape from your transgressions.

The Israelites in Egypt, for a time, were glad to dwell there and they began to worship the gods of Egypt. But presently God put it into Pharaohs heart to oppress themand he did so most grievouslyIsrael had to make bricks without straw till their bondage grew unbearable and they cried unto the Lord their God. He will make it so with you, if you are one of His, for out of the Egypt of the world you shall come. You may get the flavor of the leeks and the garlic and the onions of Egypt upon your palate and delight in then, but you shall yet be made to nauseate that in which you delightand long for heavenly manna which you now despise! The Lord Jesus will seek out His own sheep and separate them from all other flocks.

Note, next, that God said *He would bring them into distress and loneliness*And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people. It was not to be a wilderness like the wilderness of sin where there were no inhabitants, but, I will bring you into the wilderness of the *people*. This is, indeed, a terrible wilderness, for you walk in the midst of crowds and yet you are perfectly aloneyou mingle with the great congregation and yet feel that none can enter into your secret. How wretched to sit here and feel that there is not another man like you in all this vast assembly! You have come into a howling wilderness where there is no water of joy, or track of hope. Where now your mirth and giddiness? Where now your comrades in iniquity? The Lord can soon make the gay worldling into the desponding solitary. I have seen Him touch proud young men and they have been brought to deep humiliation of spirit, so as to be glad to sit down like little children and learn the way of the Kingdom of God! Oh, you stiff-necked, hard-hearted sinnersif Gods almighty love goes forth, He will soon turn your hearts of stone into flesh till you become ready to weep yourselves away because you have grieved your Savior!

Many here can remember when they were in that conditionwhen the ministry seemed a wilderness! They went up to hear the Word of God preached and, while others were converted, they were not! The Bible, itself, seemed to be a wildernesswhen they read it they found no comfort. The Book appeared to thunder at them! Great pieces of ordnance were fired against their consciences out of its Law. They turned to Christian friends and, sometimes, to unchristian friendsbut from neither the one nor the other could they obtain any help! No man understood themthey did not understand themselves! They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. Like the Jews in Babylon, they sat down and wept. Then was fulfilled in them this Word of GodI will bring you into the wilderness of the people. This is Gods way of bringing men to Himself. He digs them up by the roots, that He may remove them and plant them by the rivers of waters in the garden of the Lord.

Read on. What does He say next? *And there will I plead with you face to face*. Brothers and Sisters, you that know what this means by experience must help me out, for I cannot describe it in words. When the Lord becomes so realized to the guilty conscience that there seems to be nothing *anywhere* except God and that poor sinner, face to face with one another, *then* there is a time of fear and trembling, indeed! For God to stand face to face with an unpardoned sinner and plead with Him is a matter of deep solemnity. Do you know it? The sinner then cries out with Job, I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear: but now my eyes see You. Why, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. If the Lord does but let loose His terrors upon mens minds and deals with them hand to hand, then their beauty is consumed like the moth! The poor preacher tried often to touch their proud hearts, but he could not reach them. But when God comes, by His Holy Spirit, as a spirit of bondage and begins to plead with them face to face, they are right speedily low in the dust! They know not how to answer the Lord for one of a thousand of the sins which He presses upon their consciences! When He lays judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet, the hail soon sweeps away their refuges of lies! If I could have been saved by finding *one* excuse for my sin when I was under conviction, I could not have discovered it. I was without excuse. I knew that I was guilty and I wondered that I was not sent to Hell then and there! When once God pleaded with me, face to face, there was no help for it but to plead guilty at once.

The Lord further declares He will *plead with them as He pleaded with their fathers in the wilderness*. How did He do that? Why, very terribly indeed! Certain men had rebelled against God and against Mosesand God said, Hang up their heads in the face of the sun. At another time when certain of them rebelled against Aaron, the earth opened and swallowed them upand Korah, Dathan, and Abiram went down alive into the Pit. Once the Lord pleaded with them by sending fiery serpents among them and multitudes were bitten and died. At another time the pestilence multiplied graves at each resting place. He brought them very low by these terrible pleadings! Had not Moses stood in the gap, as mediator, and had not Aaron intervened as a faithful High Priest, they had been utterly consumed! Truly the Lord pleaded with them by terrible things in righteousness!

Beloved, broken-hearted Hearer, are you passing through that stage? Is God pleading with you in that fashion? Does He bring judgment after judgment upon you? Do His threats follow each other like peals of thunder? Has He burned up all your comfort? Has He scorched and withered all your confidence? Are you brought unto the dust of death? Do you cry out, My soul chooses strangling rather than life! Day and night Your hand is heavy upon me. My moisture is turned into the drought of summer? Believe me, you are not alone in such a dread experiencemany of Gods dear children have traversed this valley of death shade and, by this road, they have been brought under the bond of the Covenant! It is not that God loves to treat us thus, for He does not afflict willingly, but, like a wise father He will not spare the rod and spoil the child. Self-confidence must be killed! Carnal confidences must be destroyed! Self-righteousness must be slain. The Lord will turn your sweetness into bitterness and your light into darkness, that you may be fully weaned from your own ways and may be made willing to be saved by Sovereign Grace.

What more does God do? Well, it is said, *And I will cause you to pass under the rod*. What is this passing under the rod? I have frequently seen sheep, when the shepherd has required to count themhe makes them pass through a half-opened gate and there he numbers them. They would all come rushing through, but the shepherd blocks the way and, as they come out, one by one, he touches them with his staff and so counts them. The Lord makes His chosen to pass through a narrow place, even a strait gate, where only one can come at a timeand then and there He counts them and causes them to give an account of themselves individually. You have been hidden away among the thousands, but now you shall be made to appear as a separate individual and so you shall come under the rod of the Lord and be numbered with His flock. Perhaps you are frightened, as the sheep are when the shepherd counts them, for they think they are all going to be killedbut there is far more room for comfort than for dismayfor that which God counts, He values, and if He visits you with special chastisement it is because He has special designs of Grace towards you which you shall understand, by-and-by!

Then mark thisas the shepherd, by counting his own sheep, declares and exercises his right of possession, so the Lord, when He wakes up our minds to feel our personality, causes us to recognize that we are not our own, but are bought with a price. What a blessed knowledge that is when we discover that we are not our own, for in it lies the brightest hope for us! If I had been my own, I would have been lost! It is because I am the *Lords* that I shall not be lost, for He will not lose the Fathers gift, or His own purchase. They are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, even as Jesus says, I give unto My sheep *eternal* life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. This is to come under the rodto be counted one by oneand to be accounted to belong to God alone.

Moreover, we come under the rod of rulership, for a rod, in the old time, was the usual scepter of kings. What a blessed thing it is when a man comes under the rulership of Christwhen he cries

I yieldby Sovereign Grace subdued;
Who can resist its charms?
And throw myself, by wrath pursued
Into my Saviors arms!

I will bring you under the rod. That is, I will make you to yield willing obedience to My Law and Word. It means, also, the rod of chastisement. Happy is the man whom God corrects. Let the afflicted *rejoice* in his adversities instead of being cast down by them, for, whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.

The path of sorrow, and that path alone, Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown. I will bring you under the rod.

Now, have I been describing the experience of any person here? I feel sure I have! Thousands who will read these words will leap for joy as they exclaim, This is precisely where I am! I said, Surely He is going to destroy me, but if this is the way in which the Lord brings me under the bond of the Covenant, I will forever bless His name! May the Holy Spirit apply these, my words, to all the prisoners of hope!

III. But time fails me, so I must close by noticing THE ULTIMATE DESIGN OF ALL THIS. This bringing them under the bond of the Covenant has a grand intent in it.

The first design is evident in the textit is *to bind them to God*. We would have gone astray long ago and entirely left our God, if it had not been for our bitter experience when the Lord was making Himself known to us. In later life, all the better crops come in from having a deep plowing before the seed is sown. I bear the scars of my terrible convictions about me to this dayand they prevent my trifling with sin. When I came to Christ, my soul was stripped to the skinnot a rag of my own righteousness or of my own strength remained upon me. I was worse than a beggar! I was utterly destitute and did not even know how to beg.

It seems to me that some of my Brothers and Sisters came to Christ with a good coat on and have never ceased to wear it under their Gracegiven robes. Too many are unable to say, Grace, without stuttering. But when a mans mouth has been washed out with the wormwood of selfhumiliation, it is a fine thing for his pronunciationhe can say, Grace, I will guarantee youand give it a full emphatic sound! If anybody had said to me, You are a saved soul and the Lord has put away your sin, but your salvation is the result of a good, natural disposition, I am afraid I would have proved the reverse by calling him a liar to his face! It would have angered me to hear such a falsehood! Grace, alone, has made me to differ and saved me through faith in Christ Jesus. I cannot go any further, my Brothers and Sisters. My highly-intelligent, cultured Brethren may go where they like, but I must abide with the Doctrines of Grace! The march of proud human intellect will end with the devil, but I am bound, in all sincerity, to continue where I began, namely, with Free Grace.

Where else can I go? Nowhere else is there for me a beam of light, or a ray of comfort. Rock of Ages, I am secure on You! But once off that foundation, I sink in quicksand. Much of our smarting experience in coming home to God is meant to bring us under the bond of the Covenant so that we shall never leave it again. We have had such a drilling and dressing that the very *thought* of any other salvation but that which is of Grace is detestable to us.

The next design of God is that *He may entirely separate His people from the world*. I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against Me. When God makes His servants to bitterly know the evil fruit of sin, then they no longer hunger for that forbidden fruit. Oh, you are straight-laced, says one. Indeed, we are, where sin is concerned! A boy climbed into a neighbors garden and stole unripe plums and, after eating them, he became very ill and was forced to drink pints of horrible medicine to save his life. When he was better, his school fellows said to him, Come with us and steal some plums, but they seemed to be mocking him. The boy is very straight-laced, is he not? He remembers the gripes and the pains which those plums brought him and he will have no more of them! The burnt child dreads the fire. Thus the Lord often brings His people away from their sins by giving them sharp and cutting experiences of what evil will do for them. If such is the present consequences of sin, they begin to guess what sin will bring them when they come into judgment and condemnation on account of it.

Furthermore, the Lord chastens His people, thus, that *He may bring them into their own land of promise* into the rest of His love. Whereas this text tells us of the *rebels*that they shall not enter into the land of Israelit is implied that those who obey the Divine command shall enter into the land of promise and peace. Blessed be God for the land of promise into which we enter by faith! What a subject! I wish I had a week in which to preach upon it! When you quit the desert of Sinai, or the Covenant of Works, you enter into the land of promise, or the Covenant of Graceand then you plead the precious promises of God and realize the riches of His Grace to the delight of your soul! Then is it true, so shall you dwell in the land and verily you shall be fed. But no man ever gets to live upon the promise of God until, first of all, he is weaned from all self-reliance and all self-glorying. When God has stamped self with the seal of death and we have seen destruction written upon all carnal confidence, *then* we are glad to accept as a gift that which we can never win as a reward!

The table of Covenant-Grace is loaded when, in all the land of human merit, there remains not a morsel of bread! None so joyfully enter into the land of Grace as those who are weary of the wilderness and can find no rest in their own doings. As the way to Canaan was across a desert, so the way to the Covenant is often by a bitter experience. And as the land that flows with milk and honey was all the lovelier because of the howling wilderness, so is Grace all the more precious because of the utter failure of self!

Last of all, the great end of all is *that we may know the Lord*. I speak thoughtfully when I say I fear that large numbers of professors do not know the Lord. That is to say, the *Lord Jehovah*as known to Ezekiel, is not known by many who profess to believe in the true God. Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacobis the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. But He is not the god of the 19th Century. This generation has made a god of its own. The effeminate deity of the modern school is no more the true God than Dagon or Baal. I know him not, neither do I reverence him! Jehovah is the true GodHe is the God of Lovebut He is also robed in Justice. He is the God of forgiveness, but He is also the God of Atonement. He is the God of Heaven, but He is also the God who sends the wicked down to Hell. We, of course, are thought to be harsh, narrowminded and bigotednevertheless, this God is our God forever and ever. There has been no change in Jehovah! He has revealed Himself more clearly in Christ Jesus, but He is the same God as in the Old Testament and as such we worship Him.

When a man has smarted because of his sin and has been made to feel the burning coals of anguish in his own spirit. When the Lord has set him up as a target and shot at him with arrows which drink up his life. And, when afterwards he has been saved and the splendor of infinite love has shone upon him, then he knows Jehovah! When God has brought the contrite man into the place of security, comfort, joy and delight in Christ Jesus, then he knows the Lord! The full-orbed Deity is beheld by the broken and contrite in the day of his deliveranceneither does he know which to adore and admire mostthe power, the wisdom, the justice, or the Grace of God! We love everything that is in God when we are brought under the bond of the Covenant. May God bless this word to many sorrowing spirits, for Jesus sake! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONJeremiah 31:31-37; Ezekiel 36:25-32; 20:32-44.
HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK219, 228, 242.

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SWEET SAVOR

NO. 688

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 29, 1866, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.
I will accept you with your sweet savor.
Ezekiel 20:41.

GOD does not cease to observe the sins of His people. As the eyes of Moses never waxed dim, so the eyes of God do not grow dim with regard to the sins of His chosen. We may learn this from the recapitulation of those offenses which we find in the chapter before us and in many other places in Scripture. He looks down from Heaven and beholds their wanderings, the hardness of their hearts, the stubbornness of their will, their daily and continual violations of His statutes and commands. Mercy has some other source than that of laxness in the memory of God. He knows the sins of man and He hates the sins of His people just as much as the sins of other men. No, if there are sins which are worse in Gods estimation than others, they are the sins of His own elect.

But, notwithstanding this severe strictness, and although God must have a much clearer view of the evil of sin than any of us ever can, He freely pardons those whom He reserves. He casts their sins behind His back and remembers not their iniquity. He blots out their transgression like a cloud, and their iniquities like a thick cloud. He has a time to chasten but He has also a set time to bless. He afflicts, but He does not afflict from the heart. And when He turns in a way of Grace to His people, He then seems to be flying on the wings of the wind for He comes with all His soul most heartily and richly to display His favor and His love toward the objects of His choice.

One would have thought that the persons described in this chapter never would have been acceptable to God. They had so thoroughly defiled themselves, and after so many trials had been so desperately incorrigible, that one would have supposed the chapter would have concluded with thunderbolts of vengeance and a terrible voice condemning them to be driven forever from the face of the Most High. Instead of this it concludes with mercy! The trumpet ceases its loud swell, and the melodious tone of the harp is heard in gentle notes of melody. The thunder and the lightning are over, the storm is past, and the still small voice, in refreshing calm, proclaims the infinite pardon that proceeds from a tender Fathers heart.

Our text seems to me very full of fatness. Its savor will be doubtless passing sweet to those who have grace to appreciate it. We shall contemplate it in two lights. First we have a promise that the persons of His people shall be accepted as a sweet savor. Sinners are accepted through the merits of Christ: I will accept you with your sweet savor. I cannot accept you otherwise, but I will accept you thus. Then, secondly (which is more consistent with the context), we are assured that our offerings shall be acceptedI will accept you with your sweet savor. I will not only love and receive you, but I will also receive your worship and your service.

Your sweet savor, those same things which once you offered to idols, you shall from now on bring as an offering to Me and when I have accepted you and you are reconciled to Me, then I will accept your good works and your prayers, and your praises, too.

I. First of all, as being the fundamental evidence of Divine Grace, THE LORD ACCEPTS THE PERSONS OF HIS PEOPLE THROUGH THE SWEET SAVOR OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. The merits of our great Redeemer are sweet savor in the nostrils of the Most High. Whether we speak of the active or passive righteousness of Christ there is alike an overpowering fragrance. Such was the merit of His active life by which He honored the Law of God and exemplified every precept like a precious jewel in the pure setting of His own humanity.

Such, too, the merit of His passive obedience as He endured with unmurmuring submission, hunger and thirst, cold and nakednessand with the ever-deepening stream of sorrowand at length yielded to that unknown agony when He sweat great drops of blood in Gethsemane. And then when He gave His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked out His hair. He stretched His hands to the nails and was fastened to the cruel wood that He might suffer the wrath of God on our behalf. These two things are sweet before the Most High, and for the sake of His doing and His dying, His substitutionary sufferings and His vicarious obedience, the Lord God of infinite Justice accepts us with the sweet savor of Christ.

There are many sweet savors mentioned in the Old Testament. One of the first is the sacrifice of Noah where the word is used which is implied here. As soon as Noah came out of the ark he offered up clean beasts, and it is said, the Lord God smelled a sweet savor of rest. That is the very word herea sweet savor or a savor of rest. And Noah obtained a Covenant made with him and with all creatures on the face of the earththat a flood should no more destroy the earththat Covenant being given partly as the result of the sweet savor of rest. In like manner there is a Covenant made with the chosen seed through our Lord Jesus Christ who is unto us a sweet savor of rest because God delights in Him as our blessed Substitute and Representative.

But I prefer to confine your attention this morning to one figure peculiarly instructive. These words, sweet savor, appear to me to contain an allusion to the incense which was commonly offered in religious worship and particularly to the incense which was used in the Jewish tabernacle, of which you will find a description in the thirtieth chapter of the book of Exodus. In order that the sweet merits of the Lord Jesus may be the more fragrant to your understanding, I ask you to turn to that chapter and let me refer you to some points in which the holy incense brings out clearly before our eyes the qualities and excellencies of the merits of Christ.

You will read at the thirty-fourth verseAnd the Lord said unto Moses, Take unto you sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum, these sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight: And you shall make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy: And you shall beat some of it very small, and put of it before the Testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with you: it shall be unto you most holy. And as for the perfume, which you shall make, you shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof; it shall be unto you holy for the Lord. Whoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people.

Now you observe that this incense was sweet unto Godso, too, are the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, as a Spirit infinitely and exclusively holy, delights in holiness! As a truthful Spirit He cannot be satisfied with anything that is untruthful. As a most just, and yet loving Being, He finds in the Person of Jesus Christ an expiation which was in every way honorable to Justice, and a revelation of Grace according to the goodwill of Divine love which is precious to Himself beyond all expression, and admirable to all holy creatures far beyond all blessing and praise. Whenever the great God contemplates His own dear Son, He feels an intense delight in surveying His Character and in beholding His sufferings.

You and I, so far as we have been taught of God, must find infinite and unspeakable delight in the Person and work of Christ. But alas, we are like common people who look upon a fine picture without a cultivated understanding in the art of paintingwe cannot perceive the whole beauty we do not know the richness of its coloring and the wondrous skill of all its touches. Who but Jehovah understands holiness? Who like God knows what great love means? Or who save the Lord can comprehend justice and truth to perfection?

Therefore it is that as He gazes upon that matchless masterpiece of Love and Justice, of Truth and Holiness, embodied in the Person of His dear Son, He finds that infinite satisfaction which our faith is perpetually struggling by small degrees to realize. There is no doubt a discipline by which every faculty may be educated. If I may use so homely an idea, the nostril of one man may be refreshed with a coarse perfume which would disgust another man of finer taste. The educated nostril may be able to discern between this and that savor till it is only to be gratified with something exceedingly refined and delicate.

Adhering to the metaphor of the text, the Lord our God is so holy, and just, and true that the coarser virtues of mankindthe best of all that we can bringmight disgust Him! But when He looks upon His dear Son there is such a rarity of sweetness in the sacred confection of His blessed Character that He takes delight in it and the savor is sweet unto Him. We love Him, we delight in Him when we think of His Character. In our inmost souls we feel that there is nothing we could find fault with, but everything to admire and adore. And the most holy God finds even

greater satisfaction!

The merits of the Savior are so sweet a savor to Him that we strive in vain to reach the knowledge of it. The sweetness of the incense in the Temple was meant to set this forth. The incense, however, was not the result of one sweet drug, but of several mixed together. We have four mentioned. The Talmud says there were elevenwe do not know whether there were or were notwe are content to believe, as the Scripture tells us, that there were four. Many ingredients, then, are mixed and mingled together to make up the one surpassing sweetness of this incomparable perfume.

And, Brothers and Sisters, it is certainly so in Christ Jesus. If we take the characters of other men, however excellent they may be, they only excel in some one, or possibly some two points. But when you contemplate the Savior you find all the virtues enshrined in Him. Other men are stars but He is a constellation! No, He is the whole universe of stars gathered into one galaxy of splendor! Other men are gems and jewels but His Character is perfect and matchless.
If I look at Peter, I admire the crown imperial, where every jewel glittersother men finish but a part of the picture, and the background is leftor else there is something in the foreground that is but roughly touched. But he finishes the whole, not the minutest of which is his courage. If I look at Paul, I am amazed at his industry and devotedness to the cause of God. If I look at John, I see the loveliness and gentleness of his bearing. But when I look to the Savior I am not so much attracted by any one particular virtue as by the singular combination of the whole. There are all the spicesthe stacte, and the onycha, and the galbanum, and the pure frankincensethe varied perfumes combine to make up one perfect confection.

Still more remarkable is the perfect balance of the Saviors Character as typified to us in the exact proportions of these spices. You observe they are to be of equal weight. If you look, there is not to be so much stacte, and then but half as much of galbanum, but each one in its fair proportionthey are to be of equal weight. So is it in Christ. It is difficult to get a fully-balanced character. You can see in some men indomitable energy, but you cannot see at the same time any delicate tenderness. You will see in another an exceeding tenderness which degenerates into effeminacy through want of some sternness to modify it.

Who among you would wish to imitate Elijah? He is sterling in his integrity, a noble specimen of humanity, but the gentleness which should temper his fiery courage is so far lacking that much as you admire him you cannot love him. Even Mosesthough I may venture to say that among those that are born of women there has never been a greater. There has never been one beside himself who could have his name ennobled in the same song with our great Prophetthe song of Moses, the servant of God and of the Lambyet, as you look at Moses, beautifully balanced as his character is in most respects, that condescending loveliness which glistens in the Savior you cannot detect about the glory even of the Hebrew lawgiver.

Brethren, the Saviors Character has all goodness in all perfection! He is full of Divine Grace and the Truth of God. Some men, nowadays, talk of Him as if He were simply incarnate benevolence. It is not so. No lips ever spoke with such thundering indignation against sin as the lips of the Messiah. He is like a refiners fire, and like fullers soap. His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor. While in tenderness He prays for His tempted disciple, that his faith may not fail, yet with awful sternness He winnows the heap and drives away the chaff into unquenchable fire!

We speak of Christ as being meek and lowly in spirit, and so He was. A bruised reed He did not break, and the smoking flax He did not quench but His meekness was balanced by His courageand by the boldness with which He denounced hypocrisy. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You fools and blind, you serpents, you generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of Hell? These are not the words of the milksop some authors represent Christ to have been. He is a man a thorough man throughouta God-like mangentle as a woman, but yet stern as a warrior in the midst of the day of battle. The Character is balancedas much of one virtue as of another. As in Deity every attribute is full orbedjustice never eclipses mercy, nor mercy justice, nor justice faithfulnessso in the Character of Christ you have all the excellent things, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are true, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are of good report, you have them all. But not one of them casts a shadow on anotherthey shine each and all with undimmed splendor!

Turning to the incense again, I shall want you to notice that all the ingredients of this incense were of the very finest kindpure frankincense. And then again in the thirty-fifth verse, pure and holy. And then the thirty-sixth versemost holy. So all the virtues of Christ were the best forms of virtue. His love was not love in word but in deed. His faithfulness was not the faithfulness of cynicism, which criticizes and finds faultit was the faithfulness of a friend that loves at all times. Select any one trait in the Redeemers Character, I mind not which it is, you shall find that in that respect He will surpass the greatest master of that virtue, be he whomever he may!

Take His faith in GodI do not think we sufficiently admire the faith of Christthat faith never wavers even in the time of His strong crying and tears. As David so richly describes it, He still trusts in God, rests on Himappropriates the Divine name, My God, My God, and which adoration exclaims, You are holy, O You that inhabits the praises of Israel. Oh that mighty faith of His! You shall take Abrahams faith and put it side by side with the faith of Jesus and you find the Patriarch failing here and there, though he was the father of the faithful. But the faith of Jesus was steadfast and immoveable.

Did it seem to stagger once when He said, O My Father, if it is possible let this cup pass from me? Oh, it never failed! His steadfastness was never more illustrious than when He thus spoke, Nevertheless not as I will but as You will. Or, again, Your will be done. Was not that faith exercised in purest submission? Take any other of the virtues (I have not time to do so this morning, nor is it necessary that I should, but), wherever you fasten your meditations you shall see Christ excels thereHis gold is the gold of OphirHis jewels are of the first waterHis wheat is the finest of the wheatthe fat of kidneys! And when He lays Himself upon the altar it is not as the lean bullock which of old Israel would bring to God, but as the fatted one offered with the whole strength and perfection of every part of Him unto the Most High! Every component part, then, of the incense was pure, and so was every part of the merit of Christ.

You will not fail, also, to observe that there is no stint as to *quantity*. In some other parts of the temple service quantities are given, as, for instance, in the twenty-third and the following verses of this chapter. You have the quantities of each ingredient for making the anointing oil, yet here you have no quantities whatever for the incense. The anointing oil had five hundred shekels worth of one principal spice, and two hundred and fifty shekels worth of anotherbut this is to be made without limit as if to indicate that the merits of Jesus Christ know no bounds whatever!

Oh, when that sacred box of precious ointment was broken on the Cross, who knows how far the merit of it extended? It perfumed the earth to its utmost bound so that God has had patience with it. It acted as a salt to all creation so that it might not be destroyed, and the sweet perfume went up to Heaven. The angels knew it and returned their harps, and God perceived it, and with benignant smile looked upon the human

race ***Oh the sweet wonders of that Cross,***

Where God the Savior loved and died!
Her noblest life my spirit draws
From His dear wounds and bleeding side.

There is no end to the merit of Jesus! You lost Sinners, you need not think that it cannot avail for you. However great your sin its ill savor can all be quenched through the sweet savor of His perfect merit! And though your sins should be so many and so numerous that it should seem impossible but that the swift witnesses as avengers of blood should follow you up with their clamors, yet God regards more His Son than He does the sin of man, and has an eye to the merit of the Savior as well as to the demerit of the sinner. The first is greater than the second, so that He passes by transgression, iniquity, and sin, and remembers not the transgression of His people because His mercy in Christ Jesus endures forever. It is without stint or quantity.

I hope I shall not weary you, but this seems to me to be a rich vein. I would observe that all through this incense is spoken of as being peculiarly holy, most holy unto God. The entire dedication of Christs life and death to God is most remarkable. You can never see a divided aim about the Saviors action. When but a child, He said, Know you not that I must be about My Fathers business? To the very last He was still consumed with the zeal of His Fathers house. He never had a thought of fame. It is really wonderful how little Jesus Christ seemed to notice what people thought of Him.

There used to be an idea that Christ did a great many things to prevent people from forming such-and-such erroneous impressions of Him. For instance, it was supposed that He was anxious, after His Resurrection, to make it clear that He was Himself and that He was not an impostor. I do not think such a motive ever entered into His mind. He was so simple and child-like that He acted out His whole self not perpetually guarding against misconstruction, nor restricting Himself because of the adversary. His Character was too transparent, and His actions were too unvarnished to admit of His continually locking up that loophole, or stopping up that gap. Not He! His life was clear, without a spot of defilementHis whole soul drifted right on to this one thingthe glory of God through the salvation of man.

He was not deluded for a moment by the golden apples that were cast in His pathway. They would have made Him a king, but He was a King too great to stoop to an earthly crown! As temptation could not attract Him, so neither could trials and difficulties restrain Him. Like an arrow from a bow that has been drawn by a strong archer, He sped right onward to the great goal of His existencethe accomplishment of the work that God had given Him to do. I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it is accomplished! He set His face to go up to JerusalemHe never turned His face away until He could look up to Heaven and say, It is finished! and then He gave up the ghost. Christs merits are most holy, purely offered unto Godno selfishness, no worldliness everything Divine.

This incense, although little is said of it, was, of course, compounded when the ingredients were all brought together. It had to be compounded with great care, according to the art of the confectioner. Now, there certainly is great art and wondrous skill in the composition of the Saviors life. Why there is wondrous skill about the record of it, for those who have denied the authenticity of the evangelists ought to accept a challenge which has often been put to them. Are there four narrations written? Would somebody who believes these to be forgeries kindly forge a fifth? Would somebody be pleased to write another which, though as much a forgery as any of the other four, should be consistent and have something new to recommend it?

I would even venture to say if somebody attempted to make one new miracle, or write the fabulous record, they would find it as impossible to write a miracle on paper as to work the miraclefor there are some traits and points about the miracles of the Savior which betoken their genuineness, since to describe or imagine them were not possible! We could easily prove our point if this were the time, but it is not necessary. There is a matchless beginning in the life of the Savior and a matchless ending. In what is *not* done there is as much that is characteristic about Christ as in what *is* done. If you have ever read those spurious gospels which profess to contain the early life of the Savior, the protevangeleon, you will see that this absurd, ridiculous, preposterous composition never could be harmonized with the life of the Savior.

What is not there even in the record is as wonderful, I say, as what is there! The whole life is a compound of the confectioner. But it seems that when compounded it had to be all bruised and broken. You shall beat some of it small, says our version. Look at that some of it. How did it get there? You shall beat of it. Not some of it, but all of it. You shall beat of it small, very fine. Now, certainly the whole life of the Savior was a process of bruising Him very fine. He begins with grief. He concludes with agony. Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but He has not where to lay His headand at last He has not a rag to cover Himbut hangs *naked* to His shame upon the Cross.

His very *grave* is borrowed, just as was the manger in which He lay as an Infant. Altogether the whole sweetness of the life of Christ is brought out by the exquisite griefs which He is made to suffer. I question whether anybody knows anything about the sweetness of Christian Grace till he has been tried. We are told that when the ships are floating near Ceylon they can smell the perfume of the cinnamon groves

What though the spicy breezes
Blow softly on Ceylons isle.

But navigators tell us that the perfumes are only smelt in poetryyou never smell them therein fact, cinnamon does not smell! And that we might wander through all those groves without knowing that they were odoriferous. But take the cinnamon and begin to grind itbegin to pound it, above all begin to burn itthen it is that you get the sweetness!

And the good mans goodness is not known so much in his days of happiness and pleasure as in his times of sorrow and of grief. We must be put into the mortar. We must feel the weight of the pestle to get the sweetness from it. And the Saviors whole life was just that pounding beneath the heavy hammer of human wrath and at last of Divine anger against sinand then the sweetness came forth. But this incense was most sweet to God when it came to the burning. It was put upon the altar amidst the hot coals and then the sweet perfume went up. So, Beloved, the very preciousness of Christ in its most extreme and best degree is to be seen when He is put upon the hot coals in Gethsemane, Gabbatha, and Golgotha.

However, I need not tell you the tale over again. You loving hearts have learned it well. Your tender souls have wept all along the Via Dolorosa up to the Cross and through the hours of grief and suffering. You know what a sweet savor that must have been when the thrice holy Savior offered Himself as a holocaust to God that He might put away the ill savor of human guilt. Thus I have run through the whole. You will observe I do not stop to say a word about the four ingredients. It is very easy to spiritualize, and more especially the most difficult passages, because then you can say any nonsense you like. I have, however, omitted to do so. I do not really think there is anything to be said about them except just thisthe stacte appears to have been a form of myrrh which dropped from the myrrh tree without cutting, and therefore was highly esteemed.

The voluntary sufferings of Christ, in that He gave Himself and laid down His lifeno man taking it from Himdoes certainly render His sufferings peculiarly delightful both to us and to God. As for the onycha there is a great dispute about it. The word seems to be allied with another signifying a distillationand the Saviors blood is a marvelous distillation from His body, and His grief from His soul. The galbanum appears to have been a very bitter drug and it has been thought, therefore, by commentators, that it could not have been used as a sweet perfume. I think differently. It is well known that many of the most bitter tasting drugs are sometimes the sweetest smelling when they come to the fire. And honey, which is so sweet to the taste, becomes sour when laid on the flames.

I think the bitterest form of galbanum would be the most significant if that is what is intended, for it would then express the bitterness of His griefs to His own taste, but the sweetness of the savor of these bitters to the Most High. Frankincense, especially, you know is exceedingly bitter tasting, but extraordinarily sweet when laid upon the hot bars of iron or upon hot coals. There were many sorts of frankincensethere was one which was very rare and highly esteemed which appears to have been the pure frankincense intended here. But whatever each of those drugs may have been, or may not have been, it is certain they made a compound which God reserved to Himself and enjoined that it should never be used by men for any sort of purpose. It was reserved for Himself to set forth the holy merits, the inimitable perfections, the transcendent glories of the Character of the sufferings of that precious Redeemer of whom God says to us, I will accept you with your sweet savor.

Now for two or three practical words before I pass on. Do you feel your need of this sweet savor? How can you hope to be accepted before God in yourselves? I think that the word loathing, which occurred in our reading just now, is what we must feel with regard to our sinful selves. There may be some of you, very much growing in sanctification, who possibly look upon yourselves and congratulate yourselves on the progress that you have made. But I confess, if I know anything of the Divine life, that while I do feel myself more consecrated to Christ than ever I was, yet I do feel my unworthiness to be permitted to say so.

My utter powerlessness to do anything as of myself is a present pressing and overwhelming thought with meone that lowers me into the dust and ashes and makes me sometimes wonder that Christ should even touch such an oneand yet at the same time to hope that if God, foreseeing all this evil, could nevertheless look upon me, He will not cast me away. Brothers and Sisters, do you not feel that you cannot be accepted unless it is through this sweet savor? Well, then, when you feel this, will you, in the next place, prize that sweet savor? Speak of it in the highest and most eulogistic terms!

You cannot exaggerate when you speak of the virtues and merits of the Redeemer. Set a high store by His Person! Prize His life, and like St. Ber
nard you may say ***Jesus, the very thought of You***
With sweetness fills my breast.

Brethren, what a preciousness must there be in Him to overcome our want of preciousness! What a savor to put away our ill savor! What a cleansing power in His blood to take away sin such as ours! And what glory in His righteousness to make such unacceptable creatures to be accepted in the Beloved!

And if you have gotten so far as to prize it, the next exhortation I would give you is never come before God without it. Turning back to that passage in Exodus you notice that the Lord says in the thirty-sixth verse, You shall beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with you. Oh, never assay to meet God without that precious incense! Never think of such a thing! As the Apostle tells us, Our God is a consuming fire. Give Him this incense to consume, that He doesnt consume us! Bring Him this merit lest our demerit should compel Him to smite us as He did Nadab and Abihu when they offered strange fire before the altar.

What a blessed thing, then, to stand in prayer and feel that you are offering up again the blood of Jesus! What a delightful exercise in praise to feel that your praise comes up accepted because of the incense which He offers! Oh, to live under the shadow of the atoning Cross! Brethren, we do not experience enough of this. I confess, sorrowfully, the wanderings of my own spirit away from Calvary. May the Master bind us to the horned altar where His blood was shed and may we never venture again to go away from that blessed spot! Do not attempt to meet God, except through the merit of this sweet savor.

Take care, dear Friends, that you never doubt your acceptance when you once have it. You cannot be accepted without Christ. But, when you have once gotten His merit, you cannot be unaccepted. Notwithstanding all your doubts and fears, and sins, Jehovahs gracious eyes never look upon you in anger. Though He sees your sin and perceives it since He is OmniscientHe looks at you through Christ and sees no sinfor He answers the prayer of that hymn

Him, and then the sinner see,
Look through Jesus wounds on me.
You are always accepted in Christ, you are always blessed and beloved, always dear to the Fathers heart!

Therefore lift up a song and as you see the smoking incense of the merit of the Savior coming up perpetually before the sapphire throne let the incense of your praise go up also

Now to the Lamb, that once was slain,
Salvation, glory, joy remain!

II. It is certain from the connection that the text means that THE LORD WILL ACCEPT THE OFFERINGS OF HIS PEOPLE WHEN HE HAS ACCEPTED THEIR PERSONS. He will not only receive them into His love but all that they do for Him He will likewise receive. Before a man is accepted his best works must be unacceptablethey come from a fountain that is impureand they are defiled. Moreover, a man who is not reconciled to God offers nothing to God. He may *seem* to do so, but he has always some sinister motive which renders all his doings selfish. He has something to gain thereby or some misery to escape, and therefore he does not serve God out of a pure motive.

But as soon as the man knows that he is saved, being reconciled to God by the death of His Son, then God becomes his God and he worships Him as suchand his offerings are really presented to the Most High. These are accepted. Those things which we offer to God must be such as He has appointed. The sweet smelling savor must not be made of cassia and cinnamon, and calamusit must be made of stacte and onycha, and galbanum and frankincense. Many persons serve God sincerely, but from lack of serving Him according to His ordained method their services cannot be accepted.

God has given us a Statute Book, let us follow it. Let us not bring before God, as the Papist does, works of superstition, or works of supererogationbut let us bring such as are *commanded*for to obey is better than sacrifice, to hearken, than the fat of rams. Let our lives be lives of obedience, not lives of fancy, superstition, and inventions of our own. Prayer, praise, consecration, giving, holy livingthese are all ordained. Let us be diligent in the mixing up of these sweet savors. We must bring before God, if we would be accepted in our works, something of all the virtues. It must not be all galbanum nor all stactenot all intrepid courage without any subdued reverence, nor all the simplicity of affection without any of the sublimity of faithit must not be all self-denial though there must be some of it.

Gravity itself must be tempered with cheerfulness. There must be something of every form of virtue to make up the blessed compound! We must endeavor to bring something of all exercisesnot prayer without praise, nor works without prayernot mental energy without spiritual gifts, nor gifts without holinessit must be a mixture, a compound of the whole. We must bring something of all our powersnot all intellect, not all heart. It must be something of intellect in judgment and understandingsomething of the heart in enthusiasm and joysomething of the body, for the members of the body are members of Christ.

It must be much of the soul, for the souls service is the soul of service. We must bring to God a compound of excellencies from all the powers which He has renewed and consecrated to Himself. Oh it were matchless if God the Holy Spirit should graciously enable us to imitate Christ in this that we might have some of all the Divine Graces, not lacking in any respect, but as a man of God thoroughly furnished unto every good work! We must, above all, pay great attention to small things. You shall beat some of it very small. If we would bring a holy life to Christ we must mind our fireside duties as well as the duties of the sanctuary. We must be attentive as servants to our service, as masters to managing the household.

We must look to our private devotions. We must look to our hearts secret longingsthere must be the ejaculation as well as the long prayer. There must be the grateful spirit as well as the song of praise. Oh, that we could bring to God a life beaten small so that even in little things the Holy Spirit might be manifest, working in us to will and to do according to His good pleasure! We must take care that this sweet incense of ours is not made for man nor used by man. Accursed is that life, however good, which lives only for *man* to gaze upon! But blessed is that life which is lived for Gods sake and for Christs sakefor higher motives than mans eye could suggestand for a nobler reward than mans hand can ever give.

To be holy unto God is the grand thing, my Brothers and Sisters! To truly feel that you are not living for self, that you are not even living for your country nor for your fellow man so much as you are living to the Most High Godthe marks of whose ownership in yourself you desire to bear in your body and in your spirit! May it be yours and mine to have a life which, both in its prayer and praise, its giving and its ordinary living shall be redolent with the fullness of the Spirit of Goda perfume that may make our life like walking through a garden, a fragrance that may make us like the kings storehouse where all manner of precious fruits are laid up, and all manner of sweet frankincense stored away!

You will say, But there will be so much imperfection notwithstanding. Ah, that there will! There may be much defilement when we have done our best. Ah, so it is! The best of men are still men at the best. But the word comes very sweetlyI will accept you with your sweet savor. When God accepts you, He accepts what you do for His sake. He sees you no longer as a mere fallen man but as a man renewed by His Spirit. He counts you a vessel to honor! He puts these sweet things into you and loves them as He sees them in you. I know the prayer is broken, but it is the prayer of His own dear childand therefore He whom we call Abba, Father, accepts it! I know the praise has little of music in it to the tutored ear, but it is the praise of one whose heart loves God, and He hears no discord there.

I know your gifts to His church and His poor are necessarily but little, for yours is the poor widows portion perhaps, and you can give only your two mites. But I know that as they fall into the treasury, Jesus sits over against the treasury and hears sweet sounds in the dropping of your gifts. I know your life is such that you mourn over it every day, but still you serve God in it, and you long to serve Him moreand that love of yours is written in the Book of the Kings record and you shall be His in the day when He makes up His jewelsand your works shall be His, too, for your works shall follow you to the skies when you rise in Jesusand your reward even for a cup of cold water shall be as sure as it will be gracious! And your entrance into the joy of your Lord shall certainly be bestowed upon you according to the Divine Grace which is in Christ Jesus by which He has accepted you.

Desire, dear Friend in Christ, to be such a savor! Make it your grand ambition that your life really may be fragrant to the Most High. Do not be satisfied to be an unbroken alabaster box. Do not be willing to be a flower that wastes its sweetness on the desert air, or a gem of purest ray serene that is hidden in the caverns of seclusion. Seek to do something seek to serve Christ! Pray that you may be a sweet savor of Christ unto God in every place where Providence may cast your lot. And if you are such a sweet savor, rejoice that you are sorejoice that your name is written in Heaven!

What? Though men shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for Christs name sake, rejoice that you are numbered with the honorable multitude who have suffered for Jesus sake! And though you are not knights that ride first in the battle, be thankful that you may be as the esquires that follow at their heels, willing for the fray and able to bear the buffeting which the Lord may appoint you! Care less and less for *mans* esteem. Remember that your holiness will never shield you from calumny. Rest assured that the most strict walking will never preserve you from the envenomed tongue of slander.

If your life should be as pure as the crystal river that springs from beneath the throne of the Most High, there will be found some that will muddy that stream and mire it with their feet. Coals of juniper, hot coals of juniper shall be given unto you, O you false tongue! But as for you, Believer, care not for that tongue, though it is sharp as a razor, and though every cut of it is poisonous as the poison of an adder. Bear it! Bear it! For do you not understand that your incense was never meant for *mans* approbation, but for the Most High? It must be for God, and for God only! And if man cannot smell it, or appreciate its savor, what shall I say but, though it was meet that my pearls should not be cast before swine, if they have happened to be where swine may trample on them, the swine acts but according to its nature, and the pearl is not hurt by the swines feet it is still a pearl when trampled in the mirea pearl that Gods eyes will see and fetch out, notwithstanding all.

And oh, dear Friends, bless the Lord Jesus day by day that your works are made accepted with yourself through Him! When you have done anything that is right, and good, and pure, bring it and lay it at His feet! Come here, you that toil with holy industry, and bring your sheaves to store in the garner of your Boaz whose fields you have reaped. Come here, you that have found jewels diving into the depths of human sin to bring them up, and lay these pearls at the feet of Solomon, who is master of the seas into which you have dived. The earth is the Lords and the fullness thereof. The world and they that dwell therein. And especially are we, the blood-besprinkled ones, the sacramental host of Gods elect ordained as priests to offer sacrifices acceptable unto God.

Oh, let us praise the love that bought us, the blood that redeemed us, the power that sustains us, the Grace that smiles upon us, the righteousness that covers us, the arm which supports us and the whole Redeemer who is able and willing, and before long will receive us to Himself and to our great reward! May we all look to Jesus and to His merit, and then go forth, for the love we bear His name, to show Him afresh in our own persons to the sons of men! The Lord accept this mornings offering for His names sake. Amen.

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AN ANCIENT QUESTION MODERNIZED
NO. 2286

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, DECEMBER 11, 1892. *DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, MAY 4, 1890.
And the people said unto me, Will you not tell us what these things mean to us, that you behave so?
Ezekiel 24:19.

EZEKIELS wife died. His heart was bleeding, but he received orders from his Divine Master that he should not mourn, nor weep, nor make any sign of mourning whatever. It was a strange command, but he obeyed it. The people understood that Ezekiel was a Prophet to them in all that he didhis actions did not only concern himself. He was a teacher, not only by his words, but by *his actions*, so the people gathered round him and said to him, What is the meaning of this? It has some bearing upon our conduct; tell us what it has to do with us. He soon explained to them that, before long, they, also, would lose by sword, pestilence and famine, the dearest that they had, and they would not be able to have any mourning for the dead. They would be in such a state of distress that the dead would die unlamented, the living having enough to do to mourn over their own personal sorrows. It was a terrible lesson and it was terribly taught.

Now, dear Friends, just as Ezekiel, at his Lords command, did many strange things entirely with a view to other people, we must remember that many things that we do have some relation to others. As long as we are here, we can never so isolate ourselves as to become absolutely independent of our surroundings. And it is often well, when we note the behavior of other people, to say to somebody, if not to them, as the people did to Ezekiel, Will you not tell us what these things mean to us?

I am going to use the text at this time thus. First, *this should be your question to the Lord Jesus Christ, our Divine Prophet*. When we see Him taken forth to die outside the camp, may we not solemnly say to Him, Will You not tell us what these things mean to us, that You behave so? When I have spoken a little upon that, I shall then say to the people who will see us gathering at the Table of our Lord, tonight, *this may be your question to the Church*, Will you not tell us what these things mean to us, that you behave so? After I have explained that matter, I shall need to speak to our friends who are not coming to the Communion Table with us, but are going home, or going to sit in the upper gallery, and I shall say to them, *this is our question to you*, Will you not tell us what these things mean to us, that you behave so? First, then, THIS SHOULD BE YOUR QUESTION TO THE LORD JESUS. Very reverently, though, as far as I am concerned, very feebly, let us approach our Divine Master and, looking at Him in His wondrous passion, let us earnestly ask Him, Will You not tell us what these things mean to us, that you behave so? Do you see Him? There He is, amid the dark shadow of the olives, bending low, and pleading with God. He pleads, and pleads, and pleads again till He is covered with sweat. Sweat, did I say? Tis bloodand it is so plenteous that it falls to the earth, *great drops of blood falling down to the ground*. Man sweats for bread, which is the staff of life, but it needs a *bloody* sweat to win life, itself, and Jesus pours it out! Dear Master, while that bitter cup is at Your lips, can You stay a minute to tell us what these things mean to us that You behave so? His answer is, Sin is an exceedingly bitter thing and, to remove it, costs Me the agony of My Soul. It is not easy to bear the wrath of God. I have cried, If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me, but if I would save you, it is not possible. Hear that, my Brothers and Sisters, listen, and learn it well! Never trifle with sin! Never make a spot which will need a bloody sweat to wash it away! Never laugh at that over which Christ had to agonize. And never count redemption a trifle when to Him it was a pouring out of His soul unto death!

But do you see the lanterns twinkling through the trees? Men are coming, evil men, with rough voices, with torches, and lanterns, and staves to take the blessed pleading One. He rises to meet them. He speaks a word and down they fall! He can release Himself, there is no need for Him to be captured, but *He yields Himself up without a struggle* and they take Him to do unto Him according to their wicked will. Dear Master, while the traitors kiss is still wet upon You and You are being led away bound to Caiaphas, tell us, I pray You, what do You mean by all this? What has this to do with us? He answers, I go willingly. I must be bound, for sin has bound yousin has bound your hands, sin has hampered and crippled you and made you prisoners. You are the bond slaves of Satan and I must be bound to set you free. O Beloved, learn the lesson well! Sin always enslaves you. Free thought, free love, free living, in the highest sense, are to be found only in the service of God! Sin brings no freedom it binds! As Christ was bound and delivered up to die, so does sin bind man and lead him forth to the second death. This is what Jesus Christs resignation to His captors means to us.

But now they have taken Him before His judges. He stands before Annas, and Caiaphas, and Pilate. His enemies accuse Him violently, but *He answers them not a word*! Pilate says to Him, Do You answer me nothing? Blessed Sufferer, like a lamb in the midst of wolves, tell us, if You will speak a word, why this silence? And He whispers into the hearts of His beloved, I was silent for there was nothing to say; willing to be your Advocate, what could I say? You had sinned, though I had not. I might have pleaded for Myself, but I stood there for *you*, in *your* place. What could I say, what excuse, what apology, what extenuation could I urge? All that could be said was, Guilty, Lord, guilty. That is all that you may dare to say God, for you have nothing to plead when you stand upon the ground of your own merits! And so the silent Christ was eloquent in the condemnation of sinand we thank Him that He answered not a word when wicked men clamored against Him.

But now, do you see, they are scourging Him, they are crowning Him with thorns, they are mocking Him, blindfolding Him and then smiting Him with the palms of their hands? *What scorn, what shame, they poured on Him*. Blessed One, blessed One, will You not tell us what these things mean to us? I think I hear Him speak from that sacred head, once wounded, and He says, I must be put to shame, for sin is a shameful thing. No scorn is too great for sin. It deserves to be loathed, to be treated with contempt, to be dashed over the walls of the universe as a thing unclean, mean, despicable. Christ, in that great shame of His, teaches us to hate sin, to treat it with contempt, turn away from it with loathing, for it is a mean thing for a creature to rebel against His Creator, for a man to be an enemy of His God!

But now, you see, they take Him out through the streets of Jerusalem along the *Via Dolorosa* He pursues His weary walk, drops of blood falling on the pavement, Himself staggering beneath the load of the Cross. Why do they not let Him rest? Those weeping women could have found Him shelter. No, He must not rest, Jerusalem cannot hold Him, there is not a house that can retain Him, there is not one who can give Him shelter, for *He is going out to die*. He must go outside the city gate. I do not know whether there was, or was not, a green hill far away, but I know that it was outside the city wall. My Master, my Master, why go You outside the city wall? Tell me, Jesus, why go You out there, to the place of public execution, the Old Bailey, the Tyburn of Jerusalem? Why are You here? And He answers, I suffer outside the gate because God will not tolerate sin in His City. Sin is an unclean thing and I, though not Myself unclean, yet standing in the place of the unclean, must die outside the city gates.

And so I see Him, as they throw Him on His back, and nail His hands and feet to the Cross, and then lift Him up as a gazing stock for guilty men! Oh why, oh why, Son of God, are You lifted up like the bronze serpent of Moses? Why are You lifted up between earth and Heaven? And He answers, That I may draw all men unto Me. Earth refuses Me and Heaven denies me shelter. I hang here, the Just for the unjust, that I may bring men to God. How I wish that I could speak this explanation of my crucified Master in more piercing and penetrating, and yet more tender tones! My Hearers, you must understand this sublime mystery, or you cannot be saved! Jesus dies that *we* may *not* die! He is made a curse that we may have the blessing! He is treated as a felon that we may be treated as the children of God! Blessed be His name, thus has He told us what these things are to us that He behaves so!

They take Him down from the Cross, for He is dead, but before they take Him down, they pierce His heart, and even after death that heart pours its tribute for us. Somewhere, among the matter of the globe, is the very blood and water that flowed from His side! And though, perhaps, nobody agrees with me, yet I set it over against the fact that somewhere on the earth are the pieces of the two tablets of stone which Moses broke beneath the mount. Better still, Christs wondrous Atonement is always here, always operating, always reconciling men to God, always opening a way of access for guilty men to the righteous Lord. Again I say, blessed be His holy name!

But they have buried Him and He lies alone in His cell through the long, dark night of death. But *the third morning sees Him rise*. Before the sun is up, the Sun of Righteousness has arisen, with healing in His wings! Jesus has left the tomb and I invite all sinners to say to the risen Redeemer, Will You not tell us what these things mean to us, that you behave so? This is what I understand that His Resurrection means to us He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them!

He not only rises from the dead, but *He ascends to His Father*. He has gone Home nowthe cloud received Him out of the sight of His followers. With the sound of the great trumpets of Glory He has returned to His Kingdom and to His Throne. Ask Him what He means by that and He will tell you that He has led captivity captive and, received gifts for men, yes, for the rebellious, also. What a word is that to every heart that is conscious of rebellion! Christ has received gifts for you! Learn that lesson, I pray you. Believe on Him and live! Cast yourself at His feet and be forgiven! Yield yourself up to Him and be His servant henceforth and forever!

This is a wide theme, but my strength will not enable me to say more upon this part of it, namely, our question to the Lord Jesus.

II. Now, dear Friends, in a few minutes we shall lift the damask covering from the Communion Table, and you will find upon it a supply of bread and wine. We are coming to that Table to think of our Lord, and I think that I hear some of you ask, Will you not tell us what these things mean to us, that you behave so? THIS MAY BE YOUR QUESTION TO THE CHURCH. That will be our second point.

We are coming here, tonight, *to keep Christs death in remembrance*. I love to see our dear friends come to the Lords Table as often as they can. I am very sorry if I cannot be here every week, for, if there is a time appointed for the breaking of bread, it is the first day of the week. Every first day of the week, if you can, come to the table as a part of your Sabbath worship. This service is intended to be a memorial of Christs death. The best memorial of an event is not to rear a column, or erect a statue, or engrave a record on brass. All these things are frail and pass away. The tooth of time eats up the brass and the foot of the ages dashes down the statue or the column. The best memorial of any event is to associate with it the observance of some rite, or some ceremony frequently repeated. This will cause it to be a perpetual memorial.

Now, as long as a half-dozen Christians meet together for the breaking of bread, Christs death can never be forgotten. However poor you may be, or however illiterate, when you come to the breaking of bread, you are helping to record, as in eternal brass, the greatest fact in all human history, the fact that Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures! If this were all, it would be no little thing. It means to you who do *not* come, just thisthat some of us mean to keep this memorial before our eyes. You may forget it, but to you our action is so far significant, that, whatever you may do, we mean to perpetuate as long as we liveand we trust that our children after us will perpetuate this which we esteem to be a priceless factthat the Son of God died for guilty men, the Sinless One for the sinful, to bring them to God! That is what this memorial has to do with you.

We are not, however, coming to the Table merely to *look* at the bread and the wine. We are coming here *to eat and to drink, to show our personal benefit by Jesus Christs death*. We wish all who see us to know that we enjoy the result of Christs death. We have a life that feeds upon His Sacrifice. We have a hope that makes Christ to be its very meat and drink. There is a something about Christ who died that is, indeed, life-giving and that is sustaining and strengthening to our new-born spirit. If you are up in the gallery as spectators of the ordinance, you say to us by your actions, Tell us what these things mean to us. And we have this to say to you, that if you will not have these emblems of Jesus Christs death to be your meat and drink, at any rate, we will! And we *ask* you, if you do not feed on Christ, *why* do you not feed on Him? Have you any better bread? Have you any firmer faith than the faith we have in His atoning Sacrifice? Have you a deeper peace than Jesus gives to *us*? Have you a surer hope of Heaven than faith in Christ gives? Have you a brighter hope? We know you have not and, therefore, while to us His flesh is meat, indeed, and His blood is drink, indeed, we say that these things are to you a rebuke, a question, a suggestion concerning something lacking in you!

But, beloved Friends, we not only come to the Table to eat and to drink, but there is this point about the communion *that we come together to declare our unity in Jesus Christ*. If I went home and broke bread, and drank of the juice of the vine by myself, it would *not* be the observance of the Lords Supper. It is a united participation. It is a festival. It is a token and display of brotherhood. Those who will come to the Table, tonight, will practically say, We are one. We, being many, are one body of Jesus Christ, and everyone members, one of another. I think that I hear you say, Will you not tell us what these things mean to us, that you behave so? Well, they mean to you, thisif you do not believe in Christ, you are not of the brotherhood. If you do not feed upon Christ, you are not one with Him, you are not one of His people.

There is another brotherhood and if you do not belong to the brotherhood of Christ, you belong to the other fraternity. They who are not with Isaac are with Ishmael. They who are not with Jacob are with Esau. They who are not the seed of the woman are the seed of the serpent. Tonight, as with a drawn sword, Christ divides this congregation into two parts. If you believe in Him, you are His. But if you believe not in Him, there is a present condemnation resting upon you. It is well that you should know this fact! When Gods people come together for the Communion, it incidentally means that they leave the rest of the congregation behind.

Once more, when this Communion is over, if we live, we shall meet again next Lords Day, and when that is over, if we are spared, we shall meet again the following Lords Day. *We meet continually to show our belief in Jesus Christs coming again*. More than 52 times in the year is this Table spread in our midst, for, frequently, in different parts of the Tabernacle, the elders and deacons and other friends meet and commune with the Lord, doing this often in remembrance of Him. Here is the point to which I call your attentionwe are to do this until He comes. Every celebration of the Lords Supper speaks, not with the voice of a trumpet, but still, with a clear sound, and it says, The Lord is coming. He is on the way back. This is one of the tokens that He is coming again. As for Himself, before He went away, He took the great Nazarite vow. He said that He would drink no more of the fruit of the vine till He should drink it new with His disciples in His Fathers Kingdom. And He remains the great Abstainer, who has sworn never to drink of the cup till He should pledge them again in the new wine of His Fathers Kingdom. But He bids us go on drinking it until He shall come again to receive us unto Himselfthat where He is, there *we* may also be. Perhaps you still enquire, Will you not tell us what these things mean to us, that you behave so? Well, they are this to *you*, that, whether you remember Jesus Christs coming or not, He is coming! He is coming quickly. When you read, Behold, I come quickly, it does not mean, I shall be here soon, but it means, I am coming quickly. A man may be coming quickly from New York, tonight, and yet he may not be here tomorrow. He may not be here for another week, but he is coming quickly, all the same. Christ is coming as quickly as He canlong leagues of distance lie between Him and usand He is covering them with the utmost speed. The glowing wheels of His chariot, whose axles are hot with the haste of His journey, are hurrying over the weary way. He is coming quickly. I should not be surprised, certainly I should not be distressed, if He came before I have finished this sermon! Could you all say as much as that? Oh, how some of us would stand up and welcome Him with glad acclaim if He should make His blessed Presence manifest upon this platform before this evenings service is over! I know no reason why He should not come tonight.

The times and seasons are all unknown to us. We venture upon no prophecy, but as often as we come to the Communion Table, we say to you, He will come. When He comes, the Day of the Lord will be darkness, and not light, to every unbeliever. When He comes, woe unto His adversaries! How will they face their Judge? Now, Judas, come and kiss Him! Now, Pilate, ask Him what is truth? Now, you Jews, come and spit in His face! Now, impenitent thief, come and cast bitter sayings in His teeth! Where are they? See how they try to slink awaythey have not a word to say! No, I hear them burst into agonizing shrieks, crying to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great Day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? Ah, you who used to brag and boast, sing another tune, now, that Christ has come! You who despised Him, you who would have nothing to do with Him, what would you not give if He were now your Friend? Make Him to be your Friend, tonight, by putting your trust in Him and then you will be ready for His coming! Let Him come when He may, His coming will be full of love and joy to all who have trusted Him.

Thus I have answered two sets of questions, first for my Master, and then for my Brothers and Sisters in the Church.

III. Now, in closing, THIS IS OUR QUESTION TO YOU, Will you not tell us what these things mean to us, that you behave so?

First, there are some of you who are here, tonight, who do not often go to a place of worship. I know you. Shall I tell you what you do on Sunday morning? Well, I do not know that it would do anybody any good if I did, so I will not. Shall I tell you how you generally spend the afternoon and evening of the Lords Day? You know as well as I do, perhaps better, so I will not tell you. But here you are, now, for once in a while. *By seldom coming to the Lords House, you teach us your utter indifference*. Your carelessness seems to say to me, God is nobody! Put Him in a corner. Get on in business. Mind the main chance. God and eternity are only for fools. Gospel? Salvation? Oh, they are trifles, not worth anybodys consideration!

What about the Sabbath, which God appoints to be His own? Well, He has given us six days out of seven, so we will steal from Him the other one. We will not give Him even an hour, if we can help it, for who is the Lord that we should obey His voice? You seem to say, What is Heaven, and what is Hell? O Sirs, this is the practical teaching of your lives! If you are living in indifference, you are teaching your children this, you are teaching your neighbors this, you are teaching me this, as far as I am willing to learn itbut I am not willing to learn it, for I cannot believe that Hell is a thing to be trifled with! You can trifle yourself *into* it, but you cannot trifle yourself out of it! There is no opening of the iron gate when once it has closed behind you. And Heaven is not a thing to be trifled with. How many have I seen die with the light of Heaven on their faces! How have I heard them talk of already beginning its endless joys while yet they were here! Have we not often rejoiced at the deathbeds of Believers who have died with glory flowing into their souls? I have seen too much of this to think Heaven a trifle!

I expect to go there, myself, before long, and I mind not how soon it may be. I read, the other day, that one called on my old grandfather and said to him, Mr. Spurgeon, you are getting old. He replied, Yes, I am. I am eighty-seven, and I should like to go Home next week, but I should like better to go Home, today, for I have been here as long as I want to be, and I am not as equal to preaching as I used to be. I should like to go Home and do some of the singing up above. Well I cannot trifle with that Heaven where my grandfather has gone! I have too many friends there to run any risk of not going there myself! Perhaps you think in your own mind, I do not want to be lost. Then, I pray you, cease your indifference! Give God your Sabbaths! Go and hear the Gospel preached and when you hear it, think it over, read your Bibles, begin to pray and talk to your children about God and Jesus Christ and Heaven. Why do so many of you forget your God? How can you live without Him? How can you live without a Savior? These things are grievous to me and they ought to be very grievous to youand you ought to have done with this indifference at once. God help you to have done with it even now!

There are others of you who are not indifferent. You come to the services, and you are attentive listeners, but just observe what you are going to do, tonight. We shall need all the ground floor and the greater part of this first gallery for communicants, *but you are going home, and so telling us that you have no part in the Communion*. Yes, the Lords Table is spread, Christ is to be remembered, fellowship is to be had with Himand you are going home! I know, my Friend over yonder, that you do not quite like it, because you have to leave your wife behind you. My dear boy up in the gallery, you do not quite like it, for your mother will stay behind and you will stop about somewhere, I dare say, to walk home with her. I do not like your departing from Gods people, for it makes me think of a hymn that I used to hear sung years ago

Oh, there will be weeping
At the judgment seat of Christ!

When the last parting comes, when mother is caught up to dwell with Christ, and her boy, whom she loved so well, is driven away into outer darkness, there will be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth! A dividing day must come. You may grow with the wheat, but the time will come when the tares must be separated from it, when the Lord will say to His reapers, Gather together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into My barn. I hope that you will not go home many Sundays, leaving dear ones at the Communion Table, but that, having trusted Christ as your Savior, you will remain with them to show forth His death in His own appointed way.

I hear another say, I am not going home. *I shall remain at the ordinance as a spectator*. I always like to see you look on, I like to see the birds come where the chickens are being fed! They will always do so, you know. If you feed your chickens well, there will be sure to be sparrows in the trees near, waiting while the chickens are feeding, and afterwards the sparrows will come and have their portion. So I expect it will be with youwhen you have been looking on for a little while, you will drop down from the gallery and you will get in among the birds Christ came to feed. You are getting into a place of happy danger! Get where the shots fly and one of them may make a target of you! Oh, that it might be so!

But tonight you are going to be only a spectator. Will you tell me what that means, *only a spectator*?

There is a Fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuels veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains,

but you are only a spectator! There is my Fathers House and prodigals returning are clasped in His arms, the ring is on their finger, and the shoes are on their feet, but you are only a spectator! In Paris, during the siege, when it was shut up, there were meals given at certain times in appointed places, but what would you have thought, if you had been there, and had been allowed to come to the window and see the feeding, and yourself remain only a spectator? I pity the poor shoeless urchins, on a cold winters night, who stand against a London cook-shop, flattening their noses against the great plate of glass, and looking in, and seeing all the steaming food, while they are only spectators! Do not be so, I pray youthere is room for you at the Gospel feastand a hearty welcome, too!

Do not be merely spectators! But if you mean to be so, then I say this to you, there will be no spectators in Heaven. They will all partake of the feast above, or they will not be there. And, I grieve to add, there will be no spectators in Hell. You will have to *participate* in the award of vengeance, or else in the gift of mercy! Therefore have done with being spectators ***Come guilty souls, and flee away,***
Like doves, to Jesus wounds.

Come and put your trust in Him who died for the ungodly! He that believes in Him is not condemned! Would to God that you would believe in Him tonight! I feel that God has helped me to speak to you. It has been no small task to me in my weaknessand now I want the Lord to give me some souls. *I expect to be paid for this service*. When one preaches with joy and comfort, and is full of health and strength, there is a great delight in the work. But now, tonight, when it is heavy work to get a thought and to utter it, *I expect my wages in another form* and I shall go home to my Master, and say, Lord, give me my wages! If He asks me what I want, I shall say to Him, Lord, I should like the soul of that young man who sits in the aisle, there, and of that old man in the top gallery who has been so interested while he has been listening. And I should like half a dozen of those young women over there.

I believe that, when I once began to plead with my Lord, I should ask for every one of you! At any rate, why should I leave anyone out? Which one should I leave out? When I was preaching, once, in the great plowshed of Mr. Howard, of Bedford, (they had cleared out all the plows to make room for a large congregation), His dear old father was sitting on the platform with me, and in the afternoon I prayed that the Lord would give us some souls. I asked that a few might be converted. After the service, the good old saint said, I enjoyed your preaching, but I did not enjoy your praying. I did not say, Amen, when you asked the Lord to give us a few souls. My dear Brother, he said, I would not be content unless He gave us hundreds! Go in for it tonight, he added, pray for hundreds to be converted. I thought, what a good thing it was to have a Brother with larger faith than ones own! Now may the Lord make some of you, who have great faith, like good old Mr. Howard, to pray the Lord to save the whole ships company here tonight! Why should they not *all* be brought in to the praise of the glory of His Grace? God grant it, for Jesus Christs sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON *EZEKIEL 33:1-20; 30-33.*

Verses 1-4. *Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak to the children of your people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: if when he sees the sword come upon the land, he blows the trumpet, and warns the people; then whoever hears the sound of the trumpet, and takes not warning; if the sword comes, and takes him away, his blood shall be upon his own head.* In that case the watchman is quite clear. He has done his duty, he has sounded an alarm, and a fitting alarm, upon the trumpet. He has sounded it immediately, without loitering or delaying. He has not been afraid of giving uneasiness to men he has done his duty, fearless of remark, and he is clear. Happy also is he in knowing that, by heeding the trumpets warning blast, many have escaped the threatened danger. Still, even then it seems that there are some who hear the trumpet and will not take the warning. That is the sad part of our serviceit makes the most successful ministry to be fringed with black. It cannot be all joy for him who wins the most souls for God, for at times he can sympathize with his Brothers, the Prophets, in their sorrowful enquiry, Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Listen to this, you who hear the Gospel and yet do not repent! If you heed not the warning, your blood will be on your own head!

5, 6. *He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that takes warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman sees the sword come, and blows not the trumpet, and the people are not warned; if the sword comes, and takes any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchmans hands.* This is a very solemn Truth of God. It not only concerns me, and the many ministers of Christ who are here, but it is for *all of you* who know the Lord, for you, also, are set as watchmen to your families, to your neighbors, to the class which you teach, or which you should teach, in the Sunday school. May God grant that we may, each one of us, be delivered from other mens sins, for we may become partakers with them in their iniquity unless we bear our testimony against them and give them warning of the consequences of their evil-doing!

7. *So you, O son of man, I have set you a watchman unto the house of Israel.* It is not merely the people who took a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman, but, *I have set you*. Oh, the solemn ordination of a true servant of Christ! It is not by laying on of hands of man, nor by a pretended descent from the Apostlesit is a *call from God*!

7. *Therefore you shall hear the word at My mouth, and warn them from Me.* That is the way to preach, to get the sermon from the mouth of God and then to speak it as the mouth of God! Dear teachers, wait upon God for that which you are to teachtake it warm with love out of the very mouth of Godand then speak it for God out of your own mouth. Good will surely come of such teaching as that!

8. *When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, you shall surely die; if you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at your hands.* Even as God required Abels blood at the hands of Cain and pronounced him cursed because he was guilty of that blood, so will He require the blood of perishing men at the hands of those set over them, and a curse shall come upon them if they are found negligent.

9, 10. *Nevertheless, if you warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul. Therefore, O you son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?* This is as much as to say, We cannot get away from our sins; there is no hope of our living. When men get into the iron cage called, Despair, there really seems to be no hope that they will turn from their sin. There *is* no hope in *themselves*their only hope is in the Lord.

11, 12. *Say unto them, As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his ways and live: turn you, turn you from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel? Therefore, you son of man.* Notice how often God calls Ezekiel the son of man. He had many wonderful visions, but he was to be kept humble by being constantly reminded that he was nothing more than a son of man. He was to be kept sympathetic with the peoplethey were men, and he was one of thema son of man. It seems hard that any mothers son of ours should die and perish. The thought that he will perish *forever* is terrible, indeed, to one who recognizes his union with the race as a son of man.

12. *Say unto the children of your people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turns from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sins.* It is not merely what we *have been*, but what we *are*, and what we *shall be*, that will have to be taken into account. If we have been righteous in our own esteem, what of that if we turn from it? If we have been sinful, yet if, by Gods Grace, we turn from it, the past shall be blotted out!

13. *When I shall say to the righteous that he shall surely live; if he trusts to his own righteousness, and commits iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he has committed, he shall die for it.* There is no salvation for any man without final perseverance, and if that final perseverance were not secured to us in the Covenant of Grace, there would be no salvation, even, for the brightest Believer, or the most sparkling professor! What are our lights in themselves? Will they not soon burn dim unless the secret oil of Gods Grace shall keep them bright? Whatever point any of you have reached, do not begin to put your confidence in that. If you have seemed to be righteous through a lifetime of 70 years, yet, unless the Grace of God keeps you, even to the end, you will perish! The mercy is that we have many precious promises concerning the eternal safety of all who are in Christ, and God will not fail to fulfill every one of them.

14-17. *Again, when I say unto the wicked, You shall surely die; if he turns from his sin, and does that which is lawful and right; if the wicked restores the pledge, gives again what he robbed, walks in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his sins that he has committed shall be mentioned unto him: he has done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live. Yet the children of your people say, The way of the Lord is not equal: but as for them, their way is not equal.* Sinners are very fast in judging God! Oh, that they would judge themselves! It is not the Lord who is unjustit is the balances and weights of men that are unjust. Oh, that they did but know it!

18-20. *When the righteous turns from his righteousness, and commits iniquity, he shall even die thereby. But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby.* Now let us read at the 30th verse.

30, 31. *Also, you son of man, the children of your people still are talking against you by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that comes forth from the LORD. And they come unto you as the people comes, and they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they will not do them: for with their month they show much love, but their heart goes after their covetousness.* This is another of the great sorrows of the prophetic calling, that however accurately we report the Lords message, however earnestly we try to drive it home to the consciences of our hearers, it must often be said, They sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goes after their covetousness.

32. *And, lo, you are unto them as a very lovely song of one that has a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear your words, but they do them not.* Preaching seems to such people to be only a song, or a piece of acting for their amusementbut it is not so. They that can find sport in the things of God will find it dull sport in Hell when they shall be forever driven away from the Presence of God, and from the glory of His power!

33. *And when this comes to pass, (lo, it will come), then shall they know that a Prophet has been among them.* But then it will be too late for them to know it, for they will have missed their opportunity of profiting by the message that the Prophet delivered to them! God grant that it may not be so with any one of us, for His abounding mercys sake! Amen.

ADAPTED FROM *THE C. H. SPURGEON COLLECTION*, AGES SOFTWARE, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1933 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

YOUR ROWERS HAVE BROUGHT YOU INTO GREAT WATERS

NO. 1933

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, DECEMBER 12, 1886,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 10 1885.
Your rowers have brought you into great waters. Ezekiel 27:26.

THIS was spoken by the Prophet concerning Tyre, that great mercantile city where all the commerce of the East found its outlet towards the West. Tyre, when the Chaldeans invaded Palestine, had greatly rejoiced at the fall of Jerusalem. She said, Aha, she is broken that was the gates of the people: I shall be replenished now she is laid waste. It was a cruel and selfish exultation. After a while the city in the sea came to feel the weight of the great oppressors arm, for thus said the Lord, I will bring upon Tyrus, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north. He shall set engines of war against your walls and with his axes he shall break down your towers. For 13 years the city endured a siege under Nebuchadnezzar and it was concerning this calamity that the Prophet said, *Your rowers have brought you into great waters*. The merchant princes of Tyre had so managed the affairs of the State that they brought the Tyrians into desperate straits. They had incited them to stand out against the great king and they discovered, in due time, that they were striving against a power too strong for them. Their policy had been a mistake. Comparing Tyre to one of its own galleys propelled with oars, the Prophet declares, Your rowers have brought you into great waters.

All the glories and the woes of Tyre are now over. What city is like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea? That page of history has long ago been turned over to give place to the rise and fall of other cities and empires, but the prophetic expression is still full of power. To many persons in our own day we may well cry with Ezekiel, Your rowers have brought you into great waters.

I. First and foremost, this is truly applicable to SINNERS WHO ARE BEGINNING TO TASTE THE RESULT OF THEIR SINSungodly persons who have chosen their own ways and followed their own devicesand now, at last, are finding that the way of transgressors is hard. Sinners may go unpunished for many a bright hour of the morning of life, but as the day grows older, the shadows fall and their way is clouded over. I meet with many who may be well assured that God will ultimately punish sin because the first flakes of the endless fire shower have begun to fall upon them and they cannot escape. They are now beginning to reap the first ripe ears of that awful harvest whose sheaves of woe shall fill their bosoms, world without end. In those who sin with the flesh, the result of their vices is seen and felt to a horrible degree

in their own bodies. Many a man bears in his bones the sins of his youth. Around us are many who already wish that they had never been born because of the condition into which their wantonness has brought them. The sin which at first seemed a dainty luxury, sweet to their palate, has now developed into a corrosive poison in their heart, eating their flesh as with fire and burning up their spirits. Lust was their pilotthe siren of pleasure lured them on and now they are wrecksbreaking to pieces on the rocks. Despondent, ashamed, haunted with nameless terrors, afraid to hope, they dare neither live nor die. They are overcome with alarm as they look forward, for if it is darkness behind and night around, tenfold blackness lies before them by reason of their transgression and their sins. O sinner spent with sin, Your rowers have brought you into great waters.

Certain transgressors are beginning to feel the result of wrong-doing *in their circumstances*. They have brought themselves from wealth to poverty by drunkenness, dishonesty, or vice. The owner of a fair estate is compelled to herd with the lowest of the low in a filthy lodging. He who was educated for a profession and is skilled in learned languagesemploys his superior knowledge to beg and cheatand even then remains in loathsome rags. Not even in this world does sin pay its servants good wages! Drunkenness and idleness clothe a man with ragsthese are the livery of sin. Those godly men who spend their lives in the painful business of seeking out the fallen often harrow our feelings with the dread stories of those who are truly prodigals, not merely in parable, but in literal fact, who have wasted their substance in riotous living and now, if it were possible, would be glad to fill their belly with the husks that swine eat and no man gives to them.

Many a broken-down sinner has, in this house, found his way back to the Great Father. Oh, that it may be so during this service! Sorely tossed about in sickness and in need, both of them the result of your sin, you are in a sorry plight at this hour. Your rowers have brought you into great waters. You would not take Christ to be your Pilot in your youthyou were too proud to accept your fathers God, your mothers Savioryou must have your own way and follow your own devices! And now the desperate tugging of your passions have brought you into deep waters, indeed. You said in your pride, I will not be tied to my mothers apron strings, but you are now a captive, fastened with bonds of steel to one who will be no mother to you, but a destroyer! You gave up your boat to pirate rowers and now look where they have brought you! The waters about you are dark and tempestuous and no port is near. One thing you can do, and I would have you do itwarn others lest they come into your place of danger! With broken health and lost estate, at least be humane when you are most in your misery, call to yourself the young who have not yet known your evil ways and charge them to shun your course! If you cannot be an example, I would use you as a beacon. Though hand join in hand, yet shall not the wicked be unpunishedand you are a proof of the same. Your rowers have brought you into great waters.

Others who have not yet been afflicted by any outward Providence are beginning to feel the sting of sin upon their conscience. This will, I trust, be used for their good. I trust the Lord has a kind intent towards them and is condemning them in the inward court of conscience that they may not be judged and condemned with the godless world at the Last Great Day. The Lords eyes perceive many that once were at ease in their iniquities who are now sorely troubled by their own reflections. Like the troubled sea, they cannot rest. Their memories are constantly casting up the mire and dirt of their former transgressions. There is no peace for them, day or night. They know that they must die. They have also heard of judgment to comethe blast of the trumpet of doom is sounding in their ears and, therefore, they cannot sleep at night, nor be at rest by day. A tempest is hurrying up. Black masses of clouds hang overhead. Thunder mutters from afar and the lightning lights up the sky. Sin is always before them. It casts ashes into their bread and gall into their drink. Their merry comrades cannot make them out, for they were once as wild as any. Men wonder why it is that for them there seems to be no music in the lute, no pleasure in the bowl, no joy in the dance. They know not the voice which cries to the troubled oneYour rowers have brought you into great waters.

O Soul, you have now come where your sins compass you about and shut you in on every side! They seemed as if they were all forgotten, like dead men, out of mind, but they have risen again and in their rising you have fallen! As a man pursued by wolves in the steppes of Russia seeks to escape from the hungry pack which hurry on so swiftly, so are you trying to escape from your sinsbut all in vain! You hear their howls behind you as they chase you with untiring feetwhat can you do? The sins of 20 years ago are upon you! Fierce sins of your hot and youthful blood which seemed so harmless thenthey are demons now from which you can not hide! What would you give to forget them? But they will not be forgotten! The devourers are near you; their hot breath comes upon you! Their fangs are in your flesh! They taste your blood! Verily, you have made a poor business of life to become the prey of such horrors! At a time of life when many a Christian man is in full vigor of usefulness, you are worn out and near deathand near Hell! Your sins are upon you. Even now they overtake you and what will you do? O gallant boat of the silken sail and the painted hull, where are you now? Your rowers have brought you into great waters.

Listen to me, then, while I speak to you words which may seem harsh, but they are all meant in love to you. Listen, I say, and take warning from your present sorrows.

If the waters are great, today, what will they be before long? If now you cannot bear the wages of sin, what will you do when they are paid to you in full? What will you do in the swelling of Jordan? What will you do when they wipe the clammy sweat from your brow and tell you that a few more gasps will send you into eternity? O man, woman, however great the waters are now, they are as *nothing* compared with what they will be at the last! You are only running with the footmen now and yet they weary you! What will you do when you contend with horses? When the Lord shall walk through the sea with His horses, through the heap of great waterswhat will become of you? Your case is lamentable. My heart weeps for you. Your rowers have brought you into great waters.

Learn, I pray you, this piece of timely wisdom. Your rowers have brought you into no quiet waters. They have found you no harbors of delightshall they any longer be your rowers? Do this one thing to your own soul if you have any sense left, or any pity for yourselfcry out against those who are ruining you! Now say, I will go no further with these rowers. God helping me, the helm shall be reversed. If such is your resolve and the great Pilot shall come to your help, you will never drink again of the accursed cup and you will shun the company which has lured you to your present wretchedness! Hear me while I cry to you, Escape for your life! Look not behind you! for maybe you will never have another hope of escapingbut you will, from this day on, drift from bad to worse, till the worst of all shall come. Your rowers have brought you into great watershave no more to do with them! Oh that the Spirit of the Lord may help you to break the oars and cast the rowers into the sea!

Remember, also, that they have rowed you into the stormy waters, but they cannot row you out of them. You can find no rest by continuing in sin, neither can you save yourself from your present forlorn condition. O man, cry mightily unto God! He will hear you! He has revealed a way of deliverance for you in the Person of His dear Sonall your hope lies there! Have you not heard of Jesus, who can still the wind and bring your vessel into an instant calm? While there is life in you, there is hope in Christ for you! You are not yet in tormentnot yet in Hellstill does His good Spirit strive, with the chief of sinners dwell. Therefore, though the sun is gone down for this day, I pray you suffer it not to rise again until you have committed your soul into the hands of your Redeemer! In desperate jeopardy of eternal destruction, cry unto the mighty God for succor and He will make bare His arm and rescue you from your destructions! Despair not! There is a Savior, and a great one, and He has come here to seek and to save that which was lost! Trust in Him who is mighty to save. By the terror of your destruction, I beseech you believe in the great salvation. Cry

Jesus, lover of my soul, Let me to Your bosom fly, While the nearer waters roll, While the tempest still is high! Hide me, O my Savior, hide, Till the storm of life is past!
Safe into the haven guide
Oh receive my soul at last.

I have spoken very feebly, but I pray the Lord to bless it to every unconverted person within these walls.

II. And now, secondly, I think that I see another ship. It is not black with the grime of the world. It resembles the gilded barge of a mighty prince, but still, for all that, its rowers have brought it into great waters. This represents THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS BROUGHT INTO DISTRESS. Many men are fondly persuaded that either they need no saving or that they can save themselves. Either in whole or in part, their natural goodness, or their benevolent actions, or their careful attention to external religion will secure their safety. They suppose that by going to hear the Gospel, by participating in sacraments, by contributing towards Church work and the like, they will find themselves borne securely towards the desired haven. This ship is rarely built. It resembles that to which Ezekiel likens TyreThey have made all your planks of fir trees from Senir: they have taken cedars from Lebanon to make a mast for you. Of the oaks of Bashan have they made your oars; they have made your benches of ivory inlaid in boxwood, from the isles of Kittim. Of fine linen with embroidered work from Egypt was your sail, that it might be to you for an ensign; blue and purple from the isles of Elishah was your awning. There is no end to the gallant show which self-righteousness can exhibit! No ship of Tyre can excel it.

Yet to this glorious ship a trying voyage is appointed. Alas, my Friend, your rowers have brought you into great waters. I would like you to think of the difficult journey which lies before you. The proposal is that you shall row yourself by your good works across yon sea of sin to the Port of Glory. Before you enter upon a matter, it is well to count the cost. Do you not know that if you are to be saved by obedience to the Law of God, your obedience must be absolutely perfect? If there is a breach of one single commandment, although all the others should be scrupulously kept, yet the Law is broken and the course of it descends. If you have a chain and you break one link, it is of no further use. It is idle to say, All the other links are strong. The miner would not risk his life upon a chain with one dangerous linkand the strength of the whole chain must be measured, not by its strongest, but by its weakest part! Do you think, my Friend, that you can perfectly keep the Law of God? Can you do it as long as you live? I should like you to think what great waters the rowers are proposing to take you into if you are to win salvation by an obedience which shall never fail or falter! You see from Holy Scripture that God gave His Son Jesus Christ to die for us that we might be saved by His Grace. Do you suppose that this gift of Jesus was a superfluity? There would have been no need for that great offering on the part of our Lord Jesus Christ if men can save themselves by their own merits! Calvary is a blot upon the Character of Deity if salvation by self is possible! His own Son put to death without a stern necessity for it were the grossest charge that could be brought against the Great Father! You certainly are attempting a very singular work if you are to perform that which cost the glorious Son of God His life! Great waters, dear Friendwaters too great for your frail vessel.

Look, Sirs, you who have been resting in your own righteousness, have you never once sinned? Take even *today* to pieceshas no evil thought, or wrong desire, or wanton imagination defiled its hours? Have you never spoken a sinful, unkind, untruthful, or proud word? Do you claim to have been absolutely perfect before your Maker from your childhood? Surely, you must have a brow of brass to make such a boast! What does He say to you? There is not a just man upon earth, that does good, and sins not. All we like sheep have gone astray. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Verily, my Friend, Your rowers have brought you into great waters. If you are to be saved by your works, look where you are! Any day you may slip and stumbleand then what becomes of all your past life? For, When the righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, all his righteousness that he has done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he has trespassed, and in his sin that he has sinned, in them shall he die. If this is your style of standing before God, it is a poor standing, indeed! Can you ever be sure that you will be safe in an hours time? Come, my Friend, can you be sure that you have *done* enough, *felt* enough, *prayed* enough, *given* enough alms and gone a sufficient number of times to the Meeting House, or to the Church? Can you be sure that it is well with you even *now*? And if your faith is in a *priest*, can you be sure that he who baptized you and confirmed you had the apostolic succession? Can you be sure that he that gave you the sacrament was truly ordained? When you lie dying, a thousand questions will haunt you! You will have to ask yourself about this, that and the otherand on your present way of going to work you can never be sure!

The religion of self-righteousness never proposes such a thing as security. It does not give the quiet of faith, much less the deep repose of full assurance. Your rowers have brought you into great waters. Uncertainty follows uncertainty and the wind of fear tosses the billows of doubt. You will have to slave your fingers to the bone with incessant efforts and then never have done. Your life will be one perpetual treadmill and you will never be an inch the higher. You might as well attempt to sail across the Atlantic on a sere leaf of autumn as hope to reach Heaven by your own works! You have no good worksyou are incapable of good works! Your motive is tainted and it pollutes all you do. Self-salvation is your aim and, therefore, you are serving yourself and not your God. The *motive* is the essence of the deed. Now, the grand motive which makes virtue, virtue, is absent in the selfish heart. The motive of love is necessary to acceptance with God and you know nothing of it. As of now all your labor comes of a joyless servitudeit is slaves work for a slaves wageand the wage you will get, because you are a sinnerwill be no more than death when all is done. Your rowers have brought you into great waters.

I remember when I reached those same terrible seas. I used, as a youth, to think, sometimes, that I was as good as other lads and, perhaps, I was, for I had not fallen into the grosser vices. I fancied that if *anybody* was saved by a moral life, I might be. But oh, when God lifted the veil of my nature and I saw what my heart really was, I sang another tune! I had been down into the cellar of my heart a great many times in the dark and it seemed pretty fair, but when the Holy Spirit opened the shutters and let in the light, what loathsome abominations I saw there! My life, too, no longer appeared to be the goodly thing I had imagined it. Ah, no, my comeliness was turned into corruption! Let but a man get the Light of God streaming into His soul, convicting Him of sin, of righteousness and of judgment to comeand all reliance upon self, in any form, will seem to him to be the most hateful of crimes! What crime is there that is more like the pride of Lucifer than the pride of a wretched rebel who talks about *meriting* Heaven and finding entrance among glorified spirits without washing his robes in the blood of Jesusunder the pretence that they were never foul? Does he imagine that he will be admitted to the courts of the Eternal King to sing his *own* praises and thus insult the Lord? While others come there through rich and free and Sovereign Grace and, therefore, rapturously adore almighty love, is he to reach the blissful shores to magnify his own excellence?

I tell you, Sir, that if you have put to sea in the boat of selfrighteousness, however strong the rowers who tug those three banks of oars and make the vessel leap through the waves, the day shall come when you will hear a voice across the waters crying, Your rowers have brought you into great waters: the east wind has broken you in the midst of the seas. The voyage is too great for you! Shipwreck is sure! May God give you Grace to shun the attempt! Flee from your own works to Christs work! Place your trust where God has placed His love, namely, in the Lord Jesus! Then shall you have good works, indeed, but they shall be the *cargo* which you carry, not the *ship* which carries *you*. They shall then be grounded upon the motive of gratitude and not of selfishness. And then shall real virtue be possible to youvirtue based on love to God. When you are delivered from your sin and safe in the righteousness of Christ, then will you say, as each Believer does when his heart is warm with affection

Loved of my God, for Him again
With love intense I burn!
Chosen of Him before time began,
I choose Him in return.

Thus have we seen two gallant ships in grievous straits and we have hearkened to counsels by which we may avoid their dangers. May God bless my simple words!

III. But now, very briefly, there is a third case, THE ERRORIST IN HIS DIFFICULTIES. This is a very common sight in these wayward times. I might say to many a man who has ventured out to sea under the strong impulse of curiosity, trusting to his own proud intellect, Your rowers have brought you into great waters. The only safe course for a thoughtful man is to trust in God and to accept the Scriptures as Infallible Truth of God. There is our anchor! Every mind needs a fixed pointwe must have Infallibility somewheremy Infallible Guide is Holy Scripture. I know of no other anchor. The Revelation of God to man, in the Person of the Son of God, even Christ Jesus, is the one and only hope of men. And the Word of the Lord in which we have the Divine testimony to the appointed Savior is our oracle and court of appeal.

But there are men who cannot abide this and, first of all, I think that they begin to get into great waters *when they resolve to be guided by their own judgment* and their own intellect, without submitting to the teachings of Christ. It is proud and dangerous work to set up to be your own guide. You are undertaking a very large responsibility when you refuse to sit at Jesus feet and prefer to assume the teachers chair. If you will rely upon your own wisdom, wit and will, you choose a highland roadrough, rugged and full of perils. You cast away the possibility of that sweet peace which comes of reposing on superior wisdom. You miss, in fact, that joy of faith, that sweet rest of mind which is the reward of the lowly of heart. Simple trust in Christ is, to me, the wellspring of comfort. To believe because the Lord speaks is rest to my heart! I could not live except as I leave questions with God and accept His Word instead of all reasoning.

O my wise and thoughtful Friend, do you know what will soon happen to you? You will probably fall under the domination of anothers intellect you will become the shadow of some greater man. The man who will be guided by nobody is usually guided by someone more foolish or more knavish than himself. I have seen both cases. I have seen a man of superior abilities crouching at the feet of a semi-idiot who seemed, to the other, to be a profound mystic! And I have also seen the deep, designing man of brazen impudence towering above an abler man and cowing him into submission. He swore that he would be independent and to be so he cast off all old beliefs and fettered himself to foolish lies. He would not stay at home with his father to partake of the joyous heritage, for he longed for freedom. Alas, before long a master sent him into his fields to feed swine. He could not believe the simplicities of the Truth of God, but now he groans beneath the monstrosities of superstition!

Hear the just law, the judgment of the skies! He that hates Truth shall be the dupe of lies, And he that will be cheated to the last,
Delusion, strong as Hell, shall bind him fast.

The man has given up the old doctrine because it was difficult and has accepted new doctrine which is 10 times more difficult! He would not be credulous and now he is a hundred times more so. Creation staggered him and he tries to believe in evolution! Faith in Jesus seemed hard, but he must now accept Agnosticism. The difficulties of unbelief are 10 times greater than the difficulties of faith. We may require a great stretch of faith to accept all that the Holy Spirit teaches, but once believe in His faithful Word and you have found a way of life! If you do not do this, you have continually to enlarge the gullet of your credulity and remain forever receptive of mere wind which can never fill the mind. Unbelief calls you to go from improbability to impossibility, from extravagance to romance, from romance to raving! I appeal to candid persons who have ventured from the moorings of faith to sport upon the waves of modern speculation, whether they are not conscious of a great loss? When faith evaporates, there is a speedy departure of spiritual power. The new notions intoxicate, but they do not sustain. The near approach to God is gone when the old faith in the Atonement is shakenand the enjoyment of hallowed communion ceases when the din of perpetual controversy frightens away the dove of peace!

I have heard it remarked that the modern apostles, when they preach, often discourse very prettilyfor they are clever menbut all sense of enjoyment of what they preach is lacking. They are not, themselves, feeding upon what they hand out. There is no beaming light upon their faces as of men who are enamored by the doctrines they proclaim! Small delight can their teachings cause them and you see that it is so. They are not heralds arrayed to adorn a banquet, but surgeons gathered to an operation! Well may they be without enjoyment, for there is nothing to enjoy. Who smiles as he sits down to a meatless, marrowless bone? Who rejoices as he lifts a shining cover which has nothing beneath it? In the dogmas of modern thought, there is not enough mental meat to bait a mousetrap! As to food for a soul, there is none of itan ant would starve on such small grain! No Atonement, no regeneration, no eternal love, no Covenantwhat is there worth thinking upon? They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him.

They have taken away the light, the life, the love, the liberty of Free Grace and they have given us nothing to replace them but pretty toys which they, themselves, will break before many days are past. O Sirs, it is all very fine to be amused in the heyday of our health with bubbles from the brunnen of superior intellects, but times will come when the soul will have to do business on great waters and then it will need substantial help. When a man comes face to face with eternity, he demands certainties about which his heart has no shadow of question.

I have lain by the hour together consciously looking into death in as bitter suffering of body and mind as a man might well endure and I tell you nothing will then satisfy the heart but the atoning Sacrifice! Nothing will avail to clear the sky but a distinct view of Jesus as a Substitute and a vicarious Sacrifice for human sin! Nothing cheers me at such times but the Eternal Covenant, ordered in all things and sure; promises founded upon the faithfulness of God; Grace given by the Sovereignty of God to guilty and undeserving men! You may do with lighter things, but I must have these and nothing less! Grace, with Omnipotence and Immutability to back it, will bear my spirit up and nothing else! But if you will let go the old Gospel. If you will go from one new theory to anotherafter a short time you will come into misery of the direst order! I have seen men give up, first of all, the communion of saints. Then all belief in the Word of God. After that, they have gone into the common pleasures of worldlings and so they have drifted and drifted till, at length, the seat of the scorner, the song of the drunkard, or the stews of the unchaste have afforded them carrion suited to their taste. How many who only meant to go a little from the old ways of the Truth of God have gone too far aside even for themselves? Truly, my speculative Friend, Your rowers have brought you into great waters.

I am not intending to follow you. You are so wise that I am satisfied to be a fool, because I would wish to be the reverse of what you are. I am content to be weak, for your strong mind is bringing you small profit. I would not, at any time, rest my souls eternal hope upon a theory, or upon the workings of my own brain. I need a firmer foundation. On the Truths of God revealed in this Book, on the clear and certain verities of Holy Scripture I dare risk my soul for time and for eternity, without the shadow of a doubt! I would earnestly entreat you to do the same, lest, by-and-by, your rowers bring you into great waters!

Why, to me it seems very great waters to be brought into to be forced to say that I know nothing! One walking with me observed, with some emphasis, I do not believe as you do. I am an Agnostic. Oh, I said to him that is a Greek word, is it not? The Latin word, I think, is *ignoramus*. He did not like it at all. Yet I only translated his language from Greek to Latin! These are strange waters to get into, when all your philosophy brings you is the confession that you know *nothing* and the stolidity which enables you to glory in your ignorance! As for those of us who rest in Jesus, we know and have believed something, for we have been taught eternal truths by Him who cannot lie! Our Master was not known to say, It may be, or, It may not be, but He had an authoritative style and testified, Verily, verily, I say unto you. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of what He has taught us shall cease to be the creed of our souls! We feel safe in this assurance but should we quit it, we should expect, soon, to find ourselves in troubled waters.

IV. Now I pass on to dwell for a moment upon another sight which is as sad as any of the othersperhaps more sad. Behold THE BACKSLIDER FILLED WITH HIS OWN WAYS. O wanderer from the Lord your God, Your rowers have brought you into great waters. I have seen and talked with some to whom this text has become an awful truth. There are some here, tonight, who, if I brought them upon this platform and they had the courage to speak, could unfold a tale of measureless misery which they have brought upon themselves by departing from the Lord! Look at yonder woman! She once rejoiced in the Gospel as one that finds great spoil. It is 30 years ago, but at that time she knew the Truth of God and loved it. She was the joy of the pastor who brought her to Christ, for she was earnest, intense, devoted. There were years of gracious walking and then there came a temptation. She grew cold in heart. She was poor. She was infatuated. She turned asideshe was wretched and found comfort in the glass. Drop the veil. It is many years ago since that fall and she plunged on in suffering, misery and sin such as I will not attempt to describe. She became a mere wreck! Death stared her in the face. She returned to us and said, Let me be taken into the Church before I die, for I have never lost, after all, the life of God in my soul but, oh, I stepped aside and from that day sorrow has pursued me. Restore me to the Church, for I am, by Grace, restored to God. As you looked at her, you said, Poor weatherbeaten boat! It was an ill day for you when your rowers brought you into these great waters.

You know how it beginsfirst of all, that holy, joyful walk with God is lost. You used to sing from morning to night for joy of heart, for, like Enoch, you walked with God! Alas, that music came to a close. It did not seem muchmerely to lose rapturous enjoymentbut it was much in itself and it meant more. Then there came a loss of relish for the means of Grace. The services were long and the ministry grew dull. The Prayer Meeting was not worth attending and weeknight services were too much of a good thing. Secret prayer was neglected and the Bible was unread. The forms of religion were kept up longer than the enjoyment of it, but there was no life, no power in them. After that there came a general faultfinding with Brothers and Sisters in Christa constant quibbling at this and that. Nothing was good enough. The soul was drifting and it fancied that the Church and the world were no longer what they were, just as men in a boat fancy that the shore is moving. How many endeavor to be blind to their own declensions by pretending to see fault and falsehood in other people! Then there came a distaste for Christian companygodly people were too commonplace and prosaic. The love of something brighter called them away from solid conversation. Occasionally they were found in places doubtfully virtuous and unquestionably irreligious. Songs other than those of Zion began to be relished and teachings not of the Bible were listened to.

All the while there was an inward unrest and there was a yearning of the spirit for better things. The man felt, every now and then, that he was losing sight of shore and floating into dangerous places. He was uneasy as to where the currents would carry him and he did not feel safe under his new pilot. Then on a black day there were rocks aheadrocks from which, in former years, his vessel had steered clear with ease. And now a current and a wind drove the ship that way and before he was well aware of it, the man was wrecked! To quit our figure, the sin which the man once hated he now played with. He did not mean to yield, but he gave way a little and soon became the slave of appetite. He that sat at the sacramental table was now to be seen intoxicated. She that would have communed only with believers in Christ was now found in very dubious society.

At last it went furtherit came to actual and open sinand ruin followed. I cannot tell how long that sinner may remain in his sin. How long David continued impenitent I need not mention, but oh that he had never fallen into it! Oh that he had never idled that day away upon his bed so as only to rise at eventide to see a sight that led him to rush headlong into foul transgression! O Brothers and Sisters, when you begin to get a little away from Christ, you do not know how far you may yet go, nor how soon you may commit the grossest crimes! There may be some here, tonight, who once were preachers of the Gospel, or earnest Sunday school teachers, or Christian women devoted to the cause of God, but now, alas, they are separated from the fellowship of the Church, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, outcasts from the communion of saints!

O Friend, Your rowers have brought you into great waters. Oh that He would come who owns your boat, who shed His blood for you! Oh that He would step into your vessel and take the helm and turn you around, tonight, by a great stroke of His almighty Grace, and turn your head to the Port of Peace! Do you ask, Will He receive me again? Listen to His voice! He says to you, Turn, O backsliding children, says the Lord; for I am married unto you. Take with you words and come to Him at once, for He is ready to receive you. Do not linger! But O backslider in heart, before you become filled with your own ways, come home, come home and say, Return unto your rest, O my Soul. Remember that if you are a child of God you will never be happy in sin! You are spoiled for the world, the flesh and the devil. In the day when you were regenerated there was put into you a vital principle which can never die nor be content to dwell in the dead world. You will *have to come back* if, indeed, you belong to the familyprodigal as you are, you are still a child! Though you return with every bone broken, you will *have* to return!

He that is married to you has not forgotten the marriage bond. Though you have forsaken Him and defiled yourself with many lovers, yet it is written, He hates putting away. He cannot endure divorce! His almighty love will win you back. He cannot and He *will not give you up*. Read those memorable passages in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, where the Holy Spirit uses that simile which I scarcely dare use tonight, where the most defiled and corrupt of adulterous souls are still bid to come back to their first husband because the marriage bond still holds good and the Lord will neither let them go nor suffer them to continue in sin. Your rowers have brought you into great waters. Oh for a steersman to guide you into port! Return, return! I leave my text and those to whom it applies with the God of all Grace. May He bless you all, for Christs sake! Amen.

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THE WARNING NEGLECTED
N0. 165

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, NOVEMBER 29, 1857, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.
He heard the sound of the trumpet and took not warning: his blood shall be upon him.
Ezekiel 33:5.

IN all worldly things men are always enough awake to understand their own interests. There is scarce a merchant who reads the paper who does not read it in some way or other with a view to his own personal concerns. If he finds that by the rise or fall of the markets he will be either a gainer or a loser, that part of the days news will be the most important to him. In politicsin everything in factthat concerns temporal affairs, personal interest usually leads the van. Men will always be looking out for themselves and personal and home interests will generally engross the major part of their thoughts.

But in religion it is otherwise. In religion men love far rather to believe abstract doctrines and to talk of general truths than the searching inquiries which examine their own personal interest in it. You will hear many men admire the preacher who deals in generalitiesbut when he comes to press home searching questions by-and-by, they are offended. If we stand and declare general facts, such as the universal sinnership of mankind. Or the need of a Savior, they will give an assent to our doctrine and possibly they may retire greatly delighted with the discourse, because it has not affected them. But how often will our audience gnash their teeth and go away in a rage because, like the Pharisees with Jesus, they perceive concerning a faithful minister, that he spoke of *them*?

And yet, my Brethren, how foolish this is. If in all other matters we like personalitiesif in everything else we look to our own concerns, how much more should we do so in religion? For surely every man must give an account for himself at the Day of Judgment. We must die alone. We must rise at the day of resurrection one by one and each one for himself must appear before the bar of Godand each one must either have said to him, as an individual, Come you blessedor else he must be appalled with the thundering sentence, Depart you cursed.

If there were such a thing as national salvationif it could be possible that we could be saved in the gross and in the bulk, that so, like the sheaves of corn, the few weeds that may grow with the stubble would be gathered in for the sake of the wheatthen, indeed, it might not be so foolish for us to neglect our own personal interests. But if the sheep must, every one of them, pass under the hand of him that counts them. If every man must stand in his own person before God, to be tried for his own actsby everything that is rational, by everything that conscience would

dictate and self-interest would commandlet us each of us look to ourselves, that we are not deceived and that we find not ourselves, at last, miserably cast away.

Now, this morning, by Gods help, I shall labor to be personal. And while I pray for the rich assistance of the Divine Spirit, I will also ask one thing of each person here presentI would ask of every Christian that he would lift up a prayer to God that the service may be blessed. And I ask of every other person that he will please to understand that I am preaching *to him* and *at him.* And if there is anything that is personal and pertinent to his own case, I beseech him, as for life and death, to let it have its full weight with him and not begin to think of his neighbor, to whom, perhaps, it may be even more pertinent, but whose business certainly does not concern him.

The text is a solemn onehe heard the sound of the trumpet and took not warning: his blood shall be upon him. The first head is this*the warning was all that could be desired*he heard the sound of the trumpet. Secondly, *the excuses for not attending to the startling warning are all of them both frivolous and wicked*. And therefore, in the third place, *the consequences of inattention must be terrible, because mans blood must then be on his own head*.

I. First, then, THE WARNING WAS ALL THAT COULD BE DESIRED. When in time of war an army is attacked in the night and cut off and destroyed while asleepif it were impossible for them to be aware of the attack and if they had used all diligence in placing their sentinelsbut nevertheless the foe were so wary as to destroy them, we should weep. We should attach no blame to anyone, but should deeply regret and should give to that host our fullest pity. But if, on the other hand, they had posted their sentinels and the sentinels were wide awake and gave to the sleepy soldiers every warning that could be desired, but nevertheless the army were cut offwe might for common humanity regret the loss thereof. Yet at the same time we should be obliged to say, if they were foolish enough to sleep when the sentinels had warned themif they folded their arms in presumptuous sloth after they had had sufficient and timely notice of the progress of their bloodthirsty enemy, then in their dying, we cannot pity themtheir blood must rest upon their own heads.

So it is with you. If men perish under an unfaithful ministry and have not been sufficiently warned to escape from the wrath to come, the Christian may pity them, yes, and methinks even when they stand before the bar of God, although the fact of their not having been warned will not fully excuse them, yet it will go far to diminish their eternal miseries, which otherwise might have fallen upon their heads. We know it is more tolerable for unwarned Tyre and Sidon in the Day of Judgment, than it is for any city, or any nation that has had the Gospel proclaimed in its ears.

My Brethren, if on the other hand we have been warned, if our ministers have been faithful, if they have aroused our conscience and have constantly and earnestly called our attention to the fact of the wrath to comeand if we have not attended to their message, if we have despised the voice of God, if we have turned a deaf ear to their earnest exhortationsif we perish, we shall die *warned*. We shall die under the sound of the Gospel and our damnation must be an unpitied oneour blood must fall upon our own heads. Permit me then, to try, if I can, to enlarge upon this thoughtthat the warning has been in the case of many of you all that could have been needed.

In the first place, the warnings of the ministry have been to most of you warnings that have been *heard*he heard the sound of the trumpet. In far off lands the trumpet sound of warning is not heard. Alas, there are myriads of our fellow creatures who have never been warned by Gods ambassadors, who know not that wrath abides on them and who do not yet understand the only way and method of salvation. In your case it is very different. You have heard the Word of God preached to you. You cannot say, when you come before God, Lord, I knew no better. There is not a man or a woman within this place who will dare then to plead ignorance.

And moreover, you have not only heard with your ears, but some of you have been obliged to hear it in your consciences. I have before me many of my hearers whom I have had the pleasure of seeing now for some years. It has not been once or twice, but many a time I have seen the tear guttering your cheeks when I have spoken earnestly, faithfully and affectionately to you. I have seen your whole soul moved within you. And yet, to my sorrow you are now what you wereyour goodness has been as the early cloud and as the morning dew that passes away. You have heard the Gospel. You wept under it and you loved the sound of it. You came again and wept again andmany marveled that you did weepbut the greatest marvel was that after having wept so well, you wiped away your tears so easily. Oh, yes, God is my witness, there are some of you not an inch nearer Heaven. You have sealed your own damnation doubly sure unless you repentfor you have heard the Gospel, you have despised prophesying, you have rejected the counsel of God against yourselves. And, therefore, when you shall die you must die pitied by your friends, but at the same time with your blood on your own heads.

The trumpet was not only *heard*, but more than that, *its warning was understood*. When the man supposed in the text heard the trumpet, he understood by it that the enemy was at hand and yet he took not warning. Now, my Brethren, in your case, the sound of the Gospel warning has been understood. A thousand faults your minister may have, but there is one fault from which he is entirely free. And that is, he is free from all attempts to use fine language in the expression of his thoughts. You are all my witnesses that if there is a Saxon word or a home phrase, a sentence that is rough and market-like that will tell you the truthI always use that first. I can say solemnly, as in the sight of God, that I never went out of my pulpit, except with the firm belief that whatever might have happened, I was perfectly understood.
I had sought at least so to gather wise words, that no man might mistake my meaninggnash his teeth he might, but he could not say, The preacher was misty and cloudy, talking to me of metaphysics, beyond my comprehension. He has been obliged to say, Well, I know what he meant, he spoke plainly enough to me. Well, Sirs, then if it is so and if you have heard warnings that you could understand, so much the more guilty you are if you are living this day in rejection of them. If I have preached to you in a style above comprehension then on my head must be your blood, because I ought to have made you understand. But if I come down to men of low estate and pick even vulgar phrases to suit common people, then if you understood the warning and if you then risked it, mark you, my hands are clean of your blood. If you are damned I am innocent of your damnation. I have told you plainly, that except you repent, you must perishand that except you put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, there is for you no hope of salvation.

Again, this trumpet sound was *startling*. The trumpets sound is ever considered to be the most startling in the world. Tis that which shall be used on the resurrection morning to startle the myriads of sleepers and make them rise from their tombs. Yes, and you have had a startling ministry. You have sat, some of you, under ministers that might have made the devil himself tremble, so earnest have they been. And they have made you tremble sometimes, so much, that you could not sleep. The hair of your head was well near moved to stand upright. They spoke as though they never might speak againas dying men to dying men. They spoke as if they had been in Hell and knew the vengeance of the Almightyand they spoke as if they had entered into the heart of Jesus and read His love to sinners.

They had brows of brass, they knew not how to flinch. They laid your iniquity bare before your face and with rough language that was unmistakable they made you feel that there was a man there who told you all things that ever you did. They so declared it, that you could not help feeling under it. You always retained a veneration for that minister, because you felt that he at least was honest with you. And you have sometimes thought that you would even go and hear him againbecause there at least your soul was movedand you were made to hear the Truth.

Yes, you have had a startling ministry, some of you. Then, Sirs, if you have heard the cry of fire, if you are burned in your beds, your charred ashes shall not accuse me. If I have warned you that he that believes not must be damned, if you are damned, your miserable souls shall not accuse me. If I have startled you sometimes from your slumbers and made your dances and your pleasure parties uneasy because I have sometimes warned you of these things, then, Sirs, if after all you put away these warnings and you reject these counsels, you will be obliged to say, My blood is on my own head.

In many of your cases the warning has been *very frequent*. If the man heard the trumpet sound ONCE and did not regard it, possibly we might excuse him. But how many of my audience have heard the trumpet sound of the Gospel very frequently? There you are, young man. You have had many years of a pious mothers teachingmany years of a pious ministers exhortations. Wagon loads of sermons have been exhausted upon you. You have had many sharp providences, many terrible sicknesses. Often when the death bell has tolled for your friend, your conscience has been aroused. To you warnings are not unusual things. They are very common. Oh, my Hearers, if a man should hear the Gospel but once, his blood would be upon his own head for rejecting it. But of how much sorer punishment shall you be thought worthy who have heard it many and many a time? Ah, I may well weep when I think how many sermons you have listened to, many of you, how many times you have been cut to the heart.

A hundred times every year you have gone up to the house of God, and far oftener than that you have just added a hundred billets to the eternal pile. A hundred times the trumpet has sounded in your ears and a hundred times you have turned away to sin againto despise Christto neglect your eternal interests and to pursue the pleasures and the concerns of this world. Oh, how mad this is, how mad! Oh, Sirs, if a man had but once poured out his heart before you concerning your eternal interests and if he had spoken to you earnestly and you had rejected his message, then, even then, you had been guilty. But what shall we say to you upon whom the shafts of the Almighty have been exhausted? Oh, what shall be done unto this barren ground that has been watered with shower after shower and that has been quickened with sunshine after sunshine? What shall be done unto him who being often rebuked, still hardens his neck? Shall he not be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy and shall it not then be said, his blood lies at his own door, his guilt is on his own head?

And I would just have you recollect one thing more. This warning that you have had so often has come to you *in time*. Ah, said an infidel once, God never regards man. If there is a God, He would never take notice of men. Said a Christian minister, who was sitting opposite to him in the carriage, The day may come, Sir, when you will learn the truth of what you have just said. I do not understand your allusion, Sir, said he. Well, Sir, the day may come when you may call and He will refuse. When you may stretch out your hands and He will not regard you, but as He has said in the book of Proverbs, so will He do, Because I called and you refused, because I stretched out My hands and no man regarded, I also will mock at your calamity, I will laugh when your fear comes.

But oh, Sirs, your warning has not come too late. You are not warned on a sick bed, at the eleventh hour, when there is but a bare possibility of salvation. You are warned in timeyou are warned *today*you have been warned for these many years that are now past. If God should send a preacher to the damned in Hell, that were an unnecessary addition to their misery. Surely, if one could go and preach the Gospel through the fields of Gehenna and tell them of a Savior they had despisedand of a Gospel that is now beyond their reachthat were taunting poor souls with a vain attempt to increase their unutterable woe. But oh, my Brethren, to preach the Gospel now is to preach in a hopeful periodfor now is the accepted timenow is the day of salvation.

Warn the boatman before he enters the current, and then, if he is swept down the rapids, he destroys himself. Warn the man before he drinks the cup of poison, tell him it is deadly. And then, if he drinks it, his death lies at his own door. And so, let us warn you before you depart this life. Let us preach to you while as yet your bones are full of marrow and the sinews of your joints are not loosed. We have then warned you in time and so much the more shall your guilt be increased because the warning was timely. It was frequent, it was earnest, it was appropriate, it was arousing, it was continually given to youand yet you sought not to escape from the wrath to come.

And so even this morning would I say to you, if you perish. I am free from your blood. If you are damned, it is not for want of calling after, nor for want of praying for, nor for want of weeping over. Your blood must be on your own heads, for the warning is all that is needed.

II. And now we come to the second point. MEN MAKE EXCUSES WHY THEY DO NOT ATTEND TO THE GOSPEL WARNING, BUT THESE EXCUSES ARE ALL FRIVOLOUS AND WICKED. I will just go over one or two of the excuses that people make. Some of them say, Well, I did not attend to the warning because I did not believe there was any necessity for it. Ah, you were told that after death there was a judgment and you did not believe there was any necessity that you should be prepared for that judgment? You were told that by the works of the Law there shall no flesh living be justified and that only through Christ can sinners be saved. And you did not think there was any necessity for Christ? Well Sir, you ought to have thought there was a necessity. You know there was a necessity in your inner consciousness. You talked very large things when you stood up as an unbeliever, a professed unbelieverbut you know there was a still small voice that while you spoke belied your tongue.

You are well aware that in the silent watches of the night you have often trembled. In a storm at sea you have been on your knees to pray to a God whom on the land you have laughed at. And when you have been sick near unto death, you have said, Lord, have mercy upon me. And so you have prayedyou have believed it after all. But if you did not believe it, you ought to have believed it. There was enough in reason to have taught you that there was an hereafter. The Book of Gods revelation was plain enough to have taught it to you and if you have rejected Gods Book and rejected the voice of reason and of conscience, your blood is on your own head. Your excuse is idle. It is worse than thatit is profane and wicked and still on your own head is your everlasting torment.

But, cries another, I did not like the trumpet. I did not like the Gospel that was preached. Says one, I did not like certain doctrines in the Bible. I thought the minister preached too harsh doctrines sometimes. I did not agree with the Gospel, I thought the Gospel ought to have been altered and not to have been just what it was. You did not like the trumpet, did you? Well, but God made the trumpet, God made the Gospel and inasmuch as you did not like what God made, it is an idle excuse. What was it to you what the trumpet was, so long as it warned you? And surely, if it had been time of war and you had heard a trumpet to warn you of the coming of the enemy, you would not have sat still and said, Now I believe that is a brass trumpet, I would like to have had it made of silver. No, but the sound would have been enough for you and up you would have been to escape from the danger. And so it must be now with you. It is an idle pretense that you did not like it. You *ought* to have liked it, for *God* made the Gospel what it is.

But you say, I did not like the man that blew it. Well, if you did not like one messenger of God, there are many in this city. Could you not find one you did like? You did not like one mans mannerit was too theatrical. You did not like anothersit was too doctrinal. You did not like anothersit was too practical. There are plenty of themyou may take which you do like. But if God has sent the men and told them how to blowand if they blow to the best of their ability, it is all in vain for you to reject their warnings, because they do not blow the way *you* like. Ah, my Brethren, we do not find fault with the way a man speaks, if we are in a house that is on fire. If the man yells, Fire! Fire! we are not particular what note he takes. We do not think what a harsh voice he has got. You would think anyone a fool, a confounded fool, who should lie in his bed, to be burned, because he said he did not like the way the man cried, Fire. Why his business was to have been out of bed and down the stairs at once, as soon as he heard it.

But another says, I did not like the man himself. I did not like the minister. I did not like the man that blew the trumpet. I could hear him preach very well, but I had a personal dislike of him and so I did not take any notice of what the trumpet said. Verily, God will say to you at last, You fool, what had you to do with that man? To his own Master he stands or falls. Your business was with yourself. What would you think of a man who has fallen overboard from a ship and when he is drowning, some sailor throws him a rope and there it is. Well, he says, in the first place, I do not like that rope, I dont think that rope was made at the best factory. There is some tar on it, too, I do not like it. And in the next place, I do not like that sailor that threw the rope over. I am sure he is not a kind-hearted man, I do not like the looks of him at all. And then comes a gurgle and a groanand down he is at the bottom of the sea. And when he was drowned, they said that it served him right, if he would not lay hold of the rope, but would be making such foolish and absurd objections, when it was a matter of life and death.

Then on his own head is his blood. And so shall it be with you at last. You are so busy with criticizing the minister and his style, and his doctrine, that your own soul perishes. Remember you may get into Hell by criticism, but you will never criticize your soul out of it. You may there make the most you can of it. You may be there and say, I did not like the minister. I did not like his manner. I did not like his matter. But all your disliking will not get one drop of water to cool your burning tonguenor

serve to mitigate the unalleviated torments of that world of agony.

There are many other people who say, Ah, well, I did none of those things, but I had a notion that the trumpet sound ought to be blown to everybody else, but not to me. Ah, that is a very common notion. All men think all men mortal but themselves, said a good poet. And all men think all men need the Gospel, but not themselves. Let each of us recollect that the Gospel has a message to each one of us. What says the Gospel to *you* my Hearer? What says the Word to *you*? Forget your neighbors and ask this questiondoes it condemn *you*? Or does it assure *you* of *your* pardon? For remember, all you have to do in the hearing of the Word is to hear with your own ears for your own soul and it will be idle for anyone to say, I did not think it applied to me, when we know that it is to be preached to every creature under Heaven and therefore there must be something in it for *every* creature or else it would not be preached to every creature.

Well, says another, But I was so busy. I had so much to do that I could not possibly attend to my souls concerns. What will you say of the man who has so much to do that he could not get out of the burning house, but was burnt to ashes? What will you say of the man that had so much to do that when he was dying he had not time to send for a physician? Why, you will say then he ought not to have had so much to do. And if any man in the world has a business which causes him to lose his own soul for want of time, let him lay this question to his heart, What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

But it is falseit is falsemen *have* got time. It is the want of *will*, not want of *way*. You have time, Sir, have you not, despite all your business, to spend in pleasure? You have time to read your newspaperhave you no time to read your Bible? You have time to sing a songhave you no time to pray a prayer? Why, you know when farmer Brown met farmer Smith in the market one day, he said to him, Farmer Smith, I cant think how it is you find time for hunting. Why, man, what with sowing and mowing and reaping and plowing and all that, my time is so fully occupied on my farm, that I have no time for hunting.

Ah, said he, Brown, if you liked hunting as much as I do, if you could not find time, youd make it. And so it is with religionthe reason why men cannot find time for it is because they do not like it well enough. If they liked it, they would find time. And besides, what time does it want? What time does it require? Can I not pray to God over my ledger? Can I not snatch a text at my very breakfast and think over it all day? May I not even when I am busy in the affairs of the world, be thinking of my soul and casting myself upon a Redeemers blood and atonement? It wants no time. There may be some time requiredsome time for my private devotions and for communion with Christbut when I grow in grace, I shall think it right to have more and more time. The more I can possibly get, the happier I shall be and I shall never make the excuse that I have no time.

Well, says another, but I thought I had time enough. You do not want me, Sir, to be religious in my youth, do you? I am a lad and may I not have a little frolic and sow my wild oats as well as anybody else? Wellyes, yes. But at the same time the best place for frolic that I know of, is where a Christian lives. The finest happiness in all the world is the happiness of a child of God. You may have your pleasuresoh, yes, you shall have them doubled and trebled, if you are a Christian. You shall not have things that worldlings call pleasuresyou shall have some that are a thousand times better. But only look at that sorrowful picture. There, far away in the dark gulf of woe, lies a young man and he cries. Ah, I meant to have repented when I was out of my apprenticeship but I died before my time was up. Ah, says another by his side, and I thought, while I was a journeyman, that when I came to be a master, I would then think of the things of Christ, but I died before I had got money enough to start for myself.

And then a merchant behind wails with bitter woe and says, Ah, I thought I would be religious when I had got enough to retire on and live in the country. Then I should have time to think of God, when I had got all my children married out and my concerns settled about me. But here I am shut up in Hell and now what are all my delays worth and what is all the time I gained for all the paltry pleasures in the world? Now I have lost my soul over them. We experience great vexation if we are unpunctual in many places. But we cannot conceive what must be the horror and dismay of men who find themselves too late in the next world! Ah, Friends, if I knew there was one here who said, I shall repent next Wednesday, I would have him feel in a dreadful state till that Wednesday camefor what if he should die? Oh, what if he should die! Would his promise of a Wednesdays repentance save him from a Thursday damnation?

Ah, these are all idle excuses. Men make not such excuses when their bodily life is concerned. Would God that we were wise, that we would not make such pitiful pretences to apology when our soulour own soulis the matter at stake! If they take not warning, whatever their excuse, their blood must be upon their own head.

III. And now I come most solemnly to conclude with all the power of earnestness. The warning has been sufficient, the excuse for not attending to it has been proved profane. Then the last thought is HIS BLOOD SHALL BE ON HIS OWN HEAD. Briefly thushe shall perish. He shall perish *certainly*, he shall perish *inexcusably*. He shall *perish*. And what does that mean? There is no human mind, however spacious, that can ever guess the thought of a soul eternally cast away from God. The wrath to come is as inexpressible as the glory that shall be revealed hereafter. Our Savior labored for words with which to express the horrors of a future state to the ungodly. You remember He talked of worms that die not. Of fires that are never quenched, of a pit without a bottomof weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth in the outer darkness.

No preacher was ever so loving as Christ but no man ever spoke so horribly about Hell. And yet even when the Savior had said His best and said

His worst, He had not told us what are the horrors of a future state. You have seen sicknesses, you have heard the shrieks of men and women when their pangs have been upon them. We, at least, have stood by the bedsides even of some dear to usand we have seen to what an extent agony may be carried in the human body. But none of us know how much the body is capable of suffering. Certainly the body will have to suffer foreverHe is able to cast both body and soul into Hell. We have heard of exquisite torments, but we have never dreamt of any like unto this. Again, we have seen something of the miseries of the soul. Have we ever noticed the man that we used to know in our childhood who was depressed in spirits?

All that ever could be done for him never could evoke a smile from himnever did the light of cheerfulness light up his eyehe was mournfully depressed. Yes, and it was my unhappy lot to live with one who was not only depressed in spirits, but whose mind had gone so far amiss that it did brood fancies so mournful and dismal, that the very sight of him was enough to turn the sunlight of summer into the very darkness of a dreary winter. He had nothing to say but dark, groaning words. His thoughts always had a somber appearance about them. It was midnight in his soula darkness that might be felt. Have you ever seen yourselves what power the mind has over us to make us full of misery?

Ah, Brethren, if you could go to many of our asylums and to our sick wardsyes, and dying beds, tooyou might know what acute anguish the mind may feel. And remember that the mind, as well as the mortal frame, is to endure damnation. Yes, we must not shirk that wordthe Scripture says itand we must use it. Oh, men and women, except we repent, except we do each of *us* cry for mercy to Him that is able to save, we must perish! All that is meant by that word Hell, must be realized in me except I am a Believer. And so all that is meant by, Depart, you cursed, must be yours, unless you do turn unto God with full purpose of heart.

But again, he that turns not at the rebuke of the minister shall die and he shall die *certainly*. This is not a matter of perhaps or chance. The things we preach and that are taught in Scripture are matters of solemn certainty. It may be that death is that journey from which no traveler returns, but it is not true that we know nothing of it. It is as certain as that there are menand a world in which they livethat there is another world to come and that if they die impenitent, that world will be to them one of misery. And mark youthere is no chance of escape. Die without Christ and there is no gate out of which you can escapeforever, oh, forever lost and not one hope of mercycast away and not one outlet for escape, not one solitary chance of ransom.

Oh, if there were hope that in the world to come, men might escape, we need not be so earnest. But since once lost, lost foreveronce cast away, cast away without hope, without any prospect of a hopewe must be earnest. Oh, my God, when I remember that I have today some here present who in all probability must be dead before next Sabbath, I must be earnest! Out of so large an assembly, the chances are that we shall not all of us be found pilgrims in this world within another seven days. It is not only possible, but probable that someone out of this vast audience will have been launched upon a world unknown. Shall it be myself and shall I sail to the port of bliss or must I sail over fiery waves forever, lost, shipwrecked, stranded, on the rocks of woe? Soul, which shall it be with you? It may be you shall die, my gray-headed Hearer. Or you, young lad, you boy, you may dieI know not which nor can we tellGod only knows. Then let each one ask himselfam I prepared, should I be called to die? Yes, you may die where you are, on the benches where you are sitting you may now dieand where would you go? For recollect that where you go, you go forever.

Oh, EternityEternityEternity must I climb your topless steeps forever and never reach the summit and must my path be ever misery or joy? Oh, Eternity, you depth without a bottom, you sea without a shore, must I sail over your boundless waves forever in one undeviating trackand must I either plow through seas of bliss, or else be driven by the stormy wind of vengeance, over gulfs of misery? Then what am I? My soul awake and an impartial survey take. Am I prepared? Am I prepared? Am I prepared? For prepared or not, death admits of no delayand if he is at my door, he will take me where I must go foreverprepared or not.

Now, the last thing is *the sinner will perish*he will perish certainly, but last of all, he will perish *without excuse*his blood shall be on his own head. When a man is bankrupt, if he can say, It is not through reckless tradingit has been entirely through the dishonesty of one I trusted that I am what I am, he takes some consolation and he says, I cannot help it. But oh, my Hearers, if you make bankrupts of your own souls after you have been warned, then your own eternal bankruptcy shall lie at your own door. Should ever so great a misfortune come upon us, if we can trace it to the Providence of God, we bear it cheerfully. But if we have inflicted it upon ourselves, then how fearful it is!

And let every man remember that if he perishes after having heard the Gospel, he will be his own murderer. Sinner, you will drive the dagger into your heart yourself. If you despise the Gospel you are preparing fuel for your own bed of flamesyou are hammering out the chain for your own everlasting binding. And when damned, your mournful reflection will be this I have damned myself, I cast myself into this pit. For I rejected the Gospel, I despised the message. I trod under foot the Son of Man. I would have none of His rebukes. I despised His Sabbaths. I would not hearken to His exhortationsand now I perish by my own handthe miserable suicide of my own soul.

And now a sweet reflection strikes me. A good writer says, There are, doubtless, spots in the world that would be barren forever if we recollected what had happened there. Says he, I was once in St. Pauls cathedral, just under the dome, and a friend just touched me gently and said, Do you see that little chisel mark? and I said Yes. He said, That is where a man threw himself down and there he fell and was dashed to atoms. The writer says, We all started aside from that little spot, where a fellow creatures blood had been shed. It seemed an awful place when we remembered that. Now, there is many a street, there is many a wayside, there is many a house of God, where men have taken the last decision and damned their own souls. I doubt not, there are some here this morning, standing or sitting, to whom the voice of conscience says, Decide for God, and now Satan and the evil heart together are saying, Reject the message. Laugh it off, forget it. Take a ticket for the theater tomorrow. Do not let this man alarm usit is his very profession to talk to us like this. Let us go away and laugh if off. And let us spend the rest of this day in merriment.

Yes, that is the last warning you will ever have. It is so with some of you. There are some of you that will this hour decide to damn yourselves and you will look forever throughout eternity to that place under the gallery of the Surrey Music Hall. And you will say, Alas, woe was the day I heard that man. I was half impressedalmost he persuaded me to be a Christian, but I decided for Hell. And that will be a solemn spot to angels where you are standing, or where you are sitting, for angels will say to one another, Stand aside, that is a spot where a man ruined his own soul forever and ever.

But the sweet thought is, that there are some places just the reverse. Why, you are sitting, my Friend, this morning, on a spot where some three weeks ago one sat who was converted to God! And that place where you are sitting you ought to veneratefor in that place there sat one who was one of the chief of sinners, like yourself, and there the Gospel message met him. And far back there behind the door many a soul has been brought to Christ. Many a piece of good news have I heard from some in yonder upper gallery. I could not see your face, Sir, all the sermon through, but the arrow of the Lord found its way round the corner and reached my heart notwithstanding that, and I was saved. Ah, well, may God so bless this place that every seat of it this day may be solemnized by His own grace and a spot to be remembered in your future history by reason of the beginning of your blessedness, the dawn of your salvation.

Believe on the Lord Jesus and be baptized, and you shall be saved. This is the Gospel we are told to preach to every creaturehe that believes, and is *immersed*, shall be saved. He that believes not shall be damned.

Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #3324 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

TURNING FROM DEATH
NO. 3324

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1912.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS DAY EVENING, JULY, 22, 1866.
Turn you, turn you from your evil ways;
for why will you die, O house of Israel?
Ezekiel 33:11.

IT is a token of the great mercy of God that He is very earnest in His pleading with men to turn from their sins that He may not be compelled to punish them, as He must do if they go on in their iniquities. A cruel governor is glad of an opportunity to show his severity and, therefore, not especially anxious to prevent offenses. But a kind, tender-hearted monarch He must be who leaves His Throne and comes down among the rebels and, with tears in His eyes, cries to them, Oh, do not this wicked thing that I hate! Offend not against Me! Do not compel Me to take the sword out of its scabbard! Do not force Me to say that I will have no mercy upon you, but turn you, turn you from those evil courses which will certainly bring you mischief! Sinner, God speaks to you tonight out of His Infinite Mercy. He has no pleasure in your death! It will give Him no satisfaction to cast you into Hell! He has taken an oath concerning it. As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, and to prove the sincerity of the oath, He cries, Turn you, turn you from your evil ways: for why will you die, O house of Israel? If you are not spared, but perish, it will not be because God is not merciful to you but because you are not merciful to yourselves!

The text as it stands is a very earnest exhortation from God. It is directed, I doubt not, to all sorts of sinful men. And it is directed to such in all sincerity and honesty, for albeit we believe without reserve in the Doctrines of Sovereign Grace, we do not for a moment desire to lessen the force or explain away the reality of so earnest an appeal as this! We can preach from such a text with all sincerity and intensityindeed, as much as if we did not believe in any Election of Grace!

We would seek to give to all and every Scripture, the genuine meaning which it contains. But, dear Friends, solemnly penetrating and heartsearching as His exhortation is, and given as it is by God, Himself, if a man rejects it, he thereby adds to his sin. God calls to the sinner to turn, but turn he never will unless there is something more than the call! By the public ministry, by sickness, by the Bible, by conscienceyes, and by the common and universal operations of the Holy Spirit, God calls to menTurn you, turn you, why will you die? But they seem determined to die and, therefore, they go over hedge and ditch to destructionand this against all the warnings and rebukes of the Most High!

So they will continue in their sins and aggravate them by the rejection of the very exhortation which was meant to deliver them from themand so make themselves yet more guilty before God by turning against His Word which was meant to have a blessing in it for them. I do not intend, therefore, being the means of adding to your guilt tonight. When I took the text, I felt as if I dared not preach from it. It shook me, though it may not shake you. As I read it, and read it, and read it again, I thought, if I deliver it as I find it there, I shall very likely only have to come back and say, Who has believed our report? And the most of my Hearers who are unconverted will only go away and say, What care we for those alarming words? So I remembered that when the Holy Spirit comes effectually to work upon the souls of men He uses the very same means and instruments which in our hands seem powerless. If I say to you, Turn you, turn you, for why will you die? you will take no notice of it. But if the Holy Spirit shall come and say this to you, then you shall certainly be obedient to it, for He has the key of the heart and He knows how, without violating the free agency of man, to make man willing in the day of His power! So that when He says, Turn you, turn you, they do turn, and when He says, Why will you die? they begin to reason with themselves and they see it is an ill thing that they should perish and, therefore, they turn to God!

Now, I will earnestly hope and pray that God the Holy Spirit will use these words upon some heart. And I intend to preach upon them, not as they stand in the Book, but as they will then stand in your hearts! Let me try, if I can, to picture what will take place in the mans heart in whom God the Holy Spirit shall say by His effectual Grace, Turn you, turn you, for why will you die, O house of Israel? I shall try, therefore, to give an outline sketch of the spiritual experience which will be known in the human breast in which the Holy Spirit is now pressing home this solemn question.

There will be three things therefirst *the fears will be awakened.* That word, die, will come like the point of a dagger to slay the souls false peace. In the second place, *the heart will be affected.* Turn you, turn you, will cause the heart to turn away from its former lusts and turn towards God. And then, in the third place, *the understanding will be set vigorously working*, for the question, For why will you die? if pressed home by Divine Power, will turn reason into *right* reasoningthe man will begin to consider his ways and to ask himself seriously, why he should throw away his soulwhy he should lose his most precious possession for which nothing can ever be given in exchange, or at its purchase price.

Solemnly then, as before the Lord, let us deal in turn with these three things. If, my dear Hearer, it should be your happy lot to have this question brought home to your inmost soul by the power of Gods Holy Spirit you will tonight

I. HAVE YOUR FEARS AWAKENED.

This is how it will operate. You will begin to say within yourself, This

text tells me that I must either turn or die. I must change my present state, habits and waysand I must turn with full purpose of heart in another direction or else I shall diea deserved sentence, a capital sentence is passed against me. Not that I shall be imprisoned, not that I shall be transported for such-and-such a time, but that I shall die! The most terrible sentence of the Law of God, it seems, will come upon me unless I turn. Oh, heart, look that in the face! Oh, you fears, endeavor to awaken yourselves and on those dull and leaden eyes to see what it is to die!

First, my Hearer, if this test should come home to you, you will say, *Why, I am not ready to die in the common sense of that term.* If you were called to die tonight, my Hearer, your house is not in order. You could not go home to your bed with anything like joy if you knew that you were about to lie down upon it, never to rise from it again! I recollect when the cholera was here the last time that I was going to a house on Blackfriarsroad where a man had just put up a bedstead. He had moved only that very morning from another district which was unhealthy. He had only just put up the bed, and he lay there, fast dying, and I knelt by his bedside. Now, suppose that were to be your case?

Should swift death this night overtake you, And your bed become your tomb
Would the morn in Heaven awake you
Clad in light and deathless bloom?

Can you hope so? Ah, there are many of you who have no such hope! The thought of death is very unpleasant to you just now! That hot blood does not like to think of the chill cold handand those happy eyes do not welcome the thought of the bleak pall, the cold vault and the sad refrain Dust to dust, ashes to ashes. So then, my Soul, if you are afraid even to die, which is but the beginning of sorrows, do let yourself be affected with that awful fact that there is another death far more terrible than this first death, and a doom more fearful by far! Do let these thoughts come home to you, my Heareryou must either turn or dieand in that death of the soul, there is an emphasis of unutterable woe!

Then, again, if I am not prepared to die and this text is brought home to me with power by the Holy Spirit, I shall see that I am still less *prepared to take my last trial before the great Judge.*

It is certain that when my soul leaves my body, it will not die, but will be summoned into the august Presence of the Great King and then, during the time that will elapse between death and resurrection, your soul and mine, if they are guilty, will begin to suffer under an apprehension of the wrath which is yet to come! Am I prepared to face God as a disembodied spirit? May we not well start at the thought? May not even the true Christian feel it to be no childs play to think of his spirit coming before the bar of God? But much more the man who is without God and without hope!

Oh, Soul, what will you do when this poor flesh is left behind and you must pass that solemn test? But before long, how soon we cannot tell, the body which has been moldering in this grave shall rise again! The trumpet of the archangel, shrill and loud, shall be heard over hill and dale. Ten thousand times ten thousand angels shall descend and in the midst of them shall come the cloud, the Great White Cloud, and on the cloud shall be the Throne, and on the Throne, the Son of Man who once was crucifiedno longer with His hands pierced with nails, but grasping the scepter of all worlds! No longer despised and rejected of men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, but now

With rainbow wreath and robes of storm, On cherub wings and wings of wind,
Appointed Judge of all mankind!

If the heart is properly affected by this text it, will say, I am not ready to meet Him! I am not ready to be in that great assembly! I am not ready to hear the cryCome to judgment! Come to judgment! Come away! I am not ready be to put into the scales! I am not prepared to be brought up before those eyes of fire! I am not ready to have my secrets read before assembled men and angels! I am not ready to hear the Judge say, Depart you cursed! Well, but if the mere dying, which is only the leaving of this world. If the mere coming before the bar of God, if ultimate coming before Him at the Last Great Day is terrible**.** Oh, if the text should come home with power, my dear Hearer, and I pray God it may!you will recollect that all this is not dyingit is only being tried and sentenced, but it is not the execution! Oh, if judgment is so terrible, what must *execution* be? If merely to be brought up and committed for trial is terrible, what will it be to be taken out to the Mount of Doom? If we are afraid of the Judge, how much more of His sentence being carried out! Why, before condemned souls hear their retribution fixed, you hear them crying, Rocks, hide us, mountains fall upon us! Christ has not smitten them He has only *looked* at thembut its condemnation of them for the rejection of His saving mercy makes them appeal to the flinty rocks to yield them a shelter, for they cannot find a place of refuge! I say again, if the Judgment is so awe-inspiring, what will the execution of that judgment be? Guilty Soul! Where will you fly or hide, then? Shall my soul ever be there? If God the Holy Spirit applies this text of mine with power, we shall ask ourselves, How can I bear to die the second death? What is that second death? Surely it means thisthat just as the first death takes away man from all *earthly* sources of life and joy, so the second death separates from all sources of spiritual peace and pardon, Grace and salvation!

No more your feasts, the dance, and the sound of the violin! No more the jest or song of ribaldry. You die and all these are over! But the greater death means no more the house of God, the opportunity to pray, to repent, to believe, to receive Gods free and full salvation! It means

that second deaththe anguish more than these lips could dare to speak even if this mind knew! Oh, the anguish of a soul that is withered beneath the curse of God! Oh, the anguish of a spirit that is banished forever from the Presence of the Mast High!

To linger in eternal death,

Yet death forever fly!

Here comes the worst of it, that this death is forever! What says the Scripture? Eternal destruction from the Presence of the Lordnot a moment, and then it is all overbut eternal destruction. The Scripture has put the two side by side, These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous unto life eternal. The same word applies to both. As long as Heaven shall shine so long Hell shall burn! As long as saints are happy, so long shall those whose impenitence has made them castaways be wretched!

How I recall the time when this Truth of God came home to my heart with power! And I can only say of it, that I bless God I ever felt it! I think I would never have hated sin. I would never have fled to Christ if I had not been shown the flower that springs out of the seed of sin. Sinner, do not turn your head away and be angry! If you love sin, look at the child of this ill mother! Sinner, you love sin, that is but the seedcome and see the flower that springs out of it! No, Man, look at your own work! Sin is the spark and this is the flame. If you would escape Hell, escape sin! If you are afraid of Hell, O Sinner, be as afraid of sin! May the Lord drive this home! I know I cannot. It is a topic so distasteful that it is not likely that the mind will linger on it. I know you will try to shake it off and dismiss it. Die, you say, what is there in that? Or what care we about it? But I tell you in deepest love, that if the Holy Spirit presses home the question of my text, there will be no sleep for you until you have found the Savior! There will be no rest in you until you find it in Jesus Christ! You will then begin to cry out, God be merciful to me, a sinner. Help me to flee from the wrath to come, enable me to hide in the Rock of Ages cleft for me.

Thus I have strived to make plain to you the first point. The souls fears are awakened when it sees that it must either turn or die, must look these two things in the face, I must give up my sin, or I must be cast away eternally.

The second truth of the text is thisthat where this solemn question is pressed home by the Holy Spirit

II. YOUR HEART WILL BE MOVED.

Turn you, turn you, says the text, twice over. It is earnest, emphatic, importunate. Turn you, turn you. It looks as if it had been wetted with tears, or as if a sigh and a groan were in the very sound of it. Turn you, turn you. It seems to have the plaintive love of a mother about it and yet the majesty and authority of a Divine command, Turn you, turn you. Now, if this shall be brought home to you by God the Holy Spirit, you will begin to say, Then *I must turn from all my evil practices*. I must be done forever with my drinking and my cursing if I have been guilty of these. I must now be done with Sabbath-breaking, with coarse and evil talk. I must be done with all these sins and lusts of the flesh! Turn you, turn you. But, more than this, you will say, I must have done with my evil thoughtslet the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts. I must have done with proud thoughts. Lying thoughts. Vain thoughts. Murmuring thoughts. God calls me to turn from them all! I must have done with skeptical notions. I must have done with boastful utterances. I must have done with everything that is contrary to the pure mind of God. But that is not all. The text says, Turn you, turn you. It means that I must turn altogether *from my natural enmity to God.* I must love Him whom I hated! The very things at which I have laughed, I must now reverence. It must by such a complete turning round that the things I despised I must love, and the things I loved I must hate. I hear God saying concerning all my darling pleasures, Turn you, turn you! It will make me change my companions. It will change my way of talking. It will make a new man of me altogether if this text comes with force to me, Turn you, turn you.

But I think I hear you say, Oh, *but this is too hard a task*, if to turn is to be so thorough as this! If it were merely a turning from drunkenness to abstinence, or a turning from open vice to morality, I could manage it. Ah, that you might, and a very good thing it might be, my Hearer, but it would not save you! The turning that is needed is more than this. Except you are converted and be as little children you shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. You must be born-again. Well, says one, then I am bid do a task that is impossible! Yes, that is truemost true. The exhortation that comes to you is meant to teach you something of your powerlessness. Turn you, turn you. You can turn from your outward sins, from many evil ways, but if ever you are to be turned from wicked thoughts and evil nature, it will be by something more than your own strengthyou will need to look to a stronger arm and a mightier power than a merely mortal one! Listen to me, then, for I think this word will drop like the balm of Gilead, or the honey from the honeycomb. Turn you, turn you to Christ, for He can do for you what you could never do for yourself! You cannot resist your sins in your own power. And you cannot change your sinful nature and renew it in purity and holiness! But there is One who can do it for you!

I think I see your history. You are like the vessel that is in the stream. It is a mighty streamso strong, so swift, that no vessel ever came within its tremendous force and escaped there from. The vessel is floating on and the passengers on board are frivolous and happy. They are wondering where the wind came from that makes them sail softly and so swiftly. They dance upon the deck, they drink, they laugh, they sport the happy hours away. They know not that the maelstrom is but a little way aheadthat there is an awful whirlpool that will suck in the vessel and all its passengers and crewand take them down to sure destruction! As the vessel sails gaily along there is heard a Voice above the wind, Turn you, turn you, and the captain looks about and wonders from where it came. Turn you, turn you, comes the cry again, and the passengers go to the helm. A mysterious impulse comes over them all and then, as they look beyond they can see the gulf, they can see the maelstrom, they can see the dangerand now they are all ready to obey the Voice that sounds mysteriously in the air! They rush to the helm, butO God! O Godit is gone! There is no power to turn it and the vessel is drifting on! She goes more swiftly than ever! She flies upon the stream. Turn you, turn you! the Voice still sounds, but every passenger is crying, We are mocked! It must be a demon voice that mocks us, for how can we turn? The helm is gone! In same unguarded hour of ribaldry we unshipped the helm and lost it, and now we cannot turn!

Just then there is seen descending from the skies a bright Spirit. They know Him by the pierced hands and feet, and He comes upon the deck. They cast themselves down before Him, and cry, Help us! Help us! and with a touch he refits the helm and turns the vessel around and, against the stream, with many a struggle, she begins to make her way, while a heavenly breeze comes and fans the sail and the vessel is safe! Thank God, she is safe, with all on board! Now, that is your case tonight, my dear Hearer! You have got into the stream of sin and your habits have got too strong for you. If it were for you, and for you only, to turn the vessel around, I would despair, but while the Voice sounds, Turn you, turn you! oh, lift up your eyes to Heaven and say, Master, Jesus, turn us and we shall be turned! Come into our hearts! We trust You, You bleeding One! Your hand was once outstretched to be wounded and made to bleed for sinstretch it out now to save us from sin, and turn our boat, and make her sail by Your good Spirit in the way of righteousness.

Now this cry, Turn you, turn you, will be of no use, then, it seems, unless it is attended with the Divine Power, but when it is, what a great blessing it is! Alas, there are many who hear us who will not turn for all that, but they that are wise will obey the command. My friend, Sir John Burgoyne, once told me that in the Peninsular War he and some other officers were enteringI think it was the town of Salamanca, which stood upon the side of a hill in such a way that a church which was built on the slope would have its roof level with the earth higher up the hill. He went, not knowing anything of danger, in at the door of the churchand there were Frenchmen with guns on the roof to defend the place. He said he could not forget how the courtesies of those brave men, anxious not to shoot officers who were more civil than military, made them to call out Retire, retire, and how he did retire fast enough and was not anxious to tempt a gun when entreated to retire! Now something like that appears to me to be the position of the ungodly man. He goes where he should not be. He trespasses, but a Voice from above which might have been silentand there might have been a deadly cannonade of Divine Resentmentcalls out, Retire, retire, tempt Me no longer, Sinner! Provoke Me no more! My anger has long been held in! I have restrained Myself! I have sent My Son to you! I have bid you trust Him and love Him! I have called unto you by My servants. I have bid you, repent, but you have not repentedare you still My enemy? You are going on in your sins, but I charge you once again, by My eternal mercy, turn, turn, turn, for why will you die? This, then, seems to me to be what the text will do in the heart if God the Holy Spirit sends it home.

And so we shall close with the third point. Should the text be made by God the Holy Spirit to be as an arrow fixed in the heart

III. IT WILL MAKE AN APPEAL TO THE UNDERSTANDING.

The understanding, being thus appealed to, will begin to ask questions like thisWhy should I die? I know that this death is terrible, indeed. Why should I have to suffer it? What reason is there why I should be subject to it? And, my dear Hearer, if God the Holy Spirit awakens you, you will not be able to give a good answer to that! On the contrary, you will begin, one by one, driving out as foolish all the answers you used to give. You will say, Oh, I used to say, Let well enough alone. What is to be will be. I used to be quite indifferent to it, but I cannot be indifferent now. Indifferent when I am in danger of death? Indifferent when I may, within the next few minutes, know all that is to be known of eternal things? Careless where eternity is concerned? No, my God, my madness is now over! Behold, I turn to You! I cannot thus answer the question.

Once, too, the sinner could say, I hated to be troubled. I said do not bother me with any of your religion! Keep it away. But now, I wish to be troubledthe more troubled I can be, the better, so that I may not be troubled at the last. Once I liked a fashionable preacher who spoke in fine and gaudy words, but who never seemed to insinuate that he had a sinner in his congregation or that there was perdition for the ungodly but now let me know the worst of my state. Let me be dealt with honestly and faithfully, and if I am in great danger, God grant that I may know it, so that I may escape from it. The more a man can cut open my heart and send the arrow direct into my conscience, the better! I am only afraid lest mortification should set in and that I may die before I can be awakened and healed and saved.

Moreover, if God the Holy spirit has awakened you, you will *have given up all your other excuses.* Once you said, I cannot give up my pleasures. Now you say, I cannot afford to sell my soul for an hour or two of merry effervescence! I cannot give reality for shams. I have tried the worlds pleasures and all I can say is, there is nothing in them that is real and satisfying! I am sick and weary of them

I cannot sell my soul so cheap,

Nor part with Heaven for you.

Once you used to say, I cannot turn. I could not face my old companions. I could not bear to hear that man that I shall meet tomorrow say, Ah, so you have become religious, have you? Now, says the conscience, I could meet the very devil! I feel as if I would be afraid of no man if I might but be saved. They may laugh who will, but they will not laugh you to destruction if the Holy Spirit should really send home the text! Mark you, I am only speaking on that supposition, and then the soul will say, Afraid of man? No, I am too much afraid of God! Afraid of being laughed at? No, I am too much afraid of hearing the Voice, Depart you cursed. I may well bear the laughter of men so that I may escape the wrath of God!

You used to say, Time enough yet, but if this text comes home, you will not say that. You will feel as if every moment were important and as if every tick of the clock might be your last. You will be asking that you may hide in Jesus, and that you may hide there at once! You used to say, Pshaw! Religious people are all hypocrites! But you will not say that now, or if you do, you will say, That is no reason why I should not be sincere. If every minister should be a canting pretender and every professor should be a hypocrite, what will that matter to me? Must not I escape *personally* from the wrath to come? Their being condemned, as they justly must be if they are hypocrites, will not make my doom any more light and, therefore, I will not hide behind an accusing of others, but I will accuse myself.

I do not know how it is, dear Friends. I did want to bring home this text to the heart, but I am conscious now, more than ever, that it is not for *me* to bring it home, but for the Master to do it. I can say, Turn you, turn you, but He can turn you! I can tell you of this death, but He can enable you to feel its terrible power. I can tell you of the love and mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ, but He can make you to pant and thirst after them! And remember, if you want them, you may have them! If you desire Christ, you may have Him! If there is a sinner here that would to saved, let him flee to Jesus! Let him, sitting where he is, look to Christ with his souls eyes as He hangs upon the Cross. Rest your soul upon Him, Sinner! Black as it is, trust Him to cleanse it. Though you are altogether ruined and undone, if you can believe, all things are possible to him that believes! Never did a soul rest on Christ and find Him fail him. Come to Him! Come to Him! The doors of His heart are opened! He is waiting to receive you! You need not wait until you are preparedcome as you are! Come in your loathsomeness if such is your state. Come in spiritual ruin and depravity if such is your condition. Come now! Come now! Why will you die? Mercy provides the means of life. Christ died. Why will you die? Christ lives, why should not you live?

I remember a powerful preacher once finishing a sermon which God had helped him to deliver with extraordinary force, by turning to his congregation and asking, Why will you die? Then he paused and continued, What reason have you? What motive, what argument, what apologies, what excuses? *Why* will you die? Then he stopped a moment, and said, Why *will* you die? Why *will* you? Why this desperate resolve? Why this firmness? You vacillate elsewherewhy be so obstinate here? Why will you? Why is your heart set fast like iron? You can bend like a willow towards the wrongwhy are you firm as granite against the right? Why *will* you die? Then looking round his congregation, and picking out certain members of it, he said, Why will *you* die? You gray-heads who have had such an experience of the vanity of the world, why will *you* die? You young people to whom there is such happiness offered, why will you *die*? You chief of sinners, whose doom will be so terrible, why will you die? You moralists, you amiable ones, you who seem to have some desire towards God, why will you die? So he put it to each one. And then he came to the last, Why will you die? Why will you be driven from Gods Presence? Why will you receive His curse? Why will you make your bed in Hell? Why will you dwell with the devouring fire? Why will you abide in everlasting banishment from God? Why will you die? Do you see anything so tempting in the face of doom? Is there anything so sweet in that grim Lake of Fire? Why will you die?

Oh, may the force of this exhortation come home to youTurn you, turn you from your evil ways, for why will you die, house of Israel? May the Lord put His arm to this work and then great good shall be done and His shall be the Glory! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: ***JEREMIAH 3:12-25.***

Verse 12-14. *Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, backsliding Israel, says the LORD; and I will not cause My anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, says the LORD, and I will not stay angry forever. Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the LORD your God, and have scattered your ways to the strangers under every green tree, and you have not obeyed My voice, says the LORD. Turn, O backsliding children, says the LORD; for I am married unto you.* There is a mixed figure here, but there is no mixed sensechildren and yet married unto Him. The bond was a double onethey were begotten and betrothed. God cares little about the rules of human oratory and formal eloquence. If His meaning can only be made perfectly plain, He freely breaks through all such rules and regulations as we properly make for our talk. O backsliding children I am married unto you.

14. *And I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion.* That is, two of a tribe, for the word, family, was used in a very large sense in those times and comprehended perhaps the whole of one of the twelve tribes.

15. *And I will give you pastors according to My heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.* The backsliders, when they come back, shall not be left outside the fold, but they shall have shepherds to watch over them. And they shall not be left to a lean pasture, but they shall be fed with knowledge and understanding. This is fine fare for the hungry soul! Knowledge is good, but understanding is better. To know may be of little service unless we have the inner and deeper knowledge with it and understand what we know. These pastors shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. They shall not only teach, but teach so that you cannot fail to learn!

16. *And it shall come to pass, when you are multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, says the LORD, they shall say no more. The Ark of the Covenant of the LORD; neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more.* Ceremonial retreats into the dim background when the spiritual is in full vigor! They have come to God for themselves and they now need not that sacred Ark of gopher wood lined within and without with gold. In the present day those that walk near to God think but little of the eternal. That which God commands they obey, but their confidence lies in Him. True religion is not a form, but a lifeand the soul living near to God is the main, the really essential thing.

17. *At that time they shall call Jerusalem the Throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.* This is, I believe, yet to be literally fulfilled in Jerusalem, itself, and also spiritually to be fulfilled in the Church, when she shall not be behind the nations but become their head and take the lead in all of blessing for mankind!

18, 19. *In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your father. But I said, How shall I put you among the children?* As if God, Himself, were at a pass and brought to a nonplus! These people had sinned so much and had been driven, consequently, to the ends of the earth. I said, How shall I put you among the children?

19. *And give you a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations and I said, You shall call Me, My Father.* When God gives us the spirit of children, then it becomes easy for Him to put us among the children! Where the nature of children is given by Divine Regeneration, the rights of children may well be given by adoption! I said, You shall call Me, My Father.

19. *And shall not turn away from Me.* I always look upon that second part of the blessing as being perhaps the richer of the two! The final perseverance of the saints forms the cluster of crown jewels that is found in the casket of the Covenant. You shall not depart from Me. You shall not turn away from Me. Oh

If ever it should come to pass
That sheep of Christ could fall away
My fickle, feeble soul, alas,
Would fall ten thousand times a day!

But He that has begun the good work has promised to carry it on. There is our safety and our rest! You shall call Me, My Father, and shall not turn away from Me.

20-21. *Surely as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, so have you dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel, says the LORD. A voice was heard upon the high place, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel: for they have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the LORD their God.* The worst of crimesthat a wife should be false to her marriage vows and turn aside from her husband whom she is bound to love! And very seldom is it that a husband calls a treacherous wife back againbut God, in infinite mercy, hates putting away. He cannot bear divorce. He still holds to the object of His love and, therefore, complains with a sweet fidelity of affection, of the treachery of Israel. And while He is doing it, a voice is heard upon the high places, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel, for they have perverted their way and have forgotten Jehovah their Godand, therefore, what was there for them but sorrow? They were on their high places offering sacrifice and incense to their new gods! And instead of joy and holy Psalms and hymns of delight, they were crying like the priests of Baal and cutting themselves and torturing themselves! God heard itweeping and supplicationsbut not to Him, for they had perverted their way. Their sorrow did not come from Him, for they had forgotten the Lord their God. But that sorrow had something hopeful about it. They found no joy in their new gods and derived no comfort from their backslidings.

22. *Return, you backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.* Oh, the wonderful mercy of God! He treats sin as a disease. It was a grand thought, that, on Gods part, that He would not so much look upon sin as being a willful deed and crime, but would look upon it as a malady of the mind and soul. I will *heal* your backslidings. And see the sweet answer that Israel gives to this

22. *Behold, we come unto You, for You are the LORD our God.* Oh, that that answer might come from every backsliding heart that is here tonightthat there might be a restoration of the wanderer to his God!

23. *Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains.* See, they were trying to get it from their high places! They lifted up their voices to their gods, but they only learned to mourn and weep. In vain is salvation hoped for from the hills and from the multitude of mountains.

23-25. *Truly in the LORD our God is the salvation of Israel. For shame has devoured the labor of our fathers from our youth; their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters. We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covers us: for we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God.* May such repentance as that fall to the lot of any wanderers who listen now to my words!

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.**

GODS HAND AT EVENING
NO. 3290

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1912.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 15, 1866.
Now the hand of the Lord was upon me in the evening. Ezekiel 33:22.

PERHAPS in the special senses in which Ezekiel uses this expression, we shall not expect to feel the hand of the Lord upon us. God may not call us to prophesy as Ezekiel did, although in the Scriptural use of the word, prophesy, the preacher of the Word is still called to deliver the message which he has received from his Lords lips. The days of special visions and voices and prophesying have passed away, but we can still say with Peter, We have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto you do well that you take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the day star arise in your hearts.

I think, however, that we may use our text with some profit in other sensesThe hand of the Lord was upon me in the evening. So we will enquire, first, *what hand was this?* Secondly, *what time was this?* And then, thirdly, *what teaching is there for us in this incident?*

I. So first, let us ask, WHAT HAND WAS THIS? The answer is very clearly stated in the text, the hand of the Lord. We will examine this expression, first, in its connection with the Lords people, and then in its relation to sinners in whom a gracious work is beginning.

First, then, *looking at this expression in its connection with the Lords people,* I remark that sometimes, the hand of the Lord is laid very heavily upon them in chastisement. It is no unusual thing for a child of God to say, The hand of the Lord was upon meand often he has not merely to add, in the eveningbut he can truthfully say, All day long His hand has been heavily laid upon me. There are some of Gods children who are very frequently the subjects of His chastening, and if any of you have come here smarting under the blows of His rod, you must not murmur, for this is the treatment that is meted out to all the rest of the Lords family. It is through much tribulation that they enter the Kingdom, so let not any one of us take up the lamentation of Jeremiah, I am the man that has seen affliction by the rod of His wrathbut let us all expect to follow in the footsteps of the flock, well knowing that

The path of sorrow, and that path, alone, Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.

Be not astonished, therefore, if the hand of the Lord is laid upon you, thus, for, if you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chastens not? Yet while you feel the weight of Gods hand upon you, never forget that it is your *Fathers* hand. Whatever form your trial may takewhether it is the loss of a child or of a parent, or the withdrawal of temporal prosperity, or the smiting of the body with aches and painsthe rod is never in any hand but the paternal one and even while the Father smites, He loves. Let this be your comfort, that it is not the hand of an enemy that is upon youyou are not suffering from a crushing blow from the foemans mailed hand, but the stroke, whether it is heavy or light, is wholly caused by your loving Fathers hand!

The hand of the Lord is also a humbling hand. When God lays His afflicting hand upon us, He takes away much of our fancied beauty and lets us see the ugliness of our natural deformity. We thought we were very patient until we had need of patienceand then we found what a murmuring, discontented spirit we had within us! Perhaps you, my Brother, thought you were a strong Believer until your present trial came. But now you have proved how feeble your faith really is. You imagined that you were better than the rest of Gods saints because you could sing when they could only groan. But now you have hard work to keep from groaning yourself! It is a blessed thing when the blows of Gods rod lay us low at our Fathers feet. The safest option for all children of God is to lie flat upon the Rock of Ages. With all the joy and confidence that I trust we feel when we reflect upon our Lords promises and His solemn oath and Covenant, yet when we think of our own imperfections and unfaithfulness, we are compelled to bow very humbly before the Throne of Grace.

Turning to another side of the subject, let me say that there is no reason why the hand of the Lord should not be upon us without our having any particular trouble. When we have come up to Gods House to worship Him, I trust that we have often felt the hand of the Lord upon us, pressing us down very low in a sense of our own weakness and unworthiness. There are other things beside affliction that can humble us beneath the mighty hand of God! When Peters boat began to sink because it was full of fish, Peter, too, went down and he cried to Jesus, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. When we think of all the Lords goodness to us, we cry out, somewhat as David did, Who are we, O Lord, and what is our house, that You have done such great things for us? If we have the hand of the Lord upon us in this sense, it will not crush us, nor drive us to despondency or deathit will make us realize our own nothingness while it will also give us a grateful sense of our Lords loving kindness and condescension in dealing so graciously with us!

Yet this humbling hand of the Lord is also at the same time an uplifting hand. The Christian is often a riddle to himselfhe cannot understand how it is that the lower he sinks, the higher he rises! Then he sings, with Dr. Watts

The more Your glories strike my eyes,
The humbler I shall lie.
Thus, while I sink, my joys shall rise
Immeasurably high!

The truest joy is the joy of the creature in being made nothing that God may be All-in-Allthe joy of emptiness in receiving of the Divine fullnessthe joy of utter weakness laying hold upon the Divine strength! Have you never, dear Friends, in the worship of God, felt His hand gloriously bearing you aloft that not merely were worldly cares forgotten, with all the things that concern time and sense, but you seemed to forget that you were still in the body and that the body was upon the earth? There have been times with some of us when the hand of the Lord has been so blessedly upon us that He has seemed to open the pearly gates and bid us enter! We have stood awe-stricken and yet full of joy in the Presence of the Eternal, and we have worshipped Him with cherubim and seraphimand have anticipated the day when we shall join the heavenly throng to go no more out forever! The hand of the Lord when it is upon us thus is so uplifting that we feel as though the joys of our spirit are more than our bodily frame can bearand we cry with the spouseStay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am love-sick. May we often feel this downcasting and yet uplifting power of the hand of the Lord upon us!

Further, the hand of the Lord is a healing hand as well as a smiting and wounding one. Whenever it is laid upon a poor troubled conscience, it brings peace at once. There is no furrow in the brow which Gods finger cannot smooth away. There is no burden upon the shoulders which Gods hand cannot remove. Perhaps your heart was so heavy that you thought you would never be able to rejoice againyet the Lord did but touch you and your depression was gone in a moment! There is an old fiction about the touch of a royal hand curing disease, but the royal hand of the King of kings really does what the other was only fabled to do! Let Him but touch the suffering soul and healing comes at once. It is useless for us to go to war with our besetting sins at our own chargebut when the Lord stretches forth His hand against them, it is another matter! Beloved friends may sometimes seek to set us right, yet through their lack of wisdom they may only aggravate the evil. But when God lays His hand upon the sin, drags it to the light, tries and convicts itand hangs it up to diethen are we most blessedly delivered from it. If our besetting sin is a fiery temper, or a slothful nature, or a strange temptation to some other evil, may the hand of the Lord be so graciously upon us this evening that it shall heal us even before we go to our homes!

The Lords hand is also a strengthening hand to all His children. Let Him but lay His hand upon you and then, as your days, so shall your strength be. Isaiah trembled when he saw the King, the Lord of Hosts, but one of the seraphim touched his lips with a live coal from the Altar, and then, in answer to the Lords question, Whom, shall I send, and who will go for Us? he said, Here am I; send me. So surely, when God touches the lips with His finger, power goes into the messenger whom He sends forth on His mission of mercy! Moses was very hesitant to go as Gods ambassador to Pharaohand among his many excuses he urged that he was slow of speech, and of a slow tonguebut the Lord said to him, Who has made mans mouth?as much as to say, He who made your mouth knew what He was doing and He did not make a mistake when He gave you a slow tongue! Go you in *His* strength and you shall be mighty enough to deliver His people out of the land of Egypt. God worked through the weakness of Moses and so glorified Himself over the mighty Pharaoh. And so shall it be with us, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ, ministers, Sunday school teachers, tract-distributor, or whatever you may beif the hand of the Lord shall be upon us, God shall be glorified in our weakness and we shall be mighty through Him, to the pulling down of strongholds. Tarry in the Jerusalem of your prayer closet until you are endued with power from on High, for, they that wait upon the Lord shall remember their strengthand then in *His* name and in *His* might go forth to the service to which He has called you.

I may also add that, to many of you, the hand of the Lord is a wellknown hand. You have been receiving from it all your days. You have gone to it thousands of times so that it has become very familiar to you. And there is one mark in that hand which has made it especially dear to you, for, the hand of the Lord from which you receive everything is a nail-pierced hand, for it is the hand of the Man, Christ Jesus, as well as the hand of the Almighty God! And hard by the print of the nail is your own name, for He has said to you, I have engraved you upon the palms of My hands. When that Divine-Human hand, once outstretched upon the Cross for our redemption, is laid upon us, then do we rejoice with exceedingly great joy!

Now for a little while let us *look at this expression in its relation to sinners in whom a gracious work is beginning.* And here I must remind you that if the hand of the Lord is ever laid upon you, then it will come, first, as a creating hand. It is the hand of God and that hand, alone, which can create in you a clean heart and renew a right spirit within you! Nothing but the Divine touch can ever make a new creature in Christ Jesus. If all the angels had united all their powers, they could never have created a world and if all the ministers in the world were to combine their efforts, they could never create a new creature in Christ! Creation is the work of God, alone, so may He graciously lay His hand upon you tonight! Though there is nothing in you for Him to begin with, remember that He made the world out of nothing and He can make a new man of you out of nothing. It is true that your whole being, spiritually, is without form and voidand darkness is upon the face of the deepbut He who brought order out of chaos and said, Let there be light, and there was light, can do the same for you! May you become a new proof His creating power, so that the angels may sing over you as they once did over a newly made world!

Yet let me tell you that wherever the hand of the Lord comes, it always comes at first as a breaking hand! As soon as Gods hand is laid upon us, down go the images of our pride as Dagon fell upon his face before the Ark of God! And our self-righteousness, our self-conceit, our carnal confidence and everything else that is displeasing to the Most High are dashed in pieces by the blows from His almighty hand! It is a blessed thing to be put into Gods mortar that He may pound us with the pestle that He holds in His hand until He has crushed and bruised us so as to bring us to self-despairfor then it will not be long before that same blessed hand of His shall bind up what He has broken and heal what he has wounded! It is His prerogative to say, I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand. If you could go to some eminent surgeon, it would be a strong argument if you could say to him, O Sir, I pray you to heal me, for you did, yourself, cause this gaping wound! It was by your sharp knife that this gash was made, so will you not bind it up? So go to God, Sinner, with that poor broken heart of yours, and say to Him, Lord, You did break it, will You not bind it up? You are Jehovah-Rophi, will You not heal me? You know how David prayed, Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which You have broken may rejoice. God is a bone-breaker and He is also a bone-mender! He is also a heartbreaker, yet He delights to bind up the hearts that He has broken! So go to Him, Sinner, and ask Him to lay His hand upon you, first breaking, and then binding upfirst killing, and then making alive!

Further, to sum up briefly, the hand the Lord is a receiving hand. And if you go to Him, Sinner, He will receive you graciously and love you freely! It is also an upholding hand, and it will hold you up so that your feet shall not slip. It is an enriching hand, with which the Lord will give generously to you both in Providence and in Grace. It is a guiding hand with which the Lord shall direct your steps. And at last it shall be an opening hand, with which the Lord shall open the gates of Glory, that you may enter them to go no more out forever!

II. Our second question was to be WHAT TIME WAS THIS? The hand of the Lord was upon me *in the evening.* There is a congruity in meditating upon this text in the evening, so let us think upon it for a while in connection with our own inward experience.

And first, Beloved, when you and I have felt the hand of the Lord upon us in the evening, I think it has come very seasonably *to remind us of the days sin.* Evening is a good time for casting up the sum of the daythere ought to be set seasons for balancing our accounts. I am afraid that most us are so busy that we neglect this important duty. But it is well to devote a few minutes at night to review the day that has gone by. Recall your actions, your words, your thoughts. Look at your sins that you may repent of them. Look at your follies that you may avoid them in the future. Look at your mistakes that you may not fall into them again. As you turn over all these things in your evening mediation, what a blessed thing it is to feel the hand of the Lord upon you making your conscience tender, not allowing you to play with sin as though it were a trifle, but assuring you, by a gentle pressure, that all your sin is put away through the great Atoning Sacrifice of Christ Jesus your Lord and Savior!

It seems to me that evening is also *a very blessed time for feelings of gratitude.* How many are Gods thoughts concerning us during a single day? When we rose this morning, I suppose that most, if not all of us, found that our food and raiment had been provided for us. We have been busy all day and have had just enough strength to get through our work. We have been preserved, perhaps, in the midst of temptations to which others have yielded. Where they have stumbled and fallen, we have been graciously upheld! And now at evening we are thinking of the many mercies which the hand of the Lord has bestowed upon us during the day. If we are delivered from some accident, we say what a merciful Providence it was that we escapedyet we are apt to forget the merciful Providence when there is no accident! I have heard of a father who, in the days when there were no railways, needed to see his son who lived a long way off. They agreed to meet at a place half-way between their two houses. Each had to ride about 50 miles. And when they met, the son said to his father, I have had a very special Providence, for my horse stumbled three times yet it did not fall. Well, said the father, I also have had a very special Providence, for my horse did not stumble once, all the way. This was quite as notable a Providence as the son had experienced, but it is one that is often left unnoticed. Our mercies which pass unobserved are probably ten times as numerous as those which we perceive! It is well, therefore, at least at the close of every day, to look back upon all the mercy that has been given to us during the dayand to realize that the hand of the Lord is still upon us in the evening, shielding us from all harm, guiding us in His own good way and providing most generously for all our needs!

Evening is also *a special reminder of the evening of life*. We sometimes say that we
Long for evening to undress,
That we may rest with God

and to a Christian, dying is very much like going to bed. Being buried is just having our clothes put away while we are asleep in Jesus. Therefore, as evening is a reminder and type of dying, it is especially appropriate for us, then, to feel the hand of the Lord upon us and to realize that He has brought us there, to the margin of the river, and that He says to us, You will have to cross that river some day, so dip your foot in it, now, and try to get used to dying. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, I die daily. He was rehearsing his part every day, so that when the time came for him to actually die, he was fully prepared and was not taken unawares. It would be well if we could hear one say, As I stood by my bedside, and took off my clothes, I felt that if I were now called to put off my body, which is the clothing of my soul, I couldnt do it with as much complacency as I removed my garments. And when I laid my head upon my pillow and closed my eyes, I felt as easy in the thought of that being my last sleep as I have felt when simply going to my bed. If this is how we are able to talk, we may confidently say, The hand of the Lord lay upon me in the evening.

I like, too, the thought of this manifestation of God in the evening because *the evening is usually the quiet time that is specially suited to meditation*. The morning is the time for action. The day is the time for work. But the evening is the time for mediation. It is well if we then have the inclination as well as the opportunity for communing with God, though I am afraid that our hearts are not always ready for this high privilege even when the season is peculiarly favorable for it. May you, dear Friends, feel the hand of the Lord upon you every eveningand may you feel it very specially this evening! We are in the midst of a most gracious work in this congregation. We began with earnest prayer and we are now receiving the blessing that we have asked at the Lords hands. During the past week we have had a most blessed fulfillment of that promise, While they are yet speaking, I will hear. While we have been asking the Lord to bless, He has been blessing! And tonight we want again to feel the hand of the Lord upon us. When the preacher feels the Lords hand on him, there is no lack of power or energy in his sermons! When the Deacons and Elders feel it, there is no lack of attention to the duties of their important offices! When the members feel it, there are no dull, lifeless Prayer Meetings! And when any individual Christians feels it, his heart is made to burn within him while his Master talks with him by the way. May it be so with everyone of us!

III. Our third question was to be, WHAT TEACHING IS THERE FOR US IN THIS INCIDENT?
The text seems to me to teach us, first, *to look above man.* Ezekiel says, The hand of the Lord was upon menot the hand of the king, nor the hand of the priestbut the hand of the Lord! The first question with many persons, when the service is over, very often is, Well, how did you like the minister. But really, dear Friends, that is a very unimportant questionthe vital matter isDid you see Jesus as the preacher sought to lift Him up before you? Was the hand of the Lord upon you, pressing you down to the ground under the weight your many sins and then setting you gloriously at liberty by casting all your sins behind His back into the depths of the sea to be remembered against you no more forever? That is the chief business of our coming together in these great assembliesthat we may be brought into real, close, personal contact with God and see His power and His Glory in the sanctuary! As for the Preacher, he is of no more account than the lad with the five barley loaves and two small fishes! But if the Master will add His blessing, the multitudes shall be fed spiritually even as the thousands were then fed literallyand He shall have all the Glory! I pray you, dear Friends, never to be content with a sermon unless it brings you into yet closer fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ and lifts your eyes above man unto Him to whom you are bid to look!
Then, as you are to look above other men, much more are you to *look above yourselves*. In one sense, it is hard work to keep a Christians eyes looking up. But in another sense, it is equally difficult to keep them looking down. You may rake over the dunghills of your own corruption to try to find something good, but you will only find what Paul calls dung! But if you look up to the Most High, you will not search in vain for treasures that will endure forever! If you will persist in looking within, look there till you are tired and then do not look any longer. One look at Jesus Christ will remunerate you far better than 20 looks at yourself! No doubt there are certain marks and evidences of the Christian life for which it is quite right to talk, yet it is better to look at the marks of the Saviors wounds and to see the evidences of Gods Love manifested in the Person and work of His well-beloved Son. It is much more profitable to look at the Creator than at the creature. If you must bring self in at all, let it only be as Ezekiel did when he said, The hand of the Lord was upon me in the evening.
This text should also encourage us to *remember previous Divine visitations*. I suppose Ezekiel had often felt the hand of the Lord upon him, but this time he recorded it. David called to remembrance former manifestations of Gods mercy when he wrote, O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember You from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar. Sailors keep a logbook in which they enter the principal incidents of the voyage. And Christian, you ought to keep a log of your voyage to Heaven! And you should especially record the visitations of God to your soul. There may come times when you will not have these visits and then, if you turn to your diary, you will be able to call to remembrance the joyous seasons of the pastand it will be a great comfort to you to recollect the experiences you passed through on Mizars hill and Hermons mount. There are certain occasions that some of us can never forgetand in our dark hours we think of them and say, Lord, by all that we have felt in the past, we are assured that You will not let us go, but that You will hold us fast to the end.
And to close, I think that this should encourage us *in our darkening hours to expect the Light of Gods Presence*. It was the evening, the sun was going down, but the Sun of Righteousness was still shining upon Ezekiel! The stars began to sparkle in the heavens, but the promises of God were brighter still! The night was coming on, but the Prophet did not dread it, for although he could not see his Lords face, he could feel his Lords hand upon him! It is one of the enjoyments of faith to walk with God in the dark. It is not the enjoyment of sight because it comes in the evening when strength is declining, and life, itself, is dying out. Ah, that evening will soon come to everyone of us when we shall have to bid farewell to the fond pursuits of the daythat night of which our Savior said that then, no man can work. And when that night comes on and we begin to feel its chilly dews settling upon our dying brow. When the hoarfrost of death shall be upon every limb, how blessed it shall be to have a bright and glowing lamp within our soul which will owe none of its brilliance to sun or moon, but to the Lord God who gives us the Light that shall last forever!
At evening time it shall be light. In some parts of the world there is no twilightas soon as the sun sets, night follows immediately. But here in England our long evenings are a great delight, and certainly so is the long evening of a well spent life, when you have, to a great extent, finished with the toil and turmoil of earthly service and your soul has a blessed season of resting, as Bunyans pilgrims had in the land Beulah until the summons came for them to cross the river and go into the Presence of the King. It will be a blessed thing to feel the hand of the lord upon us in that evening! And whether it is long or short, all will be well with all who are trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ! Even though we have to pass through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, we will fear no evil, for He will be with us. His rod and His staff shall comfort us! And when we get to Heaven, we will tell the angels that the hand of the Lord was upon us in the morning of our days when we gave our young hearts to the Lord! That His hand was upon us in the noontide of middle life while we were toiling for Him with all our might! That His hand was upon us in the afternoon helping us still to gather the precious grain into His garner, and that His hand was upon us, as it was upon Ezekiel, in the evening! As the Lord God walked in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day, so will He be with us in the evening of our lives! And though we must go to bed and sleep in the tomb, we shall awake in His likeness and then shall we be satisfiedand His hand shall still be upon us in the morningthat morning which will be to us without mourning, that day which shall never have a nightthat blessedness which shall last forever! God grant that this may be the portion of each one of us, for His dear Sons sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *PSALM 92.*

Verse 1. *It is a good thing to give thanks to the LORD, and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High.* It is good in itself. It is good for those who hear it, but it is especially good for our own hearts to give thanks unto the Lord and to sing praises unto the name of the Most High. Sometimes when we are very heavy in spirit, if we would take care not to defraud the Lord of the revenue of praise that is due Him, we should find that the readiest way to bring comfort to ourselves is to sing praises unto His holy name. Brother and Sisters in Christ, it is not very notable work to praise God when all things go well with usit is far grander work to praise Him when everything seems to be against us! It is because the nightingale sings by night that he has such excellence among the birds. And if you and I can praise God in the dark, then we shall find that it is a good thing for ourselves to give thanks to the Lord and to sing praises unto the name of the Most High.

2. *To show forth Your loving kindness in the morning, and Your faith*
fulness every night. [See Sermon #1138, Volume 19MORNING AND EVENING SONGS Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Begin the

day by setting forth the Lords loving kindness. It was His loving kindness that watched over you when you lay unconscious and defenseless and could not, therefore, protect yourself. It was His loving kindness that drew wide the curtain of the night, that touched your eyelids and awakened you out of that sleep which was the image of death and bade you look out upon the rising sun. Therefore take the key of the morning to open the day, and let it be the golden key of praise! Show forth the Lords loving kindness in the morning.

And when night comes again, let us then sing of Gods faithfulness. We have experienced it through another day, let us praise Him for it. Now we see how He has borne with us, pardoned us, preserved us, supplied our needs and continued to educate us throughout another day. Let us, therefore, praise and bless His holy name and so close the day and commit ourselves to sleep again under His Divine protection.

3. *Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound.* Under the old dispensation, instrumental music seemed more congruous than it does now with the spiritual worship into which we have been introduced. If we must ever have instrumental music in our worship, let it be the samethe very same as David had. And then I, for one, though I should still think it we going back to the old dispensation long since superseded, would put up with it! I could never get much further than that, I think, for what instrument is there that is equal to the human voice? What music can be compared with it? All other sound is but the poor attempt of man to rival the creation of his God but the human voice is full of charming melodies and harmonies! And if it is controlled by a true heart, there is nothing like it even to our ears, while it seems to me that it must be far more acceptable to God than the product of mere mechanism.

4. *For You, LORD, have made me glad through Your work: I will triumph in the works of Your hands.* There is a blessed verse to come from the heart and mind of a happy man who is praising God and who looks on all the works of the Lord in Creation, Providence, and Redemptionand makes them all the subject of his joyous song!

5. *O LORD, how great are Your works! And Your thoughts are very deep.* There is little that we know of the thoughts of God except as we gather them from His works or learn them from His Word, for what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God. It is by Divine Revelation that we must know the thoughts of Godand the more we know of them, the more shall we realize that they are very deep.

6. *A brutish man knows not; neither does a fool understand this.* He looks at Nature and as he sees its varied operations. He observes certain eternal laws, as he calls them, but he does not see the power at the back of those laws which makes the laws potent for the government of the world! No, he lives and walks where God has displayed His power to the fullest, yet he fails to see Him! It would be a strange proceeding for anyone to go into an artists house and look at his pictures and his sculptures and yet never to think of himbut this is what the brutish man does with regard to the works of God, and with regard to God Himself!

7. *When the wicked spring as the grass*Numerous, fresh, vigorous
7. *And when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed forever.* That is the end to which they will surely come, no matter how much they boast, nor how they grow and flourish till they seem like the grass in the meadow, to cover everything so that you can go nowhere without seeing them! Yet they shall be destroyed forever.
8. *But You, LORD, are Most High forevermore.* The Psalmist began by calling the Lord, Most High, and now he says that He is Most High forevermore. Yes, this is our joy that God never passes awayHe abides forever. Myriads of the ungodly have come and gone. Empires of wickedness have risen to great power and in due time have passed away like dreamsbut we can still say, with the Psalmist, You, Lord, are Most High forevermore.
9, 10. *For, lo, Your enemies, O LORD, for, lo, Your enemies shall perish as the workers of iniquity shall be scattered. But my horn have You exalted like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil.* [See Ser

mon #1649, Volume 28FRESHNESSRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] The Believer, though he is very weak in his own consciousness, and utterly insignificant in his own esteem, shall receive fresh power from God! And when the wicked melt away, he shall grow stronger and stronger.

11. *My eyes shall also see my desire on my enemies, and my ears shall hear my desire of the wicked that rise up against me.* The translators put in the words, *my desire.* In both cases they are printed in italics to show that they are not in the original. No doubt the Psalmist means that his eyes should see the end of his enemies and his ears should hear of their total overthrow.

12. *The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.* The palm tree flourishes amidst the desert sunshine, growing straight upright towards Heaven without a branch that deviates to the right or the left and bearing its great masses of fruit as near Heaven as ever it can! It is a fine type of Christian life and growth and fruitfulness! A Christian should also be like a cedar in Lebanon, firmly rooted in his appointed place and defying the winters snows which threaten to bury him out of sight.

13. *Those that are planted in the House of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our Lord.* Like trees planted in the courtyard, screened and protected, such are true Believers! God is their defense and they are screened within the court of the Lords House.

14. *They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.* When Christians decay, they shall still be fruitful. They shall not feel as so many others do, that their age is a cureit shall be to them a blessing, ripening them for eternity, and it shall be a blessing to all by whom they are surrounded.

15. *To show that the LORD is upright: He is my rock.* Can each one of you say that concerning the Lord, He is my rock, my foundation, my refuge, my shelter?

15. *And there is no unrighteousness in Him.* Say that when you have lost the dearest one you ever knew! Say that when your property has melted like the hoar frost in the morning. Say that when every bone in your body is aching and some fell disease is hastening you to an early grave! There is no unrighteousness in Him. How long have you known Him? If it is 70 years, or more than that, He has never been unfaithful to you, nor allowed a single promise of His to fail! Write this down as the testimony of the experience of all Gods people, There is no unrighteousness in Him.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #3528 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A PROMISE AND A PROVIDENCE
NO. 3528

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1916. ***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,***
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.
I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord. Ezekiel 34:15.

BEFORE this can be done there are certain preliminaries. A flock cannot be fed until it is in existence. It cannot be fed, as a flock, until all the scattered sheep shall have been brought together. Hence, in the context, other promises supply this deficiency! We find, for example, the Lord declaring that He will search out His sheep and seek them. They have gone far astray. Some of them seem to have so exhausted their patience in wandering that they have invented new forms of sin and new methods of transgression. Yet the Lord will seek them till His eyes of mercy shall rest upon them and His hands of power shall grasp them. If the Lord has an elect soul in the center of Africa, He will find him out. Or should there be one for whom Jesus died who frequents the house that is infamous and has plunged into the most detestable sin, yet the Lord will not lose him! Having set His heart upon him, He will seek him till He finds him and follow him up till He reclaims him. You remember one of the Lords sheep a woman who had forsaken the paths of virtue. She had had five husbands and was then living with one who was not her husband. Yet He must go through Samaria to meet with her! He mustsuch was the Divine necessity that this sheep, which had wandered as far as it well could, should be brought back!

Cheer up! Be of good courage, preacher of the Word. You may not find the sheep, but your Master will! Take heart, you that wait upon the Lord in prayeryou may see some of your agencies fail and success may not wait upon all your efforts, but Gods purposes must standHe will do all His pleasure and at the last it shall be seen that not a single sheep was left for want of being sought out. Nor is it enough to seek the sheep and to find themthey must be delivered from the dangers into which they have fallen. There is a promise to this effect. They had been scattered in a cloudy and dark day. Some of them had slipped from the crag and fallen into crevices, from which it seemed as if no hand could reach them. Others, skipping from rock to rock, had reached some lofty pinnacle where it seemed certain that the next move would dash them down the dizzy depth to ruin. But the Lord has said it, I will bring them out from all places where they have been scattered. High up there in pride, in blasphemy, in persecution, or low down there in shameful degradation and infamy, they shall be brought, every one of them, from all the perils of evil within and evil without, and be gathered safely into the fold! But when, one by one, they have been delivered, they are not a flock till they are gathered by the Shepherd. They must, therefore, not only be brought out of the danger, but brought into the flock, safely housed, and collected into one fold. So the promise runs, I will gather them altogether into one place. Beloved, this great work of gathering is going on today! By this man and by that, by this agency and by the other, the Lord is separating His chosen people from among the ruins of the Fallfetching His Israel out of Egypt and His captives out of Babylon and Chaldeaso that the whole company of the faithful may be a people separated unto the Lord! Let us entertain no fears as to the Lord having a Church in the world! With Omnipotent Power, directed by Infallible Wisdom and moved by Immutable Love, those whom God has chosen to be His sheep shall be sought out, rescued from their danger and numbered with the living people of the living God! Do I not now address a section of this great flock? Are there not many in this dense crowd who belong to that Seed which the Lord has blessed? Can there fail to be a rich vein of comfort to such in this promise, I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord?

Our text has in it a double blessing. By way of division, we will emphasize each word and endeavor to draw out the fullness of its meaning. To take the last word, first, My flock is

I. A NOTE OF DESCRIPTION.
It describes Gods people *distinctively,* separating them from all other people. They are not ravenous like lions. They are not crafty like foxes. They are not swift like the hare. They are not foul like the swine. They love not carrion like the raven. They are timid, trembling, weak, but they are clean and they love clean feeding. They are gentle. They have no guile. When Sovereign Grace has renewed and changed them, you may easily distinguish the Lords sheep from the worlds goats. Naturally, these sheep of the Lord have the infirmities of sheepprone to go astray they are fearful, weak and liable to disease. It is said that man, a horse and a sheep are liable to more diseases than any other creatures. Certainly sheep have many contingencies. They are prone to infect others with their ailments. As to going astray they are so gregarious that if but one sheep leaps the wall, the whole flock must go after him! The Lords people, in a state of nature, are very much like sheep as to their infirmities and, when converted, they are like sheep for their meekness and gentleness. Then they can suffer without repiningthey can follow the Shepherd, for they know His voice, and a stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers. This word is thus distinctiveit sets out a people who are no more to be mistaken for any other people than sheep are to be mistaken for wolves or lions! Question yourself, my Hearer, whether you are one of the Lords sheep. Have you given yourself up to His care? Do you follow at His bidding? Do you desire to be washed in His sheep-washing? Are you desirous that He should make you to feed and to lie down in His green pastures?
Nor is the word merely distinctiveit is likewise *collective*. It is not said, I will feed My sheep one by one, but, I will feed My flock. The Lord has only one flock, and so in this world He has only one Church. Well, says one we see 20 denominations. Thank God for it! I am not one of those who would deplore the fact that different Brothers are set for the defense of different parts of the Truth of God. Can you doubt that when Christ prayed that His people might be one, He was heard? It were almost blasphemy to think that His petition was denied! Very well, then, they are one. If the intercession of Christ prevailed, then today the Church is one! I do not believe for a moment that the oneness which Christ intended was ever a oneness of opinion, or a oneness of form of worship any more than a oneness of association, congregating them together in the same building! It was a mystical, secret, vital unity which exists in the Church of God at this very day! Brothers and Sisters, all Believers are really and truly one! When their souls are in a glow with Divine Love, and their hearts speak out of the fullness of their emotion, the unity of the one flock becomes perceptible! The little divisions in the Church of God that challenge your notice are like little cracks upon the surface of the earththe rock is not cracked. The divisions that we have in the churches are only little skin woundsthe body is not divided. Not a bone of Him shall be broken. The great body of Christ still remains indissolubly one! And here tonight, be we Independent, or Baptist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, or Methodistif we are one with Christ, we must be one with one another! After all, the Catholic is right in the expression, while he is wrong in the meaning he attaches to it, when he says there is no salvation out of the pale of the church. Referred to any worldly policy, it is a lie, but in sober truth, outside of the one indivisible Church of Christ lightly defined, there can be no salvation! But, thanks be unto Christ, every soul that knows the voice of God, the Good Shepherd, and follows at His beck and call, belongs to the one flock, soon to be gathered into the one fold. Note, then, the distinctive and the aggregate descriptionthey are sheep individually and they are, collectively, a flock. But here is
II. A WORD OF DISCRIMINATION, as well as a word of descriptionI will feed My flockMy flock. Oh, that sweet word, My! I will feed My flock, not the devils flocklet those goats browse where they will! Not the worlds flocklet them wander on their own mountains of vanity! But, I will feed *My* flock. Beloved, if we are the Lords people by faith, remember we are His by Eternal Election. He chose us before earths foundations were laid! He took us unto Himself to be the jewels of His crown and the delight of His soul. Before the channels of the sea were dug, or the sockets of the mountains were formedlong before the sun had scattered the thick darknessour names were written upon the hands of Jesus! We are His, too, by purchase. Think of the price He paid for us! I am dwelling upon this to make you see how true it is that He will feed us. Did He choose us? Did He buy usand will He not feed us? ***Count the purple drops and say,***
Thus my sins were washed away.
Thus I, a captive, was set free! Thus I, impounded by the Law of God, saw the gate of the pound opened and I, the sheep of Christ, came out to lie down in His pastures. You are His by ties of blood, as well as His by purchaseand you are also His by power. He won you, fought for you and made you His lawful captives. You held out as long as you could, but at last you cried, I yield! Almighty Love, You have overcome me! Now I bow myself to Your silver scepter, willingly Your subject. Oh, how hard it was for Christ to get some of us! Like wandering sheep, we strayed here, there and everywhere! And when the Shepherd came and began to grasp us, we struggled to get free, struggled for that awful liberty which would have been our ruin! But, glory be to God, He would have us! He took us upon His shoulders, He carried us home rejoicing and this day we acknowledge it was the victorious love of Christ which made us His! Yes, and we are His by our own free consent. Would you be anothers if you could? Oh, if there could be a divorce court held between your soul and Christ, would you sue for a division? Say, my Soul, if the branch could be cut off from the Vine, would you wish to be severed from Him now? For His sake can you suffer shame, spitting, rebuke and poverty? Say, for His sake can you count the worlds treasures to be as drossand all its pomp and glory but as sounding brass and as a tinkling cymbal? I know you! You say, Truly, by His Grace, I can, for He is mine and I cannot let Him go! He holds me so fast and He has proved unto me a love which many waters cannot quench, neither can the floods drown it. Thus you see, Beloved, that that word of discrimination, My, has a good and grateful tone about it. I will feed *My* flock. Go, you who do not belong to God, and find such food as you can gather, but you who are the Lords own peculiar ones, take this for your consolation, I will feed *My* flock. The next word, going backwards, is
III. A WORD FULL OF CONSOLATIONI will *feed* My flock. Yes, He will supply your temporal needs. You may run short, but you shall never want. When the garment has got to be threadbare, then He will find you another. I recollect one instance of Providence of which I was the almost passive agent. It was the case of a Brother Christian and minister. I was staying in a country town and it was requisite to borrow an edifice for the preaching. One Chapel could not be had, for the preacher was not high enough in Doctrine. And another Chapel could not be had for the whim of some of the deacons. But there was one little Chapel which the minister very willingly lent, for he said, Oh, yes. To a fellow servant of my Lord and Master, I will cheerfully open the doors. The preacher of that night noticed that the minister of that little Chapel wore a threadbare coat and he observed that in his house there were signs of poverty. Twelve shillings a week was the good mans incomeall that his flock could afford to give him. After the preacher had done his sermon, he said, Perhaps the minister here will pardon me if I say that his clothes are getting much too shabby, and I think it would be a good thing for us all to contribute and buy him a new suit of clothes. Twas done and when I said to the minister, I hope you will pardon me for such an impertinent remark? Pardon you? he said, why the Lord always finds me fresh clothes when my things wear out, and it is always some such manner as I never dreamed of. The good man is in Heaven, now. I believe that suit just lasted him till he put on the white garment before the Eternal Throne. Depend upon it, that as it was with him, so, if you believe in your Master, it shall be with you! He will give you food and raimentthat is all He has promised youand if you get that, He will be as good as His bargain, so you must not murmur at your fare.
I will *feed* My flock. The sense, however, is mainly spiritual. It does not say the Shepherd shall feed them, but, I will feed them, says the Lord, and He says that He will feed them with good pasture. Good Doctrines, comfortable promises, sweet encouragements, tender words of exhortation, gentle notes of warningthese shall be their daily food! And, mark it, He says He will feed them on the high mountains. Some of His sheep do not like to go up such lofty heights. Dear me! How many faithful souls are frightened at the very mention of High Doctrine! Election is one of those mountains where grass grows of the very sweetest kind, but there are some of the flock who do not like to go there to feed. But the best food is on these high mountains. If your feet shall know how to stand on the craggy heights of Immutable and Eternal Love, if you shall know how to climb up yonder into the great Decrees of God, if you can take hold of His Covenant, if you can contemplate the Divine Purpose which is sure to all the Seed, you will find those to be the very sweetest and most satisfying spiritual food that is to be found on this side the Jordan! I will feed My flock. Ah, sometimes Gods people are placed where they have a very innutritious ministry, and then He feeds them in some other way. Their own private readings become a consolation to them. When, at times, some of the Lords people are sick, laid on their beds, unable to go up to the House of Prayer, this promise, I will feed My flock, proves quite as true to them at home in their seclusion as it is here in our joyous gatherings! If you neglect the means of Grace, in vain can you expect a blessing! But if you are lawfully detained from them, plead the promise and expect its fulfillmentI will feed My flock.

Are you just going to New Zealand, or are you just about to take a voyage to Australia, my beloved Sister, my dear Brother? God will feed you there. I know not how. You may be up in the back settlements, or in the bush, and have but little opportunity of meeting with the people of God, but still remember, I will feed My flock. You are going on a long sea voyage, are you, and there are but few on board to encourage you? Well, take the promise to your God, I will feed My flock. Or are you moving away from this Church, which has been like a hothouse to you, and going into some country village where there is no Gospel preaching? Never mind, Brothers and Sistersif God sends you there, lay hold on Him by faith with these words, I will feed My flockand He *will* feed you, and you shall have enough and to spare! In the time of famine you shall be filled, and in the day of scarcity you shall be satisfied. I will feed My flock. Again, going backwards, let us take the next
IV. A WORD WHICH IS FULL OF ASSURANCE.
I *will* feed My flock. I will. I will. I will. See how positively He speaks. Not, I think I will. Not, I may, but I will. Beloved, these shalls and wills are the very marrow of the Gospel! They make the strength of it. Take the shalls and wills out of the Bible and put in conditional ifs and buts and perhaps, in their placewhat a desolate appearance it would present! These shalls and wills stand like Jachin and Boaz, the great pillars of the Temple, right at the entrance, and we must see to it that we never give up these potent shalls and wills, but hold fast and firmly to them! I will feed My flock. But, says one, are not some of the flock lost? Read the verse! He says, I will seek them and I will feed them. They may be lost, but if they have backslidden I will bring them back. If, like Peter, they have denied Me to My face, I will forgive them. If they have played the harlot, like Israel of old, and gone astray from Me, yet I will bring them back, for I will feed My flock. He cannot feed them unless He brings them back! But, I will feed My flock. I will bring back all the wanderers who have been bought with My blood. I will. The adversary says they shall not be brought! I will. I will, says the Lord. No, but, says proud flesh, I will not be brought. I will, says the Lordand Gods, I will, is infinitely mightier than all the hosts of darkness and powers of corruption! But, Lord, there are some of them who have been driven awaylegal preachers have driven them from Christtheir doubts and fears, their sins and trespasses have driven them away. But I will feed My flock, every one of them, for I will bring them backthey shall have all their old comforts back, their joys and hopes shall be restored to themI will feed My flock. But, Lord, some of them are broken! Some cruel blow has broken a leg, or some other limb of some of Your sheep. But I will feed My flock. I will bring them back and heal them. You may be broken in heart and your faith may be weak, and your Graces spoiled, but this stands good, I will, I will feed My flock. But, Lord, they are infected with diseaseso runs the passage, they are weakthey have got some disease common to Your sheep. I will heal them, says the Lord, for I will feed My sheep.
My dear Friends, it is not possible for an heir of Heaven ever to get into such a state that God cannot save him! And should he be allowed in Sovereign forbearance to wander to the utmost excess of sinif he were even in the very jaws of the destroyer, yet our Savior, like another David, would pluck the lamb out of the jaw of the lion and tear it away from the paw of the bear! As long as you are out of Hell, Sinner, have hope! And, Believer, if you should sink in deep waters and be swallowed up of the Devourer, still, like Jonah, you shall be able to say, Out of the belly of Hell I cried, and You heard me. I will feed My flock. Oh, that you who are doubting and fearing would lay hold on this, I will. I will. I will. Your flesh and carnal reason will doubtless say, Well, I hope and trust. Away with your hoping and trusting! Do not halt and hesitate, but believe! If God says He will, who are you that you should entertain a suspicion? You shall be fedGods Word cannot fail you! I will feed My flock. Moreover, this is
V. A WORD OF DIVINITY.

I will feed My flock. Who is this that says, I will? When a man says, I will, it is often braggart impudence, but when God says, I will, and, you shall, such words are expressive alike of Sovereign determination and Irresistible Power! Christian, see who it is that makes the promise and mark who it is that will fulfill it! I will feed My flock. Do you complain that you cannot feed under such-and-such a minister? The Lord promises, I will feed My flock. Here you have Divine Infinity to be your supply! Here you have Divine Immutability to be your guarantee! Here you have Divine Omnipotence to be your aid and Divine Wisdom to be the measure of the supply which shall be afforded to you! Trust in the Lord and do good. When Jehovah says, I will, banish every doubt and fear and now, for time and for eternity, cast yourself upon your God. He says, I will feed My flocklet us reply, The Lord is my Shepherd.

Passing on to the second clause of the verse, *And I will make them lie down, says the lord,* you will please observe that this further blessing is intended to make amends for the harshness of the false shepherds. They would never let them lie down quietly. Their custom was always to drive, drive, drive, or else to seize, fleece and slay. But the Lord says, I will make them lie down, and so redress their wrongs. For all the weariness they have suffered in the past, they shall have calm repose in the future. You know how apt the legal preacher is to whip his hearers withDo this! And, Do that. You know how certain Calvinists whip their hearers with, If you have *felt* this, and, If you have *experienced* that, you may be saved. But the Lord Himself always makes His people, when they come fully to confide in Him, to lie down in a good fold and to feed in a fat pasture!

When the Lord reveals to you that He has loved you with an everlasting love, is not that a good place to lie down in? When He tells you that having so loved you, He will never cast you away, is not that a good place to lie down in? When He tells you that your warfare is accomplished and that your sin is pardoned, is not that a good place to lie down in? Or supposing the message to be that Christ has brought in an everlasting righteousness and that you are accepted in the Beloved, is not that a place to lie down in? Let Him say to you, You are My sons and My daughters, and I will be a Father to youis not that a good place to lie down in? Well, He does say all this to every one of you who has been brought to trust under the shadow of the wings of the Lord God Almighty! Your faith in Jesus is the evidence that He loved you before the world was and He will love you when the world shall cease to be! His righteousness is imputed to you and you are saved, completely saved, and Heaven is as surely yours as though you now wore the crown of gold! Is not this a good place to lie down in? Still more, He not only gives you a place to lie down in, but He also causes you to lie down! You know, dear Friends, it is one thing to have a promise, and quite another thing to live on it. Why, I am such a fool, sometimes, that though I know the sweetness of the Covenant, I cannot partake of it! Though I understand the sense and the preciousness of the promises, yet I cannot get a grip upon them! I remember when once talking to a captain on board his vessel, and telling him of the promises, he said to me, Ah, Sir, the promises of God are very much like those posts by the riverside, strong posts driven in by the corporation of a country town! You see, if I could once get my cable right round them, it would hold my shipbut then *that* is the job to get the cable round them. So it is, but then the promise supplies this needI will *make* them lie down. I will shed abroad the love of Christ in their hearts. I will make their peace like a river. I will come to them with such fullness of mercy, such overflowing of My communion, that their souls shall not dare to be afraid! They shall be sweetly hushed as a child is dandled to sleep upon its mothers knee. I will not allow a fear to vex them! I will send them such balmy breath from My own loving lips that their fears shall all fly away. I will make them lie down.

Ah, and thanks be to God, some of us know what this means, for we have had to lie down. My soul has fed for a whole year on one promise. I know not why it was given to me, but I had it, His soul shall dwell at ease, and my soul did dwell at ease! What had I else but to be at ease? My sins forgiven. My Heaven secure. Christ mine! God mine! This world mine! Worlds to come mine! Why should not I dwell at ease? And, Beloved, many of you, toosome of you at leastknow what it is to enjoy the same peace! You can walk up and down the world and look into the grave and not be afraid of it. You can stand by a sickbed and long for evening to undress, that you may rest with God. You have such pure calm that business does not fret youyou can leave it with your Lord, casting all your care on Him, for He cares for you! Yes, you have such unspeakable joy that sometimes you could even shout for joy, for the love, the sweet love, the precious love, the unspeakable love, the everlasting love which Jesus has manifested to you!

But there is another flock. Hear it and tremble! There is another flock. They never get fed at all, or, if they do, it is only on empty husks! It is the devils flock! Sinner, you are of his flock and he only feeds you upon mere shams, pretences, delusions, lies! He never causes you to lie downyou know you can never lie down. Your sins never give you any quiet. Who has woes? Who has redness of the eyes? They that tarry long at the wine! Who has uneasiness? Who has pangs of heart? The midnight sinner! Who is he that quivers at the fall of a leaf? Who is he whose cheek turns pale in a storm? Who is he that quivers when but a little sickness gets hold upon him, and flies to the physician? Who is he that dares not think on death? Who is he that goes to the theater or to the ballroom to quiet his terror and to keep his conscience from being heard? Who is he whose end is destruction, whose god is his belly, who glories in his shame? He is here! He is here listening to my voice! Oh, Sinner, it is time that you should change your master!

I remember an old salt, after listening to a certain sermon, coming with tears in his eyes into the vestry and saying, Sir, I have served under the black flag for 60 yearsand I think it is time I ran it down and had a new one. I think it is time you did the same, Sinner. The wages of sin is death! Fly from this tyrant master! Immanuel, the bright Prince of Glory, is willing to enlist you into His army! Though there are no conditions, I will tell you the terms. The terms are these, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. To believe is simply to trust, to believe Him to be true. Trust your soul on Him! When you can do that, you are a saved man or woman! Whatever your sins may have been, or now are, the moment you believe in Jesus, you are a partaker of this precious promise, I will feed My flock, I will make them lie down, says the Lord. God grant it to every one of you! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *DEUTERONOMY 33.*

Verse 1. *And this is the blessing with which Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel before his death.* A very beautiful thought, that he should conclude his life with a blessing. Though they had greatly grieved and provoked his spirit, he was always meek and tender. And he had very much to bear from them, but this is the end of it all, that he will dismiss them with his blessing.

2, 3. *And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of saints: from His right hand went a fiery Law for them. Yes, He loved the people; all His saints are in Your hand: and they sat down at Your feet: everyone shall receive of Your words.* Yes, He loved the people. Gods appearance on Sinai was a token of His love to them, even though it amazed them and distressed many of them. Yet still it was a great thing that God should come so near to these people and should reveal His will to them. Dear Friends, if God should come to you with His fiery Law. If He should humble you, and make you exceedingly fear and quake, it would be a token of love! The ungodly are left to go in their sin, but as for you, if you are one whom He loves, He will rebuke you and He will bring His Law to do its work upon your heart and conscience. It seems strange to you, but so it is. From His right hand went a fiery Law for them. Yes, He loved the people. Oh, it is so, because He loves them, He reveals to them His fiery Law! All His saints are in Your hand. A place of safety, a place of privilege, where they learn how precious they are to Him, for He holds them so dear that He keeps them always in His hand. All His saints are in Your hand, and they sat down at Your feet. Another place for saintsthey are always learningthey are disciples. They sit with meek humility at their Masters feet and drink in His words, Everyone shall receive of Your words. Those who know not Gods love, trifle with Gods words and reject them. Those whom He loves receive His words and feed upon them!

4-6. *Moses commanded us a Law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. And he was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together. Let Reuben live, and not die: and let not his men be few.* Here is his blessing, Let Reuben live. Reubens great sin had lost him his birthright, yet Moses gives him as much of his blessing as he can. If we are not allowed to draw the largest blessing, let us go as far as we can!

7-9. *And this is the blessing of Judah: and he said, Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people: let his hands be sufficient for him; and be You a help to him from his enemies. 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.* Judah was the royal tribe had to do much with warfare. Lord give him power in prayer! This is the peculiar benediction of those who have to lead the way in the battles of God. In the service of God, Levi was impartialhe did not wink at sin in his dearest relatives. You remember how they took the sword and went through the camp and slew their own brothers when they found them guilty of idolatry. And because of this faithfulness we read, They shall teach Jacob Your judgments, and Israel Your Law. Above all things, a teacher of the Truth of God must be fearless and impartial in the delivery of Gods Word! Then God will bless him, and it shall be said of such, They shall teach Jacob, etc.

10. *They shall teach Jacob Your judgments, and Israel Your Law: they shall put incense before You, and whole burnt sacrifices upon Your altar.* True hearts, alone, can be Gods priestsHe will not accept sacrifices from those who will dally with His Truth and trifle with His Word.

11, 12. *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. And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by Him; and the LORD shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between His shoulders.* They that have God near them are safe, indeed! There is no protection in such a world as this like constant communion with God. We have to go out into a world full of all manner of evil. Go not out into the world without your God! Let Him dwell with you and cover you all the day long, and so shall you be safe.

13. *And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the LORD be his land, for the precious things of Heaven.* Oh, in a spiritual sense, what a rich blessing this is! And remember it came upon that tribe whose father was the most afflicted of all Jacobs sons. If you are an afflicted Joseph, rejoice, for one of these days you shall have the capacity for receiving great blessings!

13. *For the dew*The Lord send us that dew tonight to rest upon our branch.
13. *And for the deep that couches beneath.* These deep eternal springs out of which we drink the Divine Water!
14. *And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon.* They shall have blessings both ways in the day and in the night. Those whom God blesses, the sun does not smite by day, nor the moon by night, but, on the contrary, they are blessed both in the one and in the other!
15, 16. *And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills. And for the precious things of the earth and fullness thereof, and for the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush.* Oh, that we may always enjoy the good will of God, who wills good to us, who in all His dealings with us has a good will towards us. Oh, that we may have the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush!
16-18. *Let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren. His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh. And of Zebulun he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out; and Issachar, in your tents.* You that go much abroad in the world, God give you to rejoice in your opportunities of doing good. You that never go abroad, but live at home in the kitchen and the parlor, learn to rejoice in your tents, for there, too, you have a sphere of holy service!
19-22. *They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas and of treasures hid in the sand. And of Gad, he said, Blessed is He that enlarges Gad: he dwells as a lion, and tears the arm with the crown of the head. And he provided the first part for himself, because there is a portion for the lawgiver; and he came with the heads of the people, he executed the justice of the LORD and His judgments with Israel. And of Dan he said, Dan is a lions whelp: he shall leap from Bashan.* And of Gad, he said, Blessed be He that enlarges Gad. God knows how to enlarge His people, give them more Grace, more gifts, more opportunities of usefulness. Which He did. His tribes enlarged their boundaries by a sudden leap. God gives His people sometimes their leaping timesthey leap from Bashansome great purpose is accomplished, some great feat is done.

23. *And of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favor, and full with the blessing of the LORD: possess you the west and the south.* What a condition of heart to be in! Satisfied with favor; full of the blessing of the Lord. Beloved, may you enjoy that tonight!

24. *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.* Then will he leave a mark wherever he goes of holy unction. He possesses it himself, and he will impart it to others.

25. *Your shoes shall be iron and brass, and as your days, so shall your strength be.* Will not some Believer grip that promise tonight and find it true?

26-28. *There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rides upon the Heaven to your help, and in His* excellence *in 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.* Israel then shall dwell in safety alone. There is no place for Gods people like a separated placethey must get outside the campthey must not be numbered among the people. Notice, there is none like unto the God of Israel, and there is none like to Israel.

29. *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 excellence*? A

nd your enemies shall submit to you; and you shall tread upon their high places. As God is by Himself, so all His people are favored beyond all others.

A TIME OF FINDING FOR LOST SHEEP
NO. 3087

A SERMON
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I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment. Ezekiel 34:16.

IT is a great mercy that God never leaves His Church. He has not made a Church as a watchmaker constructs a watch, which, after being wound up, is left to depend upon the strength and fitness of the machinery, but He has made a Church which, though fitted with the best of machinery, needs His hand every moment to keep it in motion. He has lighted the lamps, but He walks among the golden candlesticks. He has fixed the pillars of the Temple, but His own almighty shoulders are the actual support thereof. He has not left the Church to His ministers, but He, Himself, is the great Bishop and Shepherd of souls. Even if, as some affirm, there were no immediate Divine interpositions in the works of Providence, we know that there are such interpositions constantly in the works of Grace.

We have direct experimental evidence of Gods ever-watchful care over His Church. He does not deal with His people only through instruments, but He Himself takes the Church in His own hands. This is His own declaration, I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. Thus does He speak of His vineyard. So, too, in this chapter, for a while, the shepherds had domineered over the flock. Evil shepherds had crept into the office, fed themselves, but not the sheep. It would have been an ill day for the Church if Divine interposition were not the rule of His government, but because it is so, God said, Away, you shepherds! I am against you; and I will require My flock at your hands. Behold I, even I, will both search My sheep, and seek them out. Away, you that have dispersed and scattered My flock! I am about to make bare My arm. As you have proved unworthy servants, your Master, Himself, is coming; as you have not fed the people of My pastures and have not gathered together My flock, I Myself will grasp the crook in My own hand. He speaks in His wrath to the foolish shepherds, yet He mingles His threats with pity for those He elsewhere calls the flock of slaughter. He says, I will feed even you, O poor of the flock! I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick.

Ah, Beloved, if the Lord did not continually interfere in His Church, the Church would cease to exist! If the Doctrines of His holy Word had been left to mans teaching, they would, by degrees, have so degenerated that the Church would not have had a particle of the Truth of God in its midst. If God had not stretched over His Truth the broad aegis of His own Omnipotence, Truth would have ceased out of the land and those who profess to be its ministers would all have prophesied lies in the name of the Lord! The preservation of the Truth of God in our midst is owing to the direct and immediate interposition of the Almighty. And mark it well, the inward witness of the Truth in the heart of every individual Believer is an instance and evidence of the same unceasing care, inasmuch as only He can apply it to the conscience with quickening power. There is not force enough in the Truth of God to convert souls without the influence of the Holy Spirit. The minister may be a good under-shepherd and he may endeavor to feed the flock, but Gods flock cannot be fed, nor can Gods wandering sheep be gathered home unless the Chief Shepherd, the great and mighty Archbishop, even Jesus Christ, shall interfere and Himself do the work! The Divine interposition of God in the midst of His Church is her great bulwark, her hope, her shield, her stay. What we need just now is not so much more shepherds, perhaps not other shepherdsalbeit, when the Lord sends laborers into the field, it is because the crops are to be gathered inbut we need the great Master, Himself, to visit us and say, I will do My own work; since you will not faithfully and fearlessly preach the Truth, I will come and interfere, that My Word may be fully and boldly proclaimed.

Now notice what God has promised to do. In this text there is a character very graphically and minutely describedand we shall look at the four sentences as descriptive of that one character*that which was lost; that which was driven away; that which was broken and that which was sick.* Then we shall look at the sentences, one by one, as being very possibly *descriptions of four different characters.* We shall also endeavor to speak of the sweet promises appended to each character and conclude with a solemn warning to the fat and the strong.

I. First, then, notice the four features of character herethat which was lost; that which was driven away; that which was broken and that which was sick. Sometimes we say that all four of these meet in one individual.

To begin with, THAT WHICH WAS LOST. Doubtless there are some here who have felt in their hearts the solemn meaning of this word, lost. Not only have I no doubt, but I have strong hopes that some souls here present are really and actually lost in their own experience. It may seem a cruel thing that I should wish you to feel yourselves lost, but it is a well-intentioned cruelty because, if you are lost, this promise is addressed to youthat God will seek that which was lost. I shall endeavor, therefore, to tell you how men feel when they are brought to know the dreadful word, lost, as applicable to themselves.

A man is never lost until he is *devoid of all strength.* See the mariner who has fallen from the shipas long as those brawny arms of his can stem the current, as long as he can buffet the waves and hurl them aside with the strong heart of resistance, he gives up nothing for lost. Yes, and should his arms become weary, if he can float a little, and with one hand move himself amidst the billows of the deep, he still thinks it is not yet all over. And while there is one particle of strength remaining, his hopes are too buoyant to give himself up for a lost man. Suppose he grasped a spar? As long as ever those hands of his can, with a deathclutch, keep hold of that floating piece of timber, he does not consider himself lost! Fond Hope still whispers in his ear, Hold on, you are not lost yet. Some ship may cross this way, Providence may guide its path here and you may yet be delivered. Hold on, you are not lost while a sinew retains its might, while there is any vital force in your frame.

So, Soul, you can never say you are lost till you feel in your heart an utter departure of all your strength. Have you been brought to feel that there is nothing which of yourself you can do apart from the strength of the Holy Spirit? There was a time when you could pray, when you could repent, when you could believe, after your own fashion, with your own supposed strengthis that time all passed over now? Are you saying, I have no power to do any of those things without Grace from on high. I would, but cannot pray. I would, but cannot repentthis stubborn heart will not dissolve, although I strive to melt it. This haughty mind will resist the Savior, although I wish to be led in chains of Grace a willing captive to my Lord. Are you brought to feel that if your salvation depended upon one motion of your soul in the right direction, you would be lost, for you have no spiritual strength? Are you lying down, shorn of all your might, bereft of all help and hope in yourselfand do you confess, I can do nothing without Christ? Well then, you are one of those whom Christ has come to save! This death unto the Law is the precursor of your being made alive unto Godand a sure sign that Divine Grace is at work in your soul! So long as you have one particle of carnal strength, God will never show you His salvation. So long as you think to do one solitary good thing of yourself, or rely upon one particle of good works for your redemption, you are under the ban and curse of the Law and are not brought to know the Covenant plan of mercy! But when you are stripped of every rag of self-righteousness, when you say, Divinity must work, for humanity has failedGods will must conquer my will, or else I am lostthen rejoice, rejoice! Though you give yourself up for lost, it is now that God writes you saved! I will seek that which was lost.

Again, a man is never thoroughly lost until not only his strength has failed him, but *he has come to his wits end.* You know how David describes the mariners at sea as rolling to and fro, staggering like drunken men and at their wits end. While the captain could devise any scheme for scudding before the wind, or evading the tempest, or nearing the harbor, or arriving at the haven, he gave not up his ship for lost. But when every device had failedwhen, after suggesting twenty plans, all laid hold upon as Sovereign remedies, but which all failed, he was at his wits end, or, as the margin reads, his wisdom was swallowed upthen he gave himself up to being really lost.

Have I one here who is, in a spiritual sense, at his wits end? Once he said, I will do this, and then I shall be saved. I will forego that lust, I will renounce that crime, I will moderate my conduct, I will behave myself more Christian-likeand then I shall be saved. Have you tried these high resolves and have they failed you? Perhaps you have sought after ceremonies and said, I will shelter myself in the church, keep her rituals and zealously obey her rubrics. Yet that has failed you. You have tried scheme after scheme, only to discover each and all alike abortive. And now you do anxiously enquire, What must I do to be saved? Do you say, I have done all that reason could dictate. I have followed every maxim I could learn as I ran here and there for counsel. I have strained every power mortal can exercise. I have taxed my poor brain till its fitful fancies bewilder me and, alas, all is in vain! What must I do? What shall I do? Let me tell you.

You are today like a traveler who hast lost his way in a forest. You thought that there was a path and sorely have you been disappointed, until, entangled in the brambles, you have torn your clothes and your flesh. How sure you did make of some way of escape, but, alas, every avenue was blocked up and you could not get out. You have climbed the highest tree in the forest to see where the end of the dark woods might be, but the further you looked, the more intricate did it appear. At length, your hopes extinguished, your plans defeated, your strength exhausted, your tongue parched and your eyes smarting, all that you can do is, like the poor traveler in the desert, when his store of water is spent and his power is gone, lay down in fell despair and die. Are you such an one? Have you tried everything and has everything failed you? Are you now locked up in Giant Despairs castle? If so, I commend to you this blessed Truth of GodChrist came to seek and to save the lost and oh, could you believe it, what a joyous day this would be to you! You would go out of this house dancing for joy of heart and saying, I went in there a poor lost one, but the Shepherd of Israel has sought and found me, for Christ came to seek that which was lost!

Again, a man is not lost until *the door of hope is shut fast.* No man in the world ever gives himself up for lost as long as he has a grain of hope left. Tell the sick man that he must die, for the physician has pronounced his case hopeless, and will he believe you? No! He will cling to the thought that he may yet rally. Has one case of recovery ever been known? Then he hopes his disease may not prove fatal. Has one miraculous cure been worked? He thinks there may be another or if not, perhaps that his case may be the first! And so he hopes on and does not consider his condition desperate. The poor sinner, when lost, gives all up as hopeless and he says, I have no reason to hope that Christ will have mercy upon me. He might save all the rest of the world, but upon me He will never look with eyes of compassion. Here have I been lying for weeks and months by Bethesdas poolthe angel has often stirred the waterI have seen others step in and they have been saved, My mother has been saved, my brother and my sister have found deliverance! Yet here I am just the same as ever. I go to Gods House, but I sit there as an alien. I am not like one of the family and I know I am lost. It seems as if the ears of God were silent against my prayerswhen I cry to Him, He disregards the voice of my groaning. Alas, my prayer is like the sacrifice of the wicked, an abomination to the Lord! I feel that He has cast me out of His sight and that I am condemned already!

What, then, I askis your case too hard for Him? No, you say, but He will not save me. I have called so long, I have cried so often, surely God has forgotten to be gracious! I am not one of His elect. He has shut up His heart of compassion and I can never be saved. Hear this, my Friendif you feel all that, let me solemnly assure you, in Gods name, that though lost in yourself, Christ came to save you! Would to God that all of you who hear me this day were either agonizing over your being lost, or rejoicing that you are found! You would then be equally safe, if not equally happy. I had rather, O you careless Sinners, that terrors took hold upon you and fears compassed you about, than that you should be dancing on the mountains of folly and reveling in your sins, unconscious of danger! Know this, you lighthearted, you giddy and silly onesthe hour of your damnation draws near! But as for you who are broken in pieces, sighing and groaning because you think your case is hopeless, let me tell you, as Gods ambassador, that your case is *not* hopeless, but *hopeful.* You may call to mind, like Jeremiah, your affliction and your misery, the wormwood and the gall, and say with him, Therefore have I hope.

Have I faithfully described you? Will you answer to your name as a prodigal son, as a lost child? Then, lost as you are, you have a Father! So lost as to need finding, so lost as to need saving, I think I hear a Fathers yearnings over you, Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spoke against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my heart is troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, says the Lord. I think I hear the Saviors voice saying, The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. A vision flits before my eyesI think I see the blessed Jesus in shepherds garb, with staff in hand, bearing on His shoulders a lost sheep whom He has, this morning, recovered. Just now the poor sheep was wandering in the wilderness in a solitary waynow he is laid on the everlasting shoulders, guarded by Omnipotent power and kept secure from harm! Happy soul! The angels rejoice over you, though your heart has not yet realized the sense of security which could give you joy!

There is another characteristic of the man who feels himself lost, more horrible than those I have mentioned. Waking to a consciousness that he is lost, he not only beholds the gate of Hope shut, but *the gate of Hell opened.* Ah, my Friends! I speak now as one who should know, as one who has felt in his own soul what his lips describe. I have passed through that experience which I have told you and this have I likewise known. Well do I remember, after many a month of prayer without an answer from God, when faith I had none and my hope had given up the ghost, I thought God would never save me. And just then I thought the gates of Hell were opened before my soulfor if ever a soul did experience a foretaste of Perdition, I think I didand I believe many of you experienced the same before you found peace with God. You knew you were not in Hell and yet you thought even that almost preferable to your condition, you were in such dread suspense! Sometimes there was a glimmer of hope, but that only made your darkness more visible. As John Bunyan has it, the Hell drum was beating in your earsyou heard it from morning till night, and from night till morningLost, lost, lost! You will soon be in Hell! Do you not remember when you did walk the earth and think that every tuft of grass would be as the mouth of Hell to open and swallow you upwhen you could not sleep for frightful dreams and did wake and feel the very terror which haunted you in your night visions? Your poor conscience was lashed by the whip of the Law and while your wounds were smarting, you did cry, O God! Will You never save me? The sorrows of death have compassed me about, and all Your billows have gone over me.

Do you not remember when, like David, all your bones were out of joint and you said, Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within mebut there was no answer? And, moreover, Satan suggested a replyWhat? Renew a right spirit in YOU? You are the worst wretch who ever lived! Your death warrant is signed, the wood is burning that will consume you, the chains are already forged to bind you forever and you shall be with me shut up under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Now, is there such an one here, one to whom Hells gates are opened, upon whom fiends seem perpetually hissing one who is brought to the black land of confusion, to the Valley of the Shadow of Death, where not only is there no hope, but where the portending clouds seem to be gathered round him? Let him take heart Christ has come to save such lost souls! And as surely as the devil is let loose upon you in this way, Christ will find him yet! He will break the teeth of the oppressor and will take you, His poor lost sheep, out of the jaws of the lion and the paw of the bear! Are you so lost? Then here is the promise for youI will seek that which was lost.

But you say, Sir, I have had too long a trial to think it possible. I have attended your ministry, and other ministries, for many a long year. Sometimes I have thought that surely I might be saved, but ah, it is of no use! You may speak of all the promises you like, they have nothing to do with me. I write my name down among the lostand charm you ever so wisely, I am like the deaf addernever, never to be comforted! It is all overI am locked up in this iron cage of despairlost, lost beyond all hope and I cannot believe what you say! Ah, poor Soul, but just notice what the text says, I will seek that which was lost. I have been seeking you for many a Sabbath and so have other ministers, but we have never found youbut Gods seeking is very different from ours! If I could, I would come to you with these weeping eyes of mine, and say, Poor Sinner, do take heart. I would go down upon my knees with you and offer my supplications for you that you might believe in Christ. But I know it would avail little unless my Master sought you. The undershepherds have been after you many a day, but they could not find you. But God knows, as we do not, where you are! If you are in the deepest pit in the forest, His almighty eyes can see to the bottom! Yes, and in one of the favored moments of the day of salvation, that time accepted, He will send home a promise so sweetly that all your fetters shall break off in an instant, your night shall be scattered, your dawn begin and He will give you the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness! Believe now, and you shall be comforted nowfor the time of faith is the time of comfort!

Our text gives us a second characteristic of lost sheepTHAT WHICH WAS DRIVEN AWAY. I wish to particularize this morning because I have begged the Lord to send His arrows home personally, even to three or four, rather than to let me shoot them in among you and strike no hearts at all. There are souls, not only lost, but driven away. I could tell you of a time, says one, when I had a hope of Heaven or, at least, I thought I had. I groaned, prayed and strived and one SabbathI shall never forget itI stepped into the House of God and, during the reading of a chapter or the singing of a hymn, I fondly thought that I had seen Christ and had believed in Him! But oh, it was only for a momentI was only permitted to just look into the well of Living Waterno one came to draw water for me and give me a drink. I thought for a single second, Now is the hour of my salvation. Something said within my heart, Now is the appointed time. Today is the day of salvation, and I almost began to smile within myself at the thought that I had found the Lord. But, Sir, I was driven away and I dare not go again! I was once very near being a BelieverI was just upon the edge of having faith in Christbut it only makes the night darker to think I once saw a star, for I was driven away.

Now there are different ways in which poor sinners are driven away and in many cases it is the devils work. *Sometimes unbelief does it*the sinner sees Christ on the Cross, the blood flowing from His head and hands and feet and side, and he thinks

Oh I could but believe,

Then all would easy be.
He thinks of the happy effects that would follow faith in Christ and something says within him

Venture on Him, venture wholly!
Let no other trust intrude.

And he is just going to do it when suddenly there comes a great black thought, What, you? You have no right to come! Away with you! He has just pressed through the crowd and is going to touch the hem of his Masters garment, but before his finger reaches it, someone has pushed in front of him and he goes away broken-heartedand all the more so to think that he should have ever had the presumption, as he deems it, to hope for salvation! Unbelief has pushed many a sinner away from Christ just when he was coming and has kept him away for a long time.

Sometimes legal preachers drive souls away. They preach a Gospel so much mixed up with Law, so united with the doings of man, that the poor soul just coming to Christ gets driven away. And even some of Gods true ministersyes, the very best of themsometimes drive poor sinners away from Christ. When they speak of the experience of the saint, the poor sinner writes bitter things against himself because he does not feel that he comes up to the experience which some of the Lords children have had. Ah, we cannot always tell when we are driving poor souls away from Christ. Often, when we think we are wooing them, we are really driving them away! When we would be winning them to the Savior, some harsh expression of ours frightens sinners away from Him! Ah, poor Soul! Have you been driven away? Do you understand and sympathize with what I have said? Before I knew the Lord, I could declare that I was driven away. Once, under a powerful sermon, my heart shook within me and was dissolved in the midst of my body. I thought I would seek the Lord and I bowed my knee and wrestled, and poured out my heart before Him. I ventured within His sanctuary to hear His Word, hoping that in some favored hour He would send a precious promise to my consolation, but ah, that wretched afternoon I heard a sermon wherein Christ was not and I had no longer any hope! I would have sipped at that fountain, but I was driven away! I felt that I would have believed in Christ and I longed and sighed for Him. But ah, that dreadful sermonand those dreadful things that were uttered! My poor soul knew not what was truth, or what was error, but I thought the man was surely preaching the truth and I was driven back. I dared not go! I could not believe I could not lay hold on Christ! I was shut out if no one else was.

Is there someone here who has been thus driven away? I may have done it and I will weep before God in secret on account of it. But let me cheer you. Hear thisI will bring again that which was driven away. As surely as you ever did come once, you will be brought back! That heavenly hour shall once more return! That blessed day shall dawn afresh! Christ shall appear and His love and mercy shall be bestowed on you! He has drawn you once and He will draw you again, for God never fails! He may, for wise ends and purposes, suffer you to be driven away once, but He will ultimately bring you to Himself, for He has said, I will bring again that which was driven away.

The other two points have, I think, something to do with the driving awayI WILL BIND UP THAT WHICH WAS BROKEN. This, I think, refers to those who have been broken by being driven away. The shepherds smote them so hard that they even broke their bones. How many have there been who, when they thought they had found Christ, but were driven away, have felt from that moment that they were broken, that they were more sorely wounded than ever they had been! They did entertain some little hope before, that Christ might look upon then with love, but now they are broken to piecesand that breaking, together with the breaking of the Holy Spirit, which has ground them as in the mortar and pestle of conviction, has so broken them that they feel utterly destroyed. Besides the sickness of sin, they have upon them a sickness partly engendered by the strokes of those who drove them away. Then comes in most blessedly the fourth promise of the textI WILL STRENGTHEN THAT WHICH WAS SICK.

I may be taking an extreme case when I suppose one character in whom those four points meet. Have I anyone here in such a positionnot only lost, not only driven away, but broken and sick? Your head has begun to whirl, you know not how it is, but so strongly have these convictions got hold of you that your very mind seems to suffer from thema mystery to yourselfyou cannot tell where you are! Some say that you are mad and you think, within yourself, that they have good ground for the suspicion. You are sick of your existence and almost ready to take your life! A terrible giddiness has seized you, as if a Hell were kindled in your breast to be the prelude of despair and irrevocable destructionthe first notes of the Miserere of eternal woe! Are you reduced to such a terrible extremity? Are you sick as well as broken and driven away and lost? Hear this, I will seek that which was lost. Can you not believe that Gods promise is true? I will bring again that which was driven away. Do you think that Gods, *I will,* stands for nothing? I will bind up that which was broken. Can you not implicitly believe what God so absolutely affirms? I will strengthen that which was sick. O sick one, God give you Grace to understand that He means what He says and to believe that He will do what He promises! Come now, is there one here in whom all these troubles meet? Let him lift up his head with joy from this moment, for Jesus Christ has come to save him and his sighing shall, before long, be exchanged for songs of thanksgiving!

II. Now, very briefly, let me hint at the four characters separately. First, *that which was lost.* This, of course, is the awakened sinner who is made to know that, in Adam, he is lost and by his own sins he is utterly ruined and destroyed. Such an one has here the Divine authority for hope that God will seek him and that he shall yet be saved.
I will bring again that which was driven away. This refers to the backslider who has been driven away from God by sin. Strong temptations have goaded him to follow the propensities of his own wicked will. Poor Backslider, God will restore you! Oh, I could tell of some here who have greatly and grievously departed from the paths of righteousness! And the leanness will testify that they have been driven from the pastures. Let me say to you, in Gods name, that He will bring back that which was driven away. Oh but, you say, six years ago I dishonored my profession, and ever since I have been as one estranged from his people. Yes, but if you are the Lords child, if it were 60 years, He would bring you back with weeping and lamentation unto Zion! Oh, Sir, but I have so disgraced the cause! Turn you, turn you at His bidding! God invites you to come! My backsliding Brother, my backsliding Sister, I will not condemn you. I may become a backslider, too, and the best of these who now stand fast by Jesus may be, likewise, overtaken in a fault. You are condemned enough in your own heartI would not that you should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Go and proclaim these words toward the north and say, Return, you backsliding Israel, says the Lord; and I will not cause My anger to fall upon you. Tis even so with our God. Yet does He devise means that His banished be not expelled from Him. Come, Ephraim! You have been a stubborn child, still your Father bids you come home! Come, Prodigal! You have wasted your substance, yet a Fathers loving eyes have beheld you when you were a great way off. Come! His breast heaves with love for you! Come, you driven-away one, come to Him! He loved you before you loved Him and though you did rebel against Him, He has never ceased to love you! Though you have sinned much, His loving heart is immutably the same. Oh believe in His goodness in the teeth of your own unworthinessso shall you be comforted and the word on which He has caused you to hope shall be fulfilled, I will bring again that which was driven away.
The next character is *the broken one.* The child of God is often brokenespecially if he has been a backslider. He is sure to have broken bones and he is likely to limp all the rest of his days. Or the Believer may be broken by trouble, by affliction, or by assaults of the enemy. He may be broken on account of the inbred sin manifested to him by the Holy Spirit. But, broken one, God will help you, for He has said, I will bind up that which was broken. Sweet thought! Precious promises are the ligatures with which God Himself binds up broken bones! Marvelous Surgeon! God Almighty Himself bowing down from Heaven to put the heavenly liniment and the fair white linen of a Saviors righteousness round about the wounded spirit! Broken one, rejoice! God says, I will bind up that which was broken.
Lastly, there are *the sick ones,* and many such there are among the Lords people. Their faith is weak. Their prayers are not so spiritual and fervent as they desire. There is a chill about them, or else a heat of feverish anxiety. Their hearts often palpitate with gloomy fears and sad forebodingsthey are not so healthy as they desire to be before God they long for that perfect love which casts out fear. Yes then, do you feel that sickness, Saint, this morning? Say not because you are sick that God will let you die. No, for He says, I will strengthen that which was sick. So then, Saints in all your distresses, Sinners in all your sins here are exceedingly great promises ministered unto you this morning! And may the Holy Spirit show you their infinite value and apply then to you with demonstration and with power! How unspeakable the satisfaction to a poor sinner when he hears the physician minutely describe all his ailments! But to hear him speak with confidence that however painful, no symptom is beyond his skill, how the patient will brighten up! Your case, my Brother, is more cheering still! Have you not sometimes heard your doctor say, When you recover from this sickness, you will be better than you were before? Well now, think how far Gods mercies exceed our miseries, how far His cure extends beyond our maladies, how sure He is to do for His people exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think! Then, despairing Soul, though you have all four maladies, you shall have all four promises! If you are a member of His family, for every affliction and every chastisement you shall get so many peaceable fruits of righteousness, so that you will afterwards kiss the rod and subscribe to Davids testimony, Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept Your Word. And mark you thisin the fulfillment of Gods promises you shall receive

double for all your distresses!
And now, can I say any more? Have I not gone to the uttermost case in the application of my text? Are there any poor souls that I have not reached? Then let me try once again. My dear Friends, do you know yourselves to be lost and ruined by the Fall? Do you feel that you are utterly undone, ruined and lost without Christ? Well then, in His name I solemnly declare this great Truth of the Gospelthat all who know this and feel it may confidently believe that there is salvation for them! The only proof that I can give you that you shall be saints is that you feel that you are now sinners. O poor sin-sick Soul, I thank God that you are afflicted with this sickness, for now you will have recourse to the Physician! O poor Sinner, I thank God that you know yourself to be poor, for God will make you rich!
But as for such as you are as the text says, the fat and the strong, you who boast that you are good enough and have need of nothing, go your own wayyou want no Gospel and I have none to preach to you! You who are so good and excellent, you want no Christ to save youyou will despise the man who comes in Christs name to preach free, unmerited, Sovereign Love. And what if you do? Does he care for your contempt? Not one whit! Reproach will sit lightly on him if he may but win souls to be found in Christ at last. If you need not the medicine, spurn it if you please, but you are fools for your pains! And if you want it not for yourselves, if you are so whole that you need not the physician, hoot him not while he goes to attend upon those who feel their danger to be imminent! Grumble not that I preach no Gospel to you, for you want it not! You are as good as you can bein fact, rather better than most Christians in your own opinion! You are no cants, no hypocrites. You may want a patch or two of religion to make you all right at last. Your garments are white and courtlythey only need a little brushing to take the dust off. Alas for you, Sirs, Hell is built for such good people as you are! You shall find no place in Heavenits blessed mansions are prepared for sinners saved by Grace! Hells dark dungeons remain for those who reject Christ, despise mercy and scorn to sue for pardon because they deem themselves too good, too holy, too excellent to need a Savior!
I say again, as for you who are fat and strong, God will feed you with judgment! You think to stand by your own works, but your best works will destroy you! You shall appear before God in your own characters and they shall ruin you forever. You think your own merits will suffice and that God will bestow on you a reward. Yes, and He will reward you, and a terrible recompense it shall be when you shall find yourselves receiving what you have earnedtribulation, wrath and destruction from the Presence of the Lord your God! Your consciences tell you that what I speak is true. You may despise the warning now, but in the silent moments of your sober thought it shall cling to you and haunt you. When your guilt recoils on your memory. When your heart and flesh fail, and your reason totters at the prospect of a dread hereafter, you will howl with misery and cry out, Woe worth the day!
Now you lost and ruined, come to Jesus! You broken Sinners, believe in Jesus! You that are bruised and mangled by the Fall, come to Jesus ***Come you needy, come and welcome!***
Gods free bounty glorify.
True belief and true repentance,
Every Grace that brings us nigh,
Without money,
Come to Jesus Christ and buy!
Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream
All the fitness He requires
Is to feel your need of Him
And this He gives you!
Tis His Spirits rising beam.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #28 New Park Street Pulpit 1

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST
NO. 28

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JUNE 3, 1855, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT NEW PARK CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.
And I will make them and the places round about My hill a blessing and I will cause the shower to come down in his season. There shall be showers of blessing. Ezekiel 34:26.

The Chapter (Ezekiel 34) that I read at the commencement of the service is a prophetical one. I understand its meaning to refer to the *relation*, not to the *condition* of the Jews during the captivity and their subsequent happiness when they should return to their land, but to a state into which they should fall after they had been restored to their country under Nehemiah and Ezra and in which state they still continue to the present day. The Prophet tells us that the shepherds then, instead of feeding the flock, fed themselves. They trod the grass, instead of allowing the sheep to eat it and they fouled the waters with their feet. This is an exact description of the state of Judea after the captivity. For then there arose the Scribes and Pharisees who took the key of knowledge and would not enter themselves nor allow others to enter. They laid heavy burdens on mens shoulders and would not touch them with one of their fingers. They made religion to consist entirely in sacrifices and ceremonies and imposed such a burden on the people that they cried out, What a weariness it is! That same evil has continued with the poor Jews to the present day. Should you read the nonsense of the Talmud and the Gemara and see the burdens they laid upon them, you would say, Verily, they have idle shepherds. They give the sheep no food. They trouble them with fanciful superstitions and silly views and instead of telling them that the Messiah is already come, they delude them with the idea that there is a Messiah yet to come who shall restore Judea and raise it to its glory. The Lord pronounces a curse upon these Pharisees and Rabbis. These who thrust with side and with shoulder, those evil shepherds who will not suffer the sheep to lie down, neither will feed them with good pasture. But after having described this state, Ezekiel prophecies better times for the poor Jew. The day is coming when the careless shepherds shall be as nothing. Then the power of the Rabbis shall cease. Then the traditions of the Mishna and the Talmud shall be cast aside. The hour is approaching when the tribes shall go up to their own country, when Judea, so long a howling wilderness, shall once more blossom like the rose. Then, if the Temple, itself, is not restored, yet on Zions hill shall be raised some Christian building where the chants of solemn praise shall be heard, as of old the Psalms of David were sung in the Tabernacle. Not long shall it be before they shall comeshall come from distant lands, wherever they rest or roam. And she who has been the offscouring of all things, whose name has been a proverb and a byword, shall become the glory of all lands! Dejected Zion shall raise her head, shaking herself from dust, darkness and the dead. Then shall the Lord feed His people and make them and the places round about His hill a blessing. I think we do not attach sufficient importance to the restoration of the Jews. We do not think enough of it. But certainly, if there is anything promised in the Bible, it is this. I imagine that you cannot read the Bible without seeing clearly that there is to be an actual restoration of the children of Israel. There they shall go up. They shall come with weeping unto Zion and with supplications unto Jerusalem. May that happy day soon come! For when the Jews are restored, then the fullness of the Gentiles shall be gathered in. And as soon as they return, then Jesus will come upon Mount Zion to reign with His ancients gloriously and the halcyon days of the Millennium shall then dawn. We shall then know every man to be a brother and a friend. Christ shall rule with universal sway!

This, then, is the meaning of the textthat God would make Jerusalem and the places round about His hill a blessing. I shall not, however, use it so this morningI shall use it in a more confined senseor, perhaps, in a more enlarged senseas it applies to the Church of Jesus Christ and to this particular Church with which you and I stand connected. I will make them and the places round about My hill a blessing. And I will cause the shower to come down in his season. There shall be showers of blessing.

There are two things here spoken of. First, *Christs Church is to be a blessing*. Secondly, *Christs Church is to be blessed*. These two things you will find in the different sentences of the text.

I. First, CHRISTS CHURCH IS TO BE A BLESSING. I will make them and the places round about My hill a blessing. The objective of God in choosing a people before all worlds was not only to save that people, but through them to confer essential benefits upon the whole human race. When He chose Abraham He did not elect him simply to be Gods friend and the recipient of peculiar privileges. But He chose him to make him, as it were, the conservator of Truth. He was to be the ark in which the Truth should be hid. He was to be the keeper of the Covenant in behalf of the whole world! And when God chooses any men by His Sovereign Electing Grace and makes them Christs, He does it not only for their own sake, that they may be saved, but for the worlds sake. For know you not that, you are the light of the world?A city set upon a hill which cannot be hid? You are the salt of the earth. And when God makes you salt, it is not only that you may have salt in yourselves but that, like salt, you may preserve the whole mass. If He makes you leaven it is that like the little leaven, you may leaven the whole lump. Salvation is not a selfish thing. God does not give it for us to keep to ourselves, but that we may thereby be made the means of blessing to others! And the great day shall declare that there is not a man living on the surface of the earth but has received a blessing in some way or other through Gods gift of the Gospel. The very keeping of the wicked in life and granting of the reprieve was purchased with the death of Jesus. Through His sufferings and death the temporal blessings which both we and they enjoy are bestowed on us. The Gospel was sent that it might first bless those that embrace it and then expand, so as to make them a blessing to the whole human race!

In thus speaking of the Church as a blessing, we shall notice three things. First, here is *Divinity*I will make them a blessing. Secondly, here is *personality of religion*I will make *them* a blessing. And, thirdly, here is *the development of religion*and the *places* round about My hill.

1. First, with regard to this blessing which God will cause His Church to be, here is *Divinity*. It is God, the Everlasting Jehovah, speakingHe says, I will make them a blessing. None of us can bless others unless God has first blessed us. We need Divine workmanship. I will make them a blessing by helping them and by constraining them. God makes His people a blessing by helping them. What can we do without Gods help? I stand and preach to thousands, or it may be hundreds. What have I done, unless a greater than man has been in the pulpit with me? I work in the Sunday schoolswhat can I do, unless the Master is there, teaching the children with me? We want Gods aid in every position. And once give us that assistance, there is no telling with how little labor we may become a blessing, Ah, a few words, sometimes, will be more of a blessing than a whole sermon. You take some little prattler on your kneeand some few words that you say to him he remembers and makes use of in later years. I knew a gray-headed old man who was in the habit of doing this. He once took a boy to a certain tree and said, Now, John, you kneel down at that tree and I will kneel down with you. He knelt down and prayed and asked God to convert him and save his soul. Now, he said, perhaps you will come to this tree again and if you are not converted you will remember that I asked under this tree that God would save your soul. That young man went away and forgot the old mans prayer. But it chanced as God would have it, that he walked down that field, again, and saw a tree. It seemed as if the old mans name was cut in the bark. He recollected what he prayed for, but the prayer was not fulfilled. But he dared not pass the tree without kneeling down to pray, himselfand there was his spiritual birthplace! The simplest observation of the Christian shall be made a blessing, if God helps him. His leaf also shall not witherthe simplest word he speaks shall be treasured up. And whatever he does shall prosper.

But there is *constraint* here. I will *make* them a blessing. I will give them to be a blessing. I will compel them to be a blessing. I can say myself that I never did anything which was a blessing to my fellow creatures without feeling compelled to do it. I thought of going to a Sunday school to teach. On a certain day, someone calledasked mebegged me prayed me to take his class. I could not refuse to go. And there I was held hand and foot by the superintendent and was compelled to go on. I was asked to address the children. I thought I could not, but no one else was there to do it, so I stood up and stammered out a few words. And I recollect the first occasion on which I attempted to preach to the peopleI am sure I had no wish to do itbut there was no one else in the place. And should the congregation go away without a single word of warning or address? How could I allow it? I felt forced to address them. And so it has been with whatever I have laid my hand to. I have always felt a kind of impulse which I could not resist, but, moreover felt placed by Providence in such a position that I had no wish to avoid the duty and if I had desired it, could not have helped myself. And so it is with Gods people. As they go through their lives, wherever they have been made a blessing, they will find that God seems to have thrust them into the vineyard. Such-and-such a man was once rich. What good was he in the world? He did but loll in his carriage. He did but little good and was of little service to his fellow creatures. Says God, I will make him a blessingso He strips away his riches and brings him into low circumstances. He is then brought into association with the poor and his superior education and intellect make him a blessing to them. God makes him a blessing! Another man was naturally very timid. He would not pray at the Prayer Meeting, he would hardly like to join the Church. Soon he gets into a position in which he cannot help himself. I will *make* him a blessing. And as sure as ever you are a servant of God, He will *make* you a blessing! He will have none of His gold in the lump. He will hammer it out and make it a blessing. I verily believe there are some in my congregation to whom God has given power to preach His name. They do not know it, perhaps, but God will make it known by-and-by. I would have every man look and see whether God is making him do a certain thing. And when once he feels the impulse, let him by no means ever check it. I am somewhat of a believer in the doctrine of the Quakers as to the impulses of the Spirit and I fear lest I should check one of them. If a thought crosses my mind, Go to such a persons house, I always like to do it, because I do not know but what it may be from the Spirit. I understand this verse to mean something like that. I will make them a blessing. I will force them to do good. If I cannot make a sweet scent come from them in any other way, I will pound them in the mortar of affliction! If they have seed and the seed cannot be scattered in any other way, I will send a rough wind to blow the downy seed everywhere. I will *make* them a blessing. If you have never been *made* a blessing to anyone, depend upon it, you are not a child of God! For Jehovah says, I *will* make them a blessing.

2. But notice, next, the *personality* of the blessing. I will make *them* a blessing. I will make each member of the Church a blessing. Many people come up to the House of Prayer where the Church assembles and you say, Well, what are you doing at such-and-such a place where you attend? Well, *we* are doing so-and so. How do you spell *we*? It is a plain monosyllable, you say. Yes, but do you put *I* in we? No. There are a great many people who could easily spell we without an I in it, for though they say, We have been doing so-and-so, they do not say, How much have I done? Did I do anything in it? Yes. This Chapel has been enlarged. What did I subscribe? Two pence! Of course it is done. Those who paid the money have done it. We preach the Gospel. Do we, indeed? Yes, we sit in our pew and listen a little and do not pray for a blessing. We have got such a large Sunday school. Did you ever teach in it? We have got a very good working Society. Did you ever go to work in it? That is not the way to spell, we. It is I will make *them* a blessing. When Jerusalem was built, every man began nearest his own house. That is where you must begin to build, or to do something. Do not let us tell a lie about it. If we do not have some share in the building, if we neither handle the trowel nor the spear, let us not talk about *our* Church. For the text says, I will make *them* a blessing, everyone of them.

But, Sir, what can I do? I am nothing but a father at home. I am so full of business, I can only see my children a little. But in your business, do you ever have any servants? NoI am a servant myself. You have fellow servants? No, I work alone. Do you work alone, then, and live alone, like a monk in a cell? I dont believe that. But you have fellow servants at work, cannot you say a word to their conscience? I dont like to intrude religion into business. Quite right, too, so say I. When I am at business, let it be business. When you are at religion, let it be religion. But do you ever have an opportunity? Why, you cannot go into an omnibus, or a railway carriage, but what you can say something for Jesus Christ! I have found it so and I dont believe I am different from other people. *Cannot do anything*? Cannot you put a tract in your hat and drop it where you go? Cannot you speak a word to a child? Where does this man come from that cannot do anything? There is a spider on the wall. He takes hold on kings palaces and spins his web to rid the world of noxious flies. There is a nettle in the corner of the churchyard. The physician tells me it has its virtues. There is a tiny star in the sky. That is noted in the chart and the mariner looks at it. There is an insect under water. It builds a rock. God made all these things for something! But here is a *man* that God made and gave him nothing at all to do? I do not believe it! God never makes useless things. He has no superfluous workmanship. I care not what you are. You have something to do. And oh, may God show you what it is and then make you do it, by the wondrous compulsion of His Providence and His Grace.

3. But we have to notice, in the third place, *the development of Gospel blessing*. I will make them a blessing, but it does not end thereAnd the places round about My hill. Religion is an expansive thing. When it begins in the heart, at first it is like a tiny grain of mustard seed. But it gradually increases and becomes a great tree, so that the birds of the air lodge in its branches. A man cannot be religious to himself. No man lives to himself and no man dies to himself. You have heard, a score of times, that if you do but drop a pebble in a brook it causes a small ring at first, then another outside of that and then another, and another, till the influence of the pebble is perceptible over the entire bosom of the water. So it is when God makes His people a blessing. I will make a minister a blessing to one or two. I will then make him a blessing to a hundred. I will then make him a blessing to thousands. And then I will make those thousands a blessing. I will make each one, individually, a blessingand when I have done that, I will make all the places round about a blessing. I will make them a blessing. I hope we shall never be satisfied, as members of Park Street, until we are a blessing not only to ourselves, but to all the places round about our hill. What are the places round about our hill? I think they are first, our agencies, secondly, our neighborhood and thirdly, the churches adjacent to us.

First, there are our agencies. There is our Sunday schoolhow near that is to our hill? I speak a great deal about this, because I want it to be brought into notice. I intend to preach a practical sermon this morning, to move some of you to come and teach in the Sunday school, for there we require some suitable men to come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Therefore I mention the Sunday school as a place very near to the hill. It ought to be just at the very foot of it. Yes, it ought to be so near the hill that very many may pass from it to the Church. Then there is our Visiting and Christian Instruction Society which we have for the visiting of this neighborhood. I trust that has been made a blessing. God has sent among us a man who labors zealously and earnestly in visiting the sick. I have, as the superintendent of my beloved Brother, the missionary, a regular account of his labors. His report has most highly gratified me and I am able to bear testimony to the fact that he is very efficiently laboring around us. I want that Society to have all your sympathy and strength. I consider him as a Joshua, with whom you are to go forth by hundreds to those who live in the neighborhood. Do you not know what dark places there are? Walk down a street a little to the right. See the shops open on a Sunday. Some, thank God, that used to open them, now come and worship with us. We shall have more yet. For the earth is the Lords and the fullness thereof, and why should not we have it? My Brothers and Sisters, as you visit the sick, or distribute tracts from door to door, make this your prayerthat this Society, being one of the places round about our hill, may be made a blessing! Let me not forget any agency connected with this Church. There are several more which are places round about our hilland the Lord has just put it into my heart to fashion other societies, which shall be made a blessing to this hilland in a little while you shall hear of them. We have several Brothers in this congregation to whom God has given a mouth of utterance. These are about to form themselves into a society for proclaiming the Word of God. Where God has so blessed His Church and made us to be so noted and named among the people, why should we not keep on? We have been brought up to a great pitch of fervency and love. Now is the time for doing something. While the iron is hot, why not strike and fashion it? I believe we have the materials not only for making a Church, here, that shall be the glory of the Baptist churches in London, but for making churches everywhere throughout the metropolis! And we have more plans on hand, which matured by sober judgment and backed by prudence, shall yet make this metropolis more honored than it has been by the sound of the pure Gospel and the proclamation of the pure Word of God. May God make all our Agenciesthe places round about our hilla blessing!

But next, there is the neighborhood. I am paralyzed, sometimes when I think that we are of so little service to the neighborhood, though this is a green oasis in the midst of a great spiritual desert. Just at the back of us we could find you hundreds of Roman Catholics and men of the very worst character. And it is sad to think that we cannot make this place a blessing to them. It is made a great blessing to you, my Hearers. But you do not come from this district. You come from anywhere and nowhere, some of you, I suppose. People say, There is something doing in that Chapellook at the crowdbut we cannot get in! This one thing I ask never come here to gratify your curiosity. You that are members of other congregations, just consider it your duty to stay at home. There are many stray sheep about. I would rather have them than you. Keep to your own place. I do not want to rob other ministers. Do not come here from charity. We are much obliged to you for your kindly intentions. But we would rather have your seat than your company if you are members of other Churches. We want *sinners* to comesinners of every sort. But do not let us have that sort of men whose ears are everlastingly itching for some new preacherwho are saying, I need something else, I need something else. Oh, I beseech you, for Gods sake, be of some good! And if you are running about from one place to another, you can never expect to be. Do you know what is said of rolling stones? Ah, you have heard of that. They gather no moss. Now, dont be rolling stones but stay at home. God help to make us a blessing to the neighborhood! I long to see something done for the people around here. We must open our arms to them. We must go out into the open air to them. We must and will preach Gods Gospel to them. Let, then, the people around listen to the word of the Gospel. And may it be said, That place is the cathedral of Southwark! So it is now. Out of it goes a blessingGod is pouring out a blessing upon it!

What else do we mean by the places round about our hill? We mean the churches adjacent. I cannot but rejoice in the prosperity of many churches around us. But as our beloved Brother, Mr. Sherman, said last Thursday morning, It is not invidious to say that there are very few churches that are in a prosperous state, but that taking the churches at large, they are in a deplorable condition. It is only here and there, he said, that God is pouring out His Spirit. But most of the churches are lying like barges at Black Friars Bridge when the tide is downright in the mudand all the kings horses and all the kings men cannot pull them off till the tide comes and sets them afloat. Who can tell, then, what good may be done by this Church? If there is a light in this candlestick, let others come and light their candles by it! If there is a flame here, let the flame spread until all the neighboring churches shall be lit up with the glory. Then indeed, shall we be made the rejoicing of the earth for there is never a revival in one spot, but it shall affect others. Who shall tell, then, where it shall end?

Fly abroad, you mighty Gospel!

Win and conquer, never cease!
And it never will cease, when God once makes the places round about His hill a blessing.

II. The second point is that Gods people are not only to be a blessing but THEY ARE TO BE BLESSED. For read the second part of the verse. And I will cause the shower to come down in his season. There shall be showers of blessing. It is somewhat singular, as a prediction of the showers of blessings we hope to receive here, that God sent us showers on the first day of opening. If I were a believer in omens, I would pray that as it rained the first day, so may it rain every day since! When it stops, may the Chapel be shut up. For we only want it open so long as showers of Grace continue to descend.

First, here is S *overeign Mercy*. Listen to these words; I will give them the shower in its season. Is it not Sovereign, Divine Mercy, for who can say, I will give them showers, except God? Can the false prophet who walks among the benighted Hottentots? He says he is a rainmaker and can give them showers. But can he do it? Is there an imperial monarch, or the most learned man on earth, who can say, I will give them the showers in their season? No. There is only one. There is only one hand in which all the channels of the mighty ocean above the firmament are contained. There is only one voice that can speak to the clouds and bid them beget the rain! Out of whose womb came the ice? And the hoary frost of Heaven, who has gendered it? Who sends down the rain upon the earth? Who scatters the showers upon the green herb? Do not I, the Lord? Who else could do it? Is not rain in Gods power? And who could send it except Him? We know that Catholics pretend that they can get grace without getting it directly from God. For they believe that God puts all His Grace into the pope and then that runs down into smaller pipes, called cardinals and bishops, through which it runs into the priests. And by turning the tap with a shilling you can get as much grace as you like! But it is not so with Gods Grace. He says, I will give them showers. Grace is the gift of God and is not to be created by man.

Notice next, it is *needed Grace.* I will give them showers. What would the ground do without showers? You may break the clods, you may sow your seeds, but what can you do without the rain? Ah, you may prepare your barn and sharpen your sickles. But your sickles will be rusted before you have any wheat, unless there are showers. They are needed. So is the Divine blessing

In vain Apollos sows the seed,
And Paul may plant in vain.

In vain you come here, in vain you labor, in vain you give your money ***Till God the plenteous shower bestows,***
And sends salvation down.

Then, next, it is *plenteous Grace*. I will send them showers. It does not say, I will send them drops, but I will send them showers. It seldom rains but it pours. So it is with Grace. If God gives a blessing, He usually gives it in such a measure that there is not room enough to receive it. Where are we going to hold Gods blessing that we have already obtained? I told the people on Thursday that God had promised us that if we brought the tithes into the storehouse He would send us such a blessing that we would not have room to hold it. We have tried it. And the promise has been fulfilled, as it always will be as long as we rely upon it. Plenteous Grace! Ah, we shall need plenteous Divine Grace, my Friends. Plenteous Grace to keep us humble, plenteous Grace to make us prayerful, plenteous Grace to make us holy, plenteous Grace to make us zealous, plenteous Grace to make us truthful, plenteous Grace to preserve us through this life and, at last, to land us in Heaven! We cannot do without showers of Grace! How many are there here that have been dry in a shower of Grace? Why, there is a shower of Divine Grace here. But how is it that it does not fall on some of the people? It is because they put up the umbrella of their prejudice. And though they sit here, even as Gods people sit, even when it rains they have such a prejudice against Gods Word they do not want to hear it! They do not want to love it and it runs off their prejudices. Nevertheless, the showers are there and we will thank God for them where they do fall!

Again, it is *seasonable Grace*. I will give them the shower in its season. There is nothing like seasonable Grace. There are fruits, you know, that are best in their season and they are not good at any other time. And there are Graces that are good in their season but we do not always require them. A person vexes and irritates me. I need Grace just at that moment to be patient! I have not got it and I get angry. Ten minutes after I am ever so patient. But I have not had Grace in its season. The promise is, I will give them the shower in its season. Ah, poor waiting Soul, what is your season this morning? Is it the season of drought? Then that is the seasons for showers. Is it a season of great heaviness and black clouds? Then that is the season for showers! What is your season this morning, business man? Lost money all the week, have you? Now is the season to ask for showers. It is nighttime. Now the dew falls. The dew does not fall in the dayit falls in the night. The night of affliction, trial and trouble. There stands the promiseonly go and plead it. I will give them the shower in its season.

We have one more thought and then we have done. Here is a *varied* blessing. I will give you *showers* of blessing. The word is in the *plural*. All kinds of blessings God will send. The rain is all of one kind when it comes. But Divine Grace is not all of one kind, or it does not produce the same effect. When God sends rain upon His Church, He sends showers of blessing. There are some ministers who think that if there is a shower on their church, God will send a shower of work. Yes, but if He does, He will send a shower of comfort. Others think that God will send a shower of Gospel Truth. Yes, but if He sends that, He will send a shower of Gospel holiness. For all Gods blessings go together! They are like the sweet sister graces that danced hand in hand. God sends showers of blessings!

If He gives comforting Grace, He also gives converting Grace. If He makes the trumpet blow for the bankrupt sinner, He will also make it sound a shout of joy for the sinner that is pardoned and forgiven. He will send showers of blessing.

Now, then, there is a promise in that Bible. We have tried to explain and enlarge upon it. What shall we do with it?
In that book there lies hidden
A pearl of price unknown.

Well, we have examined this rich promise. We as a Church are looking at it. We are saying, Is that ours? I think most of the members will say, It is, for God has poured out upon us showers of blessing in their season. Well, then, if the promise is ours, the precept is ours as much as the promise! Ought we not to ask God to continue to make us a blessing? Some say I did so-and-so when I was a young man. But supposing you are fifty, you are not an old man now. Is there not something you can do? It is all very well to talk about what you *have* done. But what are you doing *now*? I know what it is with some of you. You shined brightly, once, but your candle has not been trimmed lately and so it does not shine so well. May God take away some of the worldly cares and trim the candles a little! You know there were scissors and scissors trays provided in the Temple for all the candles, but no extinguishers. And if there should be a poor candle here this morning with a wick that has not given light for a long while, you will have no extinguisher from mebut I hope you will always have a trimming. I thought the first time when I came to the lamps this morning it would be to trim them. That has been the intention of my sermonto trim you a littleto set you to work for Jesus Christ.

O Zion, shake yourself from the dust! O Christian, raise yourself from your slumbers! Warrior, put on your armor! Soldier, grasp your sword! The captain sounds the alarm of war! O sluggard, why do you sleep? O heir of Heaven, has not Jesus done so much for you that you should live to Him? O beloved Brothers and Sisters, purchased with redeeming mercies, girt about with loving kindness and with tenderness

Now for a shout of sacred joy,
and after that to the battle! The little seed has grown to thiswho knows what it shall be? Only let us strive together without variance! Let us labor for Jesus. Never did men have so fair an opportunity, for the last hundred years, There is a tide that, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune. Shall you take it at the flood? Over the bar, at the harbors mouth! O ship of Heaven, let your sails be out. Let not your canvass be furled. And the wind will blow us across the Sea of Difficulty that lies before us. Oh, that the latter day might have its dawning even in this despised habitation! O my God! From this place cause the first wave to spring which shall move another and then another, till the last great wave shall sweep over the sands of time and dash against the rocks of eternity, echoing as it falls, Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!

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 #1462 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE YOKE REMOVED AND THE LORD REVEALED
NO. 1462

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

They shall know that I am the Lord when I have broken the bars of their yoke.
Ezekiel 34:27.

BUT do not all men know that God is the Lord? They should know it, for He is clearly to be seen in the works of Nature. Even where no Revelation has come, yet Heaven and earth and sea and the rain which brings with it fruitful seasonsfilling mens hearts with food and gladnessall proclaim the Most High! But man, by *wisdom,* knows not God. He shuts his eyes to evidences brighter than the sun and in his willful blindness he sets up an image of wood or stone or gold or silverbows before it and calls that his God! This is the sin of the nations, that they changed the Glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things.

But do not all know God in this landthis land where there is so much Gospel teachingwhere we boast of our open Bible and of our Protestant pulpit? Alas, no! There are multitudes who have heard of God and who say that they believe in Him, but who have no personal acquaintance with Him and do not, in the sense of the text, know that He is the Lord. Ah, dear Friends, there is no knowing God except by personal acquaintance with Him! And there is no personal acquaintance with Him except by His own revealing of Himself to our spirit! You may read as much as ever you will and hear as long as ever you please, but until your own spirit comes into contact with the Spirit of God, you do not and *cannot* know the Lord! You know the report of Him which you have heard with the hearing of the ear, but that is a small matter unless it leads to something higher.

There are, I fear, a great many Christian people whom we must not judge, for they keep up outwardly all that is to be expected in the Christian character according to the common run of profession, nowadays, who, nevertheless, do not truly know God by spiritual fellowship with Him. Their faith stands upon reasonit is based upon argument and appeals to the intellectbut it has never led to personal knowledge and acquaintance. The Lord is, to them, a logical abstraction, not a beloved Person. Or, perhaps, which is somewhat worse, their faith as to God rests upon excitement, upon association, upon the eloquence of a favorite preacher, or something of that sort.

Now, in such cases as this, God is not so known as He should be and, after a while, if another god is preached, a different god from the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, they leave the true God for the false. In these days of worldly wisdom men set up a fresh deity who is more effeminate

and pliable than the glorious God of Moses and of Aaron, the God of the fathers and the Prophets! And, straightway, those who know not the only living and true God, for there is but one, run after this new god, newly set up by these modern Divines who have manufactured him in their studies as certainly as ever the Hindu manufactures mud gods by the river Ganges! They bow before this new god and cry out against the Jehovah of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as if He were to be judged by them and to be no more accounted Lord!

It is amazing to hear them speak of the, stern Deity of the Old Testament, and of, the semi-enlightened views of Moses and Isaiah. As for us, we heartily love Him who made known His ways unto Moses and His acts unto the children of Israeland we desire no other God. Those who know the Lord know that He is still the I AM THAT I AM, unchangeable in all respects! And we know that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, is the same God who revealed Himself at Paran and came with sound of thunder at Sinai! The God who manifests Himself in Jesus Christ is He who spoke to our fathers and the Prophets, for He is the one glorious Lord God!

Now, my Brothers and Sisters, there is no fear of your running after the new gods if you have once known the true God! If, by experience you have been brought into fellowship with the Most High and felt His power and seen His Glory, you will be confirmed in those things which He has taught you and which His Spirit has engraved upon your soul as with an iron pen and written with the point of a diamond.

It appears from the text that there is a process by which Gods own people are brought to know the Lord. This process takes place when He breaks the bars of their yoke. Then they know that the Lord is God! It is clear, therefore, that He must first of all permit His own chosen, for a wise purpose, to come into bondage. They must be in bondage, or else they would not wear the yoke and there would be no opportunity for the Lord to break that yoke. I do not commend the bondageit is a thing to be deploredbut, as Augustine once cried out, Beata culpa! Happy fault! when he saw how sin had made space for the wonderful display of Divine Grace. So I venture to say, Blessed bondage, which gives an opportunity for our God to come in and set His children free! And by thus breaking the bars of their yoke to teach them that He, Himself is the Lord.

Let us now describe, by the help of Gods Spirit, who alone can teach us, this process of breaking the bars of the yoke by which the emancipated know that the Lord is God. There are two things to be considered. First, that *the Lord does break the bars of the yoke of His people.* And, secondly, that *then they know Him to be the Lord.* It is not difficult to show that THE LORD BREAKS THE BARS OF THE YOKE OF HIS PEOPLE, for the yokes which they wear at different times are many and, in the breaking of each one of these, *they learn that He is the Lord*.

You cannot forget the first yoke of which you were conscious. It was a yoke of ironbut you had worn it for many years without feeling it. A spark of Divine Life dropped into your bosom and then you began to perceive that *a yoke of sin, of guilt, of condemnation under the Law* was firmly fixed upon your neck. If you felt as I felt, it was, indeed, an iron bondage and the iron entered into your soul! We can well understand the feeling of some, who, when wearing this yoke, wish that God had made them frogs, or toads, or snakes, or *anything* sooner than that they should be *men* and, being men, should be sinful and obnoxious to Divine wrath!

It is a horrible thing to be a sinnerand when the horror is fully perceived it brings a little Hell into the soul. What stings of scorpions, or teeth of lions, or lashes of a whip of wire can be more sharp and cutting than reflections such as theseI have sinned and cannot undo the sin. I have provoked God and can make no atonement for my provocation. I deserve His wrath and can present no plea why that wrath should not come upon me? The fabled Atlas, when the world pressed on his shoulders, was not more loaded than an awakened conscience pressed with its own iniquities! It is easy to talk of conviction of sin, but to *feel* it is quite another matter! It puts the soul under saws and under harrows of iron and makes it pass through the brick kiln.

Sin on the conscience is a specter which will haunt you by night as well as by dayand drive sleep away from your eyes till your soul chooses strangling rather than life. I say not that conviction is equally terrible in all cases, but some have felt this yoke to be exceedingly heavy and I believe that all Gods people, when the Lord begins to deal with them, to a greater or lesser degree, are bowed down beneath the oppressive bondage. Happy is the hour when the Lord breaks that yoke! He, alone, can remove it but He does it most effectuallyand then we know that He is Jehovah our God that brought us out of the house of bondage! To emancipate a soul from the thralldom of sin is a labor worthy of Godand to His liberating hand be Glory forever and ever!

Then the awakened soul begins to be conscious of a second yoke. More or less, according to temperament and circumstances and so on, but still, in each case we somewhat feel the yoke of *natural corruption* and inbred sin. The moment we become Christians, an inward battle begins. The old self will not tolerate the intruderthe new creature in Christ Jesusand a conflict ensues. The converted man will be clean rid of some sins and scarcely ever feel a temptation to them. Notably, some men who have been given to certain evil habits have never been tempted that way again, but the flesh has taken a turn and rebelled in another direction.

I have known a man, after conversion, tempted to commit a totally new sin for him and the suggestion has been a galling yoke. A passion which before he did not know to be in his soul has been awakened and he has seen the meshes of a net gradually encompassing himthen has he cried out because of the oppression put upon his sin-hating heart! If a Believer has gone very deep in sin before conversion, he will often have a hard battle of it arising from the recollection of old transgressions, old habits and old lusts. You may get the serpent out, but the slime of the reptile still remainsit needs the sanctifying power of the Spirit of God to purge its

former lurking places.

If a lion has long had his lair in a thicket, the hunters may chase him out, but his den is there and likely enough, cubs will come forth when least expected. And so it is with evil in the heart of man. An old cask smells of the wine it held. It will need a great deal of scalding to sweeten it and even then, if you put pure water into it, there will soon be a taste of the old liquor about it. In certain of our petty wars we never seem to come to an endthe natives are not at peace nor will they keep quietthey watch for an opportunity and break out again.

It is so with the war in the Christians soul. You may presume that sin is completely dead in you, but it laughs while you are boasting and before long it will make you weep to think that you were so readily deceived. I have known a Christian man to have a temptation come upon him and though he has not yielded to it in any degree, it has clouded his joy and put a yoke on his neck. The temptation comes. He hates it, but it comes. He goes to God and prays against it, but it comes. He watches every step he takes, but there it comes! It seems to pursue him like his shadow. He would go to the ends of the earth to get rid of it, but there it isit dogs his footsteps.

He kneels down to pray and there it is. It is like the old story of the Scot people who thought they had ghosts in their house so moved away to be rid of thembut as they moved, they heard a noise in the butter churn the mischievous spirits were going with them! So have we known a Christian man move and shift and try to get away from a temptationbut there it has beenthe torment of his life, a sword in his bones piercing him to the heart with daily anguish. To some men of God, temptation to a certain sin has been a galling yoke for years without end! They have cried to God, with their hair almost on end for horror of the sin and yet the suggestion to the evil has thrust itself upon them, as if it would not be refused!

Read in Bunyans, Grace Abounding, how he was haunted with that thought of selling Christ and how the words seemed to ring in his ears Sell Him! Sell Him! Sell Him! Sell Him! Sell Him! till at last he inadvertently said, or thought he said, Let Him go if He will. And then the devil gloried over him and said, You have sold Christ! For the ten thousandth time Satan was a liar in his accusations. Honest John had done nothing of the sort, but he had been so plagued and perplexed with the temptation that he scarcely knew what he said or thought! Madame Bubble, too, is difficult to shake off when she courts a poor pilgrim. Her seductions are only to be resisted on our knees and even then they give us terrible twists. You do not all understand this and I do not wish you should. But if you are now experiencing what I describe, I would have you remember that the Lord can break this yoke, also, and tear away each one of its bars. Very joyful is the deliverance and when it comes, the text is abundantly fulfilledThey shall know that I am the Lord when I have broken the bars of their yoke.

Another yoke which the Lords people have too often borne is that of *a perpetual tendency to unbelief*. Unbelief lies in us all! It is *the* sin of mankindthe root sinthe taproot of all sorts of iniquity. Blessed are those who believe and are strong in faith! The Lord be praised whenever He brings us to full assurance! But there are certain of Gods people who are so very prone to unbelief that on the very slightest turn of circumstances they begin to fret. At little troubles they grow nervous and as to their own spiritual state, they appear to themselves to be in jeopardy every hour. Often the only proof of their spiritual life which they can, themselves, perceive, is their wish to be right, their desire to avoid sin and their longing after God.

They cannot say that they have much joy or much peace through believing, neither can they expect it, for their faith is so exceedingly weak. Others call them, killjoys, because they mope and mourn so much and, in truth, they reflect but small credit upon their religion. They act more as scarecrows to keep others away than as attractions to draw them in. Some of the Lords people seem to be born in the shade and to live in the shade, as if they were descended from the old troglodytes, or cave dwellers, and love to be buried before they are dead. This habit of mind is to be condemned, nor should any who fall into it think lightly of it.

But, dear Friends, we must not be severe upon *others*, or condemn them. We must, on the contrary, feel that they are putting a very heavy yoke upon themselves and that the burden weighs down their spirits and crushes the joy out of them. There are many about whose interest in Christ nobody who knows them can have any doubt at all, whose Christian consistency is beyond all question, whose prayerfulness, whose love of the Word of God, whose simple, child-like trust in Jesus Christ is manifested to everybody except themselves. They are, nevertheless, in heaviness through anxiety as to their state. Their faces shine to others, but they share not in the brightness. No one has a doubt about them, but they are full of doubts for themselves! May the Lord bring up such Brothers and Sisters out of their prison and then shall they know that He is the Lord when He has broken the bars of their yoke.

Some Christians are also loaded with a yoke *through great trouble.* We come together and we look cheerful and happy, but we do not know the burden of the person sitting in the pew with us. In such an assembly as this on Thursday nights I know there is many a merchant who has come from the City where he has been driven to his wits end all day long and he scarcely knows what he shall do. So he has said, Well, I will just run into the House of God and I will hear what the Lord may have to say to my soul. Many and many a time a sweet promise has come home to the bewildered child of God and he has gone away feeling that the Master had sent a message to Him through His servant.

I have known the housewife come up to the House of God in the same stateone child is sick and another sickening. The husband, perhaps, walking in a way that grieves the tender Christian heart of the wife, and home affairs are anything but as they should be. But while she has sat before the Lord, there has come a Word from the Oracle of comfort and

Hannah has been no more sad! Some of our Brothers and Sisters have a perpetual cross to carry. If we knew what they have to suffer in business, suffer in body, suffer in the domestic circleif we knew the weight they have to carrywe should very often communicate to them words of comfort, whereas now, through our not knowing, they are left unheeded and there is little or no Christian sympathy manifested.

Ah, dear Brother, it may be that you have been made to carry a very heavy yoke for years, but when the Lord shall break the bars of your yoke, then shall you know that He is the Lord! I can bear witness that trial has been a great blessing to me. I do not know that I have learned much except in trouble! What little I know has been whipped into me and I suspect it is so with most of my Masters family. By scourging He instructs every son that He receives! But when you have been in sore perplexity and difficulty and did not see your way out of it and could not, in fact, get out of it yourselfthen have you known that the Lord was God when He has, Himself, appeared before you and broken the bars of your yoke! With a song you have magnified His surprising Grace and blessed His delivering love!

I have not time, however, to mention all the various yokes, but I would say, next, that *many yokes which Gods people bear they cannot break themselve*s. When the sinner bears the yoke of sin he cannot get it off. He may tug and tug, but he only galls himself and fixes the yoke tighter than ever. The riveted fetter of sin is not to be shaken off! Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? If so, then he who is accustomed to do evil may learn to do well by himself, apart from Divine Grace! The yoke of despondency of mind and, very frequently, the yoke of temporal trouble, will be such that a man cannot free himself from them.

Stand still and see the salvation of God, is sometimes the very best advice you can give to a man in distress. He is like a drowning manthe more he struggles, the quicker he goes down. He cannot help himself. The Lord often puts His people, on purpose, into positions where there is an end of the creature, where all carnal hope fails, where you look all around and not a single ray of light gladdens your weary eyes till the star of Bethlehem breaks forth and heralds the morning! But, dear Friends, let us remember that though yokes are very many and some of them are such that we cannot possibly break them off, yet *there is no yoke but what the Lord can readily enough take from His people*. To remove the yoke of sin He brings the pardoning blood of Jesus near and our heavy load departs. As for the power of sin over us, we overcome it through the blood of the Lamb.

As for our daily cares, we cast our cares on Him who cares for us. As for our despondencies of spirit, our soul has heard Him say, Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. Nothing is impossible with God and, therefore, dear Friends, though the peculiar form of your distress at this time is known to none but your heavenly Father and yourself, I am quite safe in saying that God can remove it in an instant if He pleases. He lifts the beggar from the dunghill and sits him among princes. He brings forth those that are bound with chains. 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.

One of His saints of old recorded his experience in these words, Out of the depths have I cried unto You, O God, and You heard me. His experience is that of all the captives who trust in the Lord. No condition is so dark that He cannot, at once, enlighten it and no case is so hopeless that He cannot instantly relieve it. Do you believe that? Are you sure of it? Why, the very belief of that fact ought to minister comfort to your mind! One other reflection comes to me and it is this. *We may expect the Lord to break the bars of our yoke*. If He can do it and we are His people, we may *expect* Him to do it. Our children look for a great deal from their fathers and I think you will find that friends and relatives frequently expect much more of you than they are likely to getbut none ever expected more of God than God has been pleased to bestow.

My soul, wait only upon God, for my expectation is from Him. You know, if your child were sick and you could heal him, he would not be rash in expecting you to do it. And if your child were carrying an intolerable load and you, as his father, could release him from it, it would be only a natural expectation that he should reckon that you would do so. Oh you, then, that are oppressedexpect to be set free! Captives under the bondage of sin, since you *feel* sin to be a slavery, you are the Lords prisoners of hope! Oh, you that have the deepest sense of guilt and have written the blackest things against yourselves, expect the Lord to set you free! If He had meant to destroy you, He would have left you to bear your sin in utter indifference and would not have convinced you of it.

What can be the good of His giving you two Hellsone here and another hereafter? No, He is judging you *now*! He is bringing you to pronounce sentence against yourself that you may plead guilty and that He may absolve you through His abounding Grace! Christian, He is bringing you low; He is stripping you; He is casting you into the mire; He is beating you small as the dust of the streets and all because by this means He will make you see your nothingness and will cause you more fully to appreciate the splendor of His Grace and the all-sufficiency of His power! Knowing this, faith may help us to rejoice in tribulation the moment it arrives, saying, Here is my Fathers black horse come to my door to bring me a new token of love from Him.

We glory in tribulation, also, knowing that tribulation works patience, and patience experience, and experience hope. O Ground, welcome the spade that is to turn you into a garden! O Soul, welcome the affliction that is, through infinite mercy, to make you bring forth fruit unto your God! Then shall you know that the Lord is God when He has broken the bars of your yokeand this you may expect Him to do! Thus much upon the first head, namely, that the Lord does break the bars of His people.

II. Now, secondly, WHEN HE DOES THIS, THEN THEY KNOW HIM TO

BE THE LORD. Here we come to personal *experience*. Beloved, when we have great deliverances from bondage, then we begin to see the Divine attributes displayed. You all believe God to be very powerful, for you have heard His voice in the thunder and seen His might in the tempest. But when you have been brought into very deep distress and God has brought you out of it with a high hand and an outstretched arm, then you have said, Now I see His power! No hand but His could have moved that burden and He has done it.

I do not suppose that all of you can go with me in this, but you who have done business in great waters have seen the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep. You have known times when if anybody had told you that you would be delivered you would have said, Impossible! Impossible! Yet you have been delivered and you have cried out, This is the finger of God! Now I know that there is a God in Israel, for He has done for me what no man could have accomplished, no, nor the angels of God! You have felt the power of God come so near to you that you have said, like Jacob, How dreadful is this place! Awe has overwhelmed you at the thought that God should display such power towards such an unworthy one as you, to lift you up from such depths of trouble!

You must also have seen with wonderful vividness the attribute of *wisdom.* You have been all in a snarl. You have done your best and you have made things worse. You have gone for advice and the advice has perplexed you. You have looked in all directions and the more you have looked, the less hope you have seen. And then, all of a sudden, Gods finger has seemed to be put out and all the knots have been untied and His Word has been fulfilledI will make the crooked places straight and the rough places plain.

You have had clear sailing where rocks appeared to hem you inand when you have safely passed both Scylla and Charybdis you have magnified the Divine Pilot and been astounded at His Infallible wisdom! Then have you called Him, the only wise God, and felt that He has abounded towards you in all wisdom and prudence. The path of your feet, as you have looked back upon it, has shone with mercy and you have said, What a blessed road is this by which I have been led! I thank God that I came this way! It is the best path that I have ever trodthe most soul-enriching yet! What wisdom has been shown towards me! I have had a considerable trouble, but it has saved me from one a thousand times worse. I have been a great loser but, still, I am a greater gainer than a loser! I would not have missed this trial though I dreaded it! I would not have missed it for a thousand worlds! No one could have told me how this was to be done, nor by what process I was to be released, but now I know that the Lord is exceedingly wise and wonderful in counselblessed be His name!

If any caviler had answered you, I do not believe in Providenceit is all stuff and nonsense! I do not suppose that you would have had much more patience with such a person than I should have and that is wonderfully little, for I am of the mind of a good old man to whom I was speaking yesterday, who said, Mainly I read my Bible and having read it about 50 years and having tried it and lived by faith upon Godthe modern humbug of the free-thinkers does not bother me. I know better! I never argue about it. I have lived upon the old doctrines and know the truth of them. You will see, as I quote his words, that he put it rather strongly! But I am altogether of the old mans mind.

Gentlemen waste their words when they try to make me doubt the overruling Presence and personal interference of the Lord in the affairs of His people. They might as well tell me that I have no father, or that I never had a mother and that my parents never treated me kindly. I know what I know and I know thisthe Lord is kind in all His ways and that His Providence does continually interpose on behalf of His praying people! If the learned doubters cannot see a Providencewell, perhaps no special Providence has been sought for by them or vouchsafed to them. If they have no God and no Providence, of course they cannot bear witness to what they do not know! Let them go home and pray God to teach them.

But we know that God *does* appear for us and are not to be beaten out of it. And we expect to accumulate much more personal evidence upon that subject between this and Heaven, for we shall again suffer times of dark distress in which God will appeal for us and we shall know that He is the Lord by His breaking the bars off our neck! The Lords *love* is also clearly revealed in our deliverances. Have you not sat down with tears of gladness in your eyes and said to yourself, What a God He is! Oh, what a God He is! Have you not almost wanted to get up into a high pulpit, with all the world around you, that you might bear witness to His Grace to you on each particular occasion? My feet were almost gone, my steps had wellnear slipped. I was in a great strait. I was hemmed in. I knew not what to do and I had grieved Him by my sin and wandered from Him.

But though I had forgotten Him, He did not forget me! Though I was unbelieving, He was faithful! Though I was foolish, He was wise and He set my feet into a large roomtherefore is my mouth opened and my heart constrains me to speak well of His name before many witnesses. I know that there are some of you who never will be able to tell what love God has manifested to you. The poet, though he strained the sense, yet spoke the truth when he said

But O eternitys too short

To utter half Your praise.

We shall never get through it, Brothers and Sisters! There is no fear of our stopping the eternal music for lack of matter, for the goodness, the Grace and the love of God to us are past finding out and are altogether infinite! When we have had the bars of our yoke suddenly broken, then the Divine love in its boundless length and breadth has been conspicuously before us and we have known the Lord.

Thus I might speak of each of the Divine attributes, but I choose rather to pass to another topic. It is this. When the bars of our yoke have been broken, *it is often in answer to* prayer and because that liberty has come in answer to prayer, we have exclaimed, Now I know the Lord. If you have gone to God 20 times about a thing(no, 20 times would be nothing). If you have risen in the night watches and cried with groans and tears about your burden! If you have walked your garden or walked the

streets and all the while your soul has been crying, My Father, deliver me! pleading every argument your soul knew with God that He would come to your rescuethen, when the rescue has comeyou have known the Lord! An answered prayer is a window into Gods existence, a proof of His faithfulness, an evidence of His Presence. There you see that He is and that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

So, again, we know Him from another reason *the special hand of God is often seen* in the breaking of the yoke of His peoplethe special hand. Those who look at Providences carefully, will often wonder at the specialties of God about little things. For instance, about the timethe exact time. God never is before His time and He is never late. He times His mercies to the tick of the clock. If they had come a little before, they might have been misused. If they came a little later, our spirit might have been broken and the steed might have been starved while the grass was growing. There it isthe moment the hand of the devil lifted the dart, the hand of the Eternal lifted the shield so that the dart was turned aside. Wonderful are the punctualities of God!

You have noticed them. I am sure you must have done so. You have met a friend by accidentally going down one street when you generally went anotherand that very friend has been the one that you most needed to see. I have known what it is to go out of my way and to complain of myself for having made such a blunder and thus wasting half-anhourtill I have seen the person that I wanted to meet above all men, but had not thought of him as the right person to enquire ofand he has told me exactly what I wanted to know! I was going the right way when I was going out of the way! But often it is so and so you shall find it and you shall have to lift up your hands and say, Now, also, do I know the Lord time, place, circumstances, words, little petty details, small thingsHe has had a hand in them all.

Blessed be God, I said, to a dear one today, for our great God, that He loves us in great troubles. And, she replied, blessed be His name that nothing is *too little* for Him. So do I say tonight! Blessed be His name for breaking the little bars of our yoke and for removing the great yokes by such small but effectual means! We most admire those little touches which are so Omnipotent! The magicians of Egypt turned water into blood, or pretended to do it, and they brought forth frogsbut when once Aaron began to make the dust into tiny life, they could not counterfeit the wonder and they said, This is the finger of God! Frequently by minute marvels God reveals Himself most clearly to the secret souls of His people and they hear, in His still small voice, more of His mind than in His thunder and mighty wind.

Dear Friends, if you have passed through any great and special deliverances, you will join with me in feeling that the Presence of God is often vividly perceived. I fear that the Presence of God is not often felt as it ought to be at a dinner table when a number of people are met together and are enjoying themselves. But I remember my feeling the Presence of God at a dinner table on a memorable occasion. There was a very large sum of money to be paid for the building of the Orphanage and I was up with certain friends at Regents Parkdining at the house of one of our Brothers. I there mentioned that I was short of some 2,000 pounds to meet an account which would very soon be due, but that I was sure that God would graciously give it, for it was His work and He would supply its needs in answer to prayer.

We were discussing as to whether it was not rather bold to speak too positively about answers to a prayer of such a kind and while we were still discoursing, there came a telegram from the Tabernacle to me, saying, A person unknown has called and left 2,000 pounds in bank notes for the Orphanage. I read the telegram to the friends assembled and their gratitude and astonishment abounded! My dear old friend, Dr. Brock, who is now with God, said, Put down your knives and forks and let us bless the name of the Lord. And he stood up and poured out His heart in a most wonderful manner in devout thankfulness to the Answerer of prayer! We all heartily joined in that act of devotion. The Lord was therewe felt His Presence as much as if it had been a sacramental supper, for the Lord had drawn so near to us. If someone had said to us just then, Well, you know, this is a coincidence, a mere coincidence, we should have laughed and I, for one, would have said, It is a very blessed coincidence and I hope it will go on coinciding, for truly it coincides with the promise and with my faith in God.

The devil does not give his followers such coincidences! Let me say that I have prayed and God has heard me and we can boldly say, Now I know the Lord, for He has broken the bars of my yoke in answer to prayer and I have felt Him near. Yes, and we feel Him so near that often we are obliged to utter words of praise!

See what the Israelites did when they had been in Egypt making bricks without straw and seeing their male children destroyed by a merciless tyrant. It was a happy, happy time for them when, at midnight, they came out of Egypt! Do you wonder, after they had crossed the Red Sea and Pharaoh and his chariots had all been drowned in the midst of it, that when they saw their enemies dead upon the shore, Miriam took her timbrel and all the daughters of Israel went forth with music chanting, Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously. The horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea?

Be quiet, good women! The philosophers have discovered that God is the totality of existence and that He has no personality and, consequently, never interferes with the fixed laws of matter! You must not believe that He drowned those Egyptians by His own act and deed! It was an extraordinary *natural* phenomenon which occasionally happens just about that time and place! You ought rather to wonder at the marvelous laws of gravitation by which these Egyptians have sunk under the water.

Thus some superfluously wise fool might have prated to the women of Israel! But what would they have thought of him? What would Miriam have said to that? Modern philosophers explain all miracles away and Colenso, with a slate, figures the whole story of the Exodus into thin air!

What would Moses have said to him for a bishop? In the presence of that miracle, with their shoulders still red with the lash, their faces still grimed with the brick dust, conscious that they had been in bondage and *knew* itand were now free and that none but the eternal Jehovah could have set them freethe sons of Jacob would have pitched the philosophers into the Red Sea along with the Egyptians! I almost wish they were there, for they are of no use among us nowadays!

Infinite Mercy lets the creatures live, but we shall not cease from our glorying in our God because of what they call their criticism. In our case is fulfilled the promise, They shall know that I am the Lord when I break the bars of their yoke. Beloved, if you do not know the Lord personally, do not talk about Him, nor pretend to know Him! But if you

know Him, be not afraid of being called dogmatic because you speak confidently! Read the Epistles of John and see how the beloved disciple harps upon that word. He says, we know. We know. We know. We know. The word occurs, perhaps, 40 times in those short Epistles. Know what you know, and when you know it, do not be driven from it, but let the text be fulfilled in your experience, *They shall know* that I am the Lord when I have broken the bars of their yoke.

If your sins have been forgiven, if you have been brought up out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay. If you have been delivered from the power of sin, so as, to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord, or aim at it. And if you have been blessed in Providence with answers to prayer and many a time rescued as from between the lions jaws, then say, The Lord lives and blessed be my Rockand I will walk by faith in Him. As for others, let them say what they will and doubt what they pleasemy soul follows hard after the Lord, for His right hand upholds me.

There I leave the subject, praying that every one of you may have the bars of your yoke broken, for then shall you know the Lord, and not till then. The Lord bless you evermore. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONEzekiel 34 **HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK708, 126, 660.**

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A CALL TO THE LORDS OWN FLOCK
NO. 1807

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 2, 1884, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Thus shall they know that I, the Lord their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are My people, says the Lord God. And you are My flock, the flock of My pasture, you are men, and I am your God, says the Lord God. Ezekiel 34:30, 31.

THE sermon of this morning is intended for the flock of God and it will be directed very pointedly to that particular part of it here gathered in fellowship. God has been coming very near to us of late, for a considerable number of Brothers and Sisters have fallen asleep during the last few daysnearly all of them persons of ripe age who have been gathered as sheaves in their season. Others are evidently upon the eve of departure, for their infirmities are multiplied and their strength is small. When the Good Shepherd is taking one and another into His bosom and bearing them away from us, the rest of us ought to recognize His Presence with holy reverence. Let us feel that the ground whereon we stand is holy, and that the time is most suitable for increased devotedness of life. Let us number our days and apply our hearts unto wisdom. If we do not live when life is seen to be so short, how foolish we must be! If we do not awaken ourselves when the Lord is calling home our Brethren, we must be sluggards, indeed. Let us spend the time of our sojourning here in fear, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God.

This is the special matter of which I would speak today. God has, in great mercy, gathered to Himself a Church in this place for these many years. He has multiplied the people and increased their joyand we have joyed before Him as with the joy of harvest. Nothing has happened to mar our unity or prevent our success, for God has been with us. Many have been added to us of such as are saved and we have gone from strength to strength in Christian enterprise, never failing to accomplish our work. But the tendency of all human things is to deteriorate. There is a downdragging influence in the world and we, ourselves, are such creatures of the earth that we all too easily yield to its attractions. If we run well for a time, yet we grow weary and slacken our pace.

This we do all the more readily and unconsciously if we are surrounded by those whose pace is slow. We are apt to think that *our* running is faster than necessary and that we shall be quite as well thought of if we keep up with the many, or are just a trifle in advance of them. Oh, how soon shall we lag in the rear if we listen to this evil suggestion! The voice of the Spirit to the Church of Philadelphia was, Hold that fast which you have, that no man take your crown. It is a great thing to have done so well as to have a crown, but it is a greater thing to hold it fast! Men of the world tell us that it takes much wit and industry to make a fortune, but that it is far more difficult to keep it when it is made. I am sure that in *spiritual* things it is so! For a Church to be thoroughly prosperous in the life and work of God is difficult enough, but to *continue* sothis is the work, this is the labor!

Hence our cries to God that He will be pleased to keep us as a Church faithful to His Truth, united with one another, earnest in the glorifying of God and diligent in the winning of souls. It would be a calamity of no mean order if this Church should decline. For the sake of those unpopular Truths of God which we uphold, it is a matter for daily prayer that this Church may be maintained in honorable usefulness evermore! To that end I wish to speak with you, this morning, my own dear Brothers and Sisters. Strangers must pardon me if I make much of you and even seem to be egotistical in my address. I risk all that for the sake of the necessary Truth of God which I must put before you.

To my mind, this day is a day of good tidings. The Lord has done great things for us of which we are glad. Let us glory in His holy name and let us walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing so that we may enjoy a continuance of His favor. May the outstretched arm of the Most High still be with us, that we may see more and more of the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ towards fallen man.

I. Calling your attention to our text, I shall notice, first, what the text rather *suggests* than declares, namely, OUR PROFESSION TOWARDS GOD. Read onThus shall they know that I, Jehovah, am their God. It is implied, then, that *we know Jehovah to be our God*. So many of us as are joined together in Church fellowship here have declared that Jehovah is the only one living and true God. He has revealed Himself to us in these latter days as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and we unfeignedly accept the Triune God as our God forever and ever. Other lords have had dominion over us, but now we yield ourselves unto God without reserve. The God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob is the God of Believers to this day. We do not wish to have any other God, although in these days the carnally wise have set up another.

Their god is a god who has no justice or righteousnesshe takes small account of sin and mainly seeks to make things pleasant all round. This effeminate deity now occupies the place once given to Apollo or Venus, and he is as much a false god as they were. *Our* God does not suffer one attribute to eclipse anotherHe has all excellencies in perfection. Remember how Moses spoke concerning our God and said, The Lord is long-suffering and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty? This God is our God forever and everHe will be our God even unto death.

A second profession we have made is this, that *we are His people*. That they, even the house of Israel, are My people, says the Lord God. This is involved in the first profession, but it is not always sufficiently thought of. We are, as Believers, in common with *all* the people of God, separated unto His service, consecrated to His Glory. We believe that He chose us before the earth was, to be a peculiar people unto Himself. We believe that He has redeemed us from among men, according to that word, Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it. We believe that by the decree of God we are adopted into the Divine family and acknowledged to be the children of the living God, even we who were once heirs of wrath even as others. We are His people because the Holy Spirit has worked upon us and we have been turned from darkness to light, from the power of sin and Satan unto God. Our song is, My Beloved is mine, and I am His.

We acknowledge the claim founded upon our redemption, You are not your own; for you are bought with a price. To glorify God in our spirits and in our bodies, which are, alike, redeemed, is our reasonable service. Our bands are loosed, we are no more the servants of mennew bonds are about us, for we are now the servants of the living God. In Jehovah is our trust, our joy, our glory! Each one of us can say, He is all my salvation and all my desire. To serve Him is its own reward. To dwell with Him is Heaven! Is it not so with you, my Brothers and Sisters? Have you not lifted up your hands unto the Lord so that you cannot go back? Do you not wish to realize that promise, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people?

Further than that, we have also professed and avowed *our joyful confidence in our ImmanuelGod With Us*. It is an interesting thing to me that this name should be in my text. Look carefully at the English and you will see it in the very first sentencethat I, the Lord their God, am with them. Leave out the word, am, which is in italics, and you get itGod with them. What is this but, God with us? Today we believe in the Lord Jesus, who is God With Us. God has come down among men. He has taken upon Himself their nature, so that the Lord Jesus Christ is God and Man in one ever-blessed and indivisible Person and, therefore, He is very near to us, yes, next of kin to us! We rejoice in Him as God With Usour Brother, Friend and Husband. Have we not found it so? Has there not been a Divine nearness between our souls and Christ since that first day when we touched His garments hem and were made whole?

Why, Brothers and Sisters, we have gone on to lean our heads upon His bosom in heavenly rest, like John of old! Yes, some of you have emulated Simeon, for you have taken up the Lords Christ into your arms and said, Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace. Through Christ Jesus we do not only believe in God as yonder in Heaven, but in God by His Holy Spirit dwelling here among men, stirring our hearts, ruling our lives, enlightening our understandings, hallowing our affections and sanctifying our whole being unto God! Is it not so? You do so confess!

This is a very large profession. We are not inclined to start back from it, but when we take it in its threefold characterthis God *our* God, ourselves His people, and Himself, by His Son Jesus Christ, God With Us oh, then, I say, it is a very solemn avowal and one which calls us to a lofty form of life! Blessed are they who stand to this confession and walk worthily of it, for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto them!

Jehovah is our God, in opposition to Romanism and Ritualism, with their idols of one form or another, to which they bow the knee. The invisible Jehovah is our God and not the host, the virgin, the crucifix, or any visible thing! Jehovah is our God in opposition to the new gods of modern thought, which your fathers knew not! Our faith finds the Light of God, as well, in the majesty of the Old Testament as in the mercy of the New. Jehovah is our God in opposition to the no God of infidelity. We believe in a *personal* God and we put our trust in Him as hearing our prayers. We are His people and on Him we call! He has come very near to us and with Him we have sweet communion through Jesus Christ His Son. This is our profession! We dare not say less! We could not say more. Now every profession of so solemn a sort should be backed up with proof. Where shall the proof be found?

II. That shall be our second subject of discourseOUR PROOF FROM GOD. Thus shall they know that I, Jehovah, am with them, and that they are My people, says the Lord God. How shall they know it? In this *one* wayby the Presence of God among us! If God works among us, then even our adversaries shall say, Jehovah-Shammah, The Lord Is There! A tree is known by its fruit and the rule applies even to God, Himself. God is known among us by the acts that He does. He reveals His Presence to His people by His deeds of Grace. I want you to look back through the chapter and then ask whether we have or have not, as a Church, the marks of Jehovahs Presence by which we are attested to be His people.

The first mark is *the gathering in of the scattered*. See verse eleven. Thus says the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out My sheep. I am bound to bear witness that in the midst of us, many have been sought out and saved who but a little while ago were wandering far away from Christ! Whenever I give notice that I will see friends who wish to join the Church, I am cheered by the many who present themselves. They fly as doves to their windows! They tell me glad news of their conversionnews which makes my heart leap for joy! The Lord calls some who were grossly ignorant of the Gospel, to whom it came as a fresh light from Heaven. And He calls others who knew the Truth of God, but slighted it, and turned away from it year after year!

He removes hard-heartedness and indifference by His Grace. His own voice calls men and they come to Him! Many conversions are among us at this timenot only from my own preaching of the Word of God, otherwise might I speak with less freedombut from the school, the missionstations, the street-preaching, the tract-distributing and from every form of effort. Frequently, when I have spoken with a number of new converts, I have found the larger proportion not brought to Jesus Christ by my words from this platform, but brought to Him by you, dear Brothers and Sisters, who have laid yourselves out to win souls. I am but one and you are manythere should be more fruit to the Lord from 5,000 of you than from me! I have desired this, and prayed for it, that you all may be useful. May God multiply you and make you spiritual parents, every one of you, till we may quote the words of Solomons Song and apply them to youThey are like a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, of which every one bears twins, and there is not one barren among them.

Herein is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit. So said your Lord, and you will not forget His words*conversions* are the sure sign of the immediate Presence of the Lord. I pray Him to give us a token of His being with us, this morning, in your conversion, O wounded heart! May some poor trembler come to Jesus! May some penitent plead the promise, I will heal that which is broken. May some wanderer look to the Cross and live! The Lord has promised that He will search His sheep and seek them outand He has fulfilled that word in our midsttherefore He is with us! If I had to stand here and say to you, Brethren, there are no conversions, none are brought to repentance and faith, then might we hold days for fasting and humiliation. And we might, each one, weep his eyes out because the Glory has departed. But the Lord has not left us! No ear has heard the awful words within the holy place saying, Let us go hence. Glory be to His name, His hand is still stretched out for miracles of Grace!

A second token of the Lords Presence is *the feeding of the flock*. The Holy Spirit seems to lay great stress upon that, for thus says the Lord in verse 15I will feed My flock, and I will cause them to lie down. There shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed. Have we not found it so? Have not our Sabbaths been times of holy festival? Has not the King, Himself, banqueted with us? At the Communion Table have we not been transported with such joys as can never be excelled until we behold the Chief Shepherd face to face? When we speak with one another at the close of the Lords Day is not the greeting habitual to some of us, The Lord has been with us again today? You have wished that there were six Sundays and only one workday in the week!

I know that many of you have fed upon the Word of God with great delight. Value greatly this gift, for it comes not from man, but is a choice gift of God! There are congregations where the sheep look up and are not fed. There are places where the Sabbath is the most wearisome day of the week because the people need the Gospel but the Gospel is withheld from them. Saints of God cannot feed upon the husks of philosophical systems or semi-rational speculations. The speech which is half of Ashdod and half of Jerusalem suits not the inhabitant of Zionit is a strange language to him. God grant to this flock, whoever may be their pastor in years to come, that they may relish the Gospel and find it sweet to their palates and strengthening to their hearts!

Another token of the Presence of the Good Shepherd is *the healing of the sick*. I mean the *spiritually* sick, for there is this promise given, I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick. It is a rare joy to restore such as have been overtaken in a fault. Lately I have received several Brothers and Sisters who had gone from us through laxity of life or through falling into novelties of opinion. I am glad to see among those who come to unite with us familiar faces which, for a while, had been missed. Those who have lived where Jesus dwells do not feel easy till they return to such society! They are saying, We will return to our Brethren, with whom we assembled before, for it was better with us then, than now. The Presence of the Lord acts like a charm upon the wanderers and they hasten to return at His bidding. It is pleasant to hear the returning penitent confess how cold in heart he grew and how he sought to find satisfaction in the things of the worldand to hear him tell how he has been brought back to be, in the future, more resolutely faithful and more humbly dependent upon God.

The showers of Grace which have fallen upon us have caused many withered branches to bud forth again! Many are singing, He restores my soul: He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His names sake. If there should have strayed in here, this morning, any who once were among Believers, and happy in the Lord, but have been away for a while and have lost the fervor of their love, let me entreat them to hasten their return! O my Brother, come back! O my Sister, come back! We shall welcome you with intense delight! Like as the man who lost one sheep left the 99 to find it and rejoiced more over the finding of the one lost sheep than over the 99 that had not gone astray, so will it be with us! If backsliders are not brought back in any Church, I would conclude that God is not therebut when they do come back, we rejoice in this evidence of His Presence! The God of our salvation has devised means to bring home His banished and, therefore, He is still in the midst of us. Glory be to His condescending love!

A further proof of the Presence of God in a Church is when *the Lord Jesus Christ is greatly honored,* for here it is written, I will set up one Shepherd over them and He shall feed them, and He shall be their Shepherd. And I, Jehovah, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it. O Brothers and Sisters, if we did not gather to the name of Christ, our gathering would not be a Church of God! If the testimony which issues from our midst were not of Jesus and of His precious bloodand of His Kingdom and of His comingthen we might know that the Lord was *not* with us, for only as we know Christ, will God know us! If your faith rested anywhere but in the glorious Person and finished work of the Son of God, it were a worthless faith! If I preached any other Gospel than that which you have received, I should be an Anathema and not a servant of God! And if you did not labor with all your might to bring souls to Jesus rather than to any sect or party, and to set Jesus forth rather than any peculiar *ism*, then might we rest assured that the Lord was *not* with us.

But in this matter we are clear, for to us Christ is All! Do you not love Jesus? I appeal to your hearts, you that have been baptized into the thrice holy name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

Is not His name melodious, still,
To your attentive ear?
Does not your heart with pleasure bound, Your Saviors voice to hear?

If a Sunday should roll by without Christ, would it not be the reverse of a Sabbath to you? You would sadly miss the Risen One on His own resurrection day! If we should gather together and there should be no discourse concerning Him, and no savor of His name, would you not go away disappointed? He is the First and the Last of our hope, the Author and Finisher of our faith, the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely! And just in proportion as it is so, the Lord is with us! He will never forget those who honor His Son and seek to advance His Kingdom!

Jesus is our Prince! His authority is supreme among us! No popes, bishops, or councils may legislate for us. Jesus is our King! If He is, indeed, the Lord of whom we are the loyal subjects, then the Lord our God is with us and we are His people. Where Jesus is, there dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily. As he that believes in Him has everlasting life, so has he fellowship with the living God! You shall judge for yourselves whether this is not the token among us that our profession is no lie, but that Jehovah is our God and we are His people.

A further evidence of the Lords Presence with a people is found *in their prevailing peace of mind*. I will make with them a covenant of peace and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. Do not many of you realize that deep peace, the peace of God which passes all understanding, so that you are free from all fear and happy amid grievous poverty and trial? By reason of your great numbers, I cannot converse much with you, personally, while you are in health, but I do have the sorrowful privilege of speaking with many Brothers and Sisters in the time of sickness and death. And my uniform experience is most joyful! To this statement I can remember no exception whatever within my memory. When our members come near to die they exhibit peacedeep, profoundand frequently *joy* is mingled therewith and a holy exultation! I have said, again and again, as I have left the sick chamber, Let me go that I may die with him.

Though emaciated and, perhaps, full of agonizing pain, each one of our friends has said, I know that my Redeemer lives. They have had no more doubt about the Divine Truths of God than about their own existence! And they have had no more fear when looking into eternity than they had in going upstairs to their bedno, not as much, for they have had a longing to depart and to be with Christ! Our people die well, said Wesley, and I can say the same. They pass away in sure and certain hope of a blessed resurrection.

Not long ago, one who preaches doctrines far different than mine, complained bitterly that he could make no headway with people of your sort because those who have once fallen under the influence of our doctrine are settled in it and cannot be rescued from it. He said that no headway could be made against our views, for men become so desperately enamored of them that they cannot be weaned from them. Blessed be God for that! Let a man once know the living God and feel His eternal love within his bosomand all the devils in Hell cannot make him leave the Doctrines of Grace which are life unto his soul! Argument is useless against the Truth of God written upon the heart! Sophistry cannot persuade us out of our consciousness. The Truth of God has been sealed upon our hearts and it is not possible that we should renounce it! In this I do rejoice, that the evil beasts cease out of the land! When the Doctrines of Grace flame forth in the midst of a people, doubters and heretics quit the place in disgust. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon. Wolves shun the flock when the Chief Shepherd is in the midst of it! So may it be even to the end of the chaptersure evidence that God is with His people, giving them deep peace of mind and solid rest as to the things of God. These tokens we have, and many others which we cannot now mentionread the chapter through and judge for yourselves.

I desire to speak to you with no flattering words, but wish soberly to testify what I have seen, desiring always to be taught of the Spirit of God, that I may speak no further than I can justify by *fact*. I can say, and do say, The Lord of Hosts is with us. What then? Then it seems to me that *it becomes every member of this Church*, as indeed of every other, *to be very careful how he lives and walks*. If the Lord is with us, remember there is a *discipline* going on in the Church every daynot only that which the Church can execute by itself, but that which God, in Providence, executes. His fan is in His hand and He will thoroughly purge His floor. Good men, if they hinder the work of God, are not dealt with as the ungodly and suffered to go on their evil wayfrequently they are laid aside and their influence is taken from them. Even more than thisI doubt not that many are removed by death when they become obstacles to the Truth of God, or fall into sin. For this cause, said Paul to the Corinthians, many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

Thus Believers are chastened of the Lord that they should not be condemned with the world. God will not have His own child transgress the rules of His house without chastising him! Hence the need of careful behavior on the part of Church members. If any of you who are Gods children are walking carelessly. If your garments are spotted with the world. If you are dishonoring the name of your Lord by an unhallowed conversation, the Lord will not walk with you in joyful fellowship. Many walk, of whom I have told you often, said the Apostle, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the *enemies* of the Cross of Christthese were *inside* the Church, and yet *enemies*! None can hinder the work of God so much as Gods professed people if they are not true to their profession. Beloved, to live up to that which I laid down at the commencement of this sermon will require more power than we possess! We shall need the Spirit of God abundantly to rest upon us, that our walk may be close with God and our actions such as become the Gospel of Christ.

In addition to this, it seems to me that if God is with us, *now is the time for abounding activities*. In evil days we tug the laboring oar to small purpose, for the vessel makes no progress against the tide. But now that a favoring wind is with us, let us spread every yard of sail. Crowd all your canvas on, cut through the foam. Now is the mariners happy hour and he must avail himself of it! If there is anything more that we can do. If there is any forgotten enterprise which we can revive. If there is a possibility of greater ardor and more intense zealin the name of God let us rise to it! Let us withhold no power from the Lords service, lest measurably upon us, also, should come the curse pronounced of oldCurse you Meroz, said the Angel of the Lord, curse you bitterly, the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty. It is a day of good tidingswe do not well if we sit still. See to it, you servants of God, that you prove, by your activity, that the Lord is among you!

Again, *let our prayers be more fervent*. Nothing comforts my heart like the Prayer Meetings which are so continual among us. Even the little gathering for prayer which meets on Thursday before my sermon has grown to larger proportions and we have delightful seasons of communion with God! As for our Monday-evening assemblieswhat a benediction from the Lord! Now that our hundreds at prayer are growing into thousands, it delights my heart to see them! I had hardly hoped to see so many constantly coming to pray. May your prayerfulness at home, in your families and in your closets be increased continually. What cannot the Lord do with a Church if it will but be ready to be used? All things are possible to Him and all things are possible to him that believes.

In general the Lord says to His people, You have not, because you ask not, or because you ask amiss. But when the spirit of supplication is poured out, then, verily, the Lord is there! We love each other with a pure heart, fervently, therefore let us remove everything that could mar our perfect unity in Christ Jesus, for then shall we have continually abundant evidence that we have taken the Lord to be our God, that we are His people and that He is God With Us and that His Glory dwells among us! Thus have I tried to press the matter home upon you. The Lord bless the exhortation.

III. A very interesting part of our discourse, this morning, lies IN OUR DESCRIPTION BY GOD. How does God describe His own Church? Read the last verse of the text. You are My flock, the flock of My pasture, you are men, and I am your God, says the Lord God. First, in this description God calls His Church *His flock*. A flock is the shepherds treasure. It is his living wealth, but it is also the shepherds *care*, it is his constant anxiety. Ask a shepherd what he prizes most and he tells you, of course, his flock. Demand what he cares for most and he replies, I have no other care but this, my flock; for this I spend my days in the heat and my nights in the damp and the cold. Only think of the Lords looking down upon His people here and saying, You are My flock.

Some Christians try to go to Heaven alone, in solitude. But Believers are not compared to bears, or lions, or other animals that wander alone. Those who belong to Christ are sheep in this respect, that they love to get together. Sheep go in flocks and so do Gods people. The Lord loves them best as a company

He likes the tents of Jacob well,

But still in Zion loves to dwell.

Christ is the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep and He folds them, guards them, protects them as His flock. A true Church is, therefore, a very precious thing. It is not a mere human society banded together for certain objectives, but it is a community which God, Himself, has formed, and over which He does watch with an unsleeping eye. It is a flock which He cares for, so that Heaven and earth may be ransacked but He will have provender for them. This flock is so well preserved that at the last, the Great Shepherd will say, Of them which You gave Me I have lost none.

Observe that it is added, *The flock of My pasture.* There is a different idea here. It shows that Gods people are not only peculiar in other things, but they are peculiar in their feeding. You may know a child of God by that which his soul lives upon. Many professors can feed on any mortal thing, so long as it is cleverly put. Have you heard So-and-So preach? No, I have not, but I have heard that he has departed from the Truth. But, says one, he is a wonderfully clever man. And if a man is only clever, the generality of people will accept anything he likes to bring, from Heaven above, or from the earth beneath, or from the waters under the earth. It does not matter, to most people, so long as the man can deliver his opinions fluently and poetically. But such are *not* Christs sheep, for they have not the discernment of the faithful. The sheep follow Him, for they know His voice; and a stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers.

I remember hearing a Brother tell how he disproved the notion that sheep only know the shepherd by his dress. When in Palestine, he asked a shepherd to allow him to put on his clothes. Then he began to call the sheep, but never a one would come, not even a lamb. The most sheepish of the flock had sense enough left to know that *he* was not the shepherd and even the youngest kept aloof, heedless of the strangers voice! He might have called till he was hoarse, but they would not come. So Gods people know their Lord and they know the kind of food which He gives them. They know the truth from a lie! Men put the falsehood so prettily that they would deceive, if it were possible, the very electbut that, if it were possible, guards the chosen flock of Gods pasture! They will not graze on the hemlock, nor feed on poisoned grain. They will have nothing but clean provender and, the more evidently it comes from the Great Shepherds own hands, the better it is to them.

It is a very amazing thing, but it is added, You are My flock, the flock of My pasture, *you are men*. This was inserted, some commentators think, lest the reader should think that the Lord was really speaking of sheep. This cannot be true, for no rational being could be so foolish as to fall into that mistake! The language is used for a much higher purpose. You are menthen God knows what kind of persons we are, whom He has loved with an everlasting love! We are *Adams*, not angels! If you come into the Church of God and expect to get among *angels*, you will be mightily mistaken! And if the Brethren should receive you and hope that they are receiving angels unawares, *they* will be mistaken, too! We make absurd mistakes through foolish expectations! We shall not find that our Brothers and Sisters are male and female *cherubim*, for they are men and women and nothing more! They are *fallen* men and women, too, bearing about them traces of the ruin of their naturethey went astray like lost sheep, even the best of them. They are men! That is to say, they are *only* men, for the best of men are but men at the best.

Somebody once wrote me a letter of denunciation for using that sentence, and, as far as I could make out from his letter, the friend thought himself to be something *more* than a man. I did not agree with his judgment, but fancied that he was rather *less* than more than a man! From the bitter spirit of his letter I thought him more human than humane. The best men I have ever seen are but men and, generally, the better men are, the more ready they are to confess their imperfections! Some are tall by the measurement of conceit, but short when brought to the standard of wisdom. Gods people are but men, yet they *are* men and not brutes. There are in human form many who are hardly so good as brutes, but the saints are gentle, compassionate and gracious. Gods people are true menwhen the Spirit of God is in them, they quit themselves like men. They come to the front and bear the brunt of the battle. You are menit is a bad word in one sense, but a good one in another. God make us men in the better sense and may we rise superior to the infirmities of men in the worse sense, by being humble, yet brave.

But then He adds this blessed assurance, *And I am your God*. God is not a man, that He should lie; nor the son of a man, that He should repent. I hear that poor soul seeking after God, say, Oh, but I am so unworthy. Just so. The Lord knows it. He says you are men. But then *He* is not unworthy*He* is worthy to receive honor and Divine Power, for He is our God. Alas, says one, I feel myself so weak. Just so. You are men, but then He is your God, your strength is in Him. But I am so changeable. Just so, for you are men, but then He says, I am the Lord, I change not, therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed. But I am so faithless. Just so, for you are men, and men are fickle and frail. But God changes not, He is the same and of His years there is no end. If the promises rested on *you* for keeping, then they would never be kept, for you are men. If your salvation depended on your own merits you would be lost, for you are men! But inasmuch as the whole Covenant and the whole weight of salvation rests with God, here is our joyI am your God, says the Lord God.

I have two words to say. One is to the poor sinner. He says, I am afraid to come to God in Christ Jesus. Do not be afraid to come, for He knows what you are! Oh, but I am so vile. He knows how vile you are. But I am everything I ought not to be. He knows that! That is why He sent a Savior. If you had not been lost, there would have been no need for Him to seek you out. Come to Jesus just as you are, poor Trembler, and let this Word of God beckon you to Him, You are My flock, the flock of My pasture, you are men. You are poor, weak, feeble, erring, undeserving men, but your God is full of mercy and His thoughts of love are as high above your thoughts as the heavens are above the earth! Come now and reason together with Him, and He will put away your sins as a cloud and your transgressions as a thick cloud, and you shall sing, Who is a God like unto You?

The other word is to you that ought to be members of the Church, who know the Lord and love Him, but have never confessed Him. You say, I shall join the Church when I feel better. When will that be? Are you any better than you were a year ago? How much better are you going to be before you obey your Lord? I should like to hang up a sort of thermometer so that when you did reach the point you might come out, obey your Lords command and join with His Church. Do you need to be perfect and to join with perfect men? If you do, do not come to *this* Church, because I will guarantee you there is not *one* perfect member in it, though there are many of the excellent of the earth in our midst. We had some perfect Brothers and Sisters once, but they went to their own place after having proved to us that their boasted perfection was very poor stuff.

When workers get that proud notion into their heads, they become both useless and unloving. We are sorry to say that we are a company of imperfect men and womenbut we shall be very glad to receive you if you love the Lord and are prepared to obey His commands. That is all we require. Do you want to join a perfect Church? You must die. You will not do it otherwise. And if you *were* to join a perfect Church, I am sure it would not be perfect after you had been admitted into it. You had better give up that idea and just believe what God says about His own Church, You are My flock, the flock of My pasture, you are men. Come, then, with us, and we will do you good.

I am afraid, says one. Is this like a man? Can we say of such cowards, You are men? We cannot give you the good side of the word, surely! But come with us. If you believe that Jesus is the Christ, confess Him! The Gospel message is, He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. Faith and Baptism are here placed very closely togetherdo not divide them. He that with his heart believes, and with his mouth makes confession of Him, shall be saved. Neglect not one command of Christconfess your faith at once. There is nothing saving in it, you say. Selfish wretch, so you will do nothing except to save your own skin? If you are a saved man, you will loathe such meanness and you will say, Now, for the love I bear my Masters name, whatever command He gives to His believing people, I am ready to obey

Through floods or flames, if Jesus leads, Ill follow where He goes.
Hinder me not, shall be my cry, Though earth and Hell oppose.

God grant you His blessing in so doing, for Christs sake. Amen. ***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONEzekiel 34:11-31.*** **HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK100 (VERS. III), 955, 957.**

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #536 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH
NO. 536

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 25, 1863, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.
Whereas the Lord was there.
Ezekiel 35:10.

HEREIN lay the special security of the chosen land. The Edomites saw the whole country of Israel and Judah left desolate. Babylonians and Chaldeans had carried away the people and ravaged the land, therefore the proud inhabitants of the city in the rock saidThese two nations and these two countries shall be mine and we will possess it. The dukes of Edom counted upon an easy conquest and such, indeed, the Holy Land would have proved, had there not been one great difficultyquite unknown to them*The Lord was there*.

Jehovah Himself was still in possession, even though His rebellious people had been carried into captivity. HE would never allow that the Idumea should hold Jehovahs land in possession, and with despiteful hearts cast it out for a prey. From this one incident we gather that whatever may be the machinations and devices of the enemies of Gods people, though there is nothing else to thwart them, there is this as an effectual barrierthe saints are Gods heritage and the Lord is there, to guard and hold His own. The book of Ezekiel, if you will notice, concludes with these blessed words, as the name of the great city of the latter days. When all conflicts shall be ended, when the scattered shall be gathered, when the tabernacle of the Lord shall be among them. Then this which is Zions bulwark today, shall be her everlasting glory. JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH

The Lord was there.

As Palestine was preserved from the enmity of Mount Seir by the presence of the great Jehovah, so the Church and each separate member of it is constantly kept by the power of a present God, despite the rage of adversaries. In enlarging upon this cheering Truth of God, I shall invite you to notice *the Church as a despised people, constantly triumphant.* Next, we will observe *the Christian, in his opposed life, perpetually victorious.* Thirdly, *a desolate soul graciously delivered from Satan*. And lastly, *a ruined and depraved earth, resplendent with perfect beauty*and all because The Lord was there.

I. Consider, then, A DESPISED PEOPLE CONSTANTLY TRIUMPHANT, BECAUSE THE LORD WAS THERE. Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated. Here election divides two races forever. Since that hour the rejected have always displayed a deadly hatred towards the elected. The seed of the profane Esau, who sold his birthright, have in all generations maintained perpetual strife against the children of the accepted Jacob, upon whom the Lord has looked with the eyes of discriminating Grace.

The Prophet Obadiah denounces a curse upon Edom for their violence to their brother JacobIn the day that you stood on the other side. In the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces and foreigners entered into his gates and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even you were as one of them. But you should not have looked on the day of your brother in the day that he became a stranger. Neither should you have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction. Neither should you have spoken proudly in the day of distress. Neither should you have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape. Neither should you have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress.

An eternal enmity is put between the serpent and the womanbetween his seed and her seed. This was evidenced at the beginning of human history, in the case of Cain and Abeland the story of the great battle of Armageddon, when Gog and Magog shall be utterly overthrown, will stand upon the last page of the worlds story as a sure proof that the old enmity is as hot as ever. The people of God have always been, in every age, a hated and despised people. This may be seen if you will notice a few facts.

1. *The adversaries of Gods Israel have often thought in their hearts that they would utterly destroy them*. When Israel dwelt in Egypt and the single household began to be a great nation, Pharaoh said unto His people, Come on, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply. Hard bondage, in mortar and in brick and in all manner of service in the field was tried until their lives were made bitter. But the tyrants purpose was not accomplished, for the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew.

Then spoke the king unto the midwivesIf it is a son, then you shall kill him. But if it is a daughter, then she shall live. O deep-laid scheme of a cruel and wily despot! Now he thinks that the work is surely done. The Nile will be covered with the dead bodies of Israels sons and Egypt will know no fear from her bond slaves. Little did he dream that the midwives would violate his orders and far less that from the river which he worshipped would spring the man who would make the fields of Zoan mourn and avenge upon the first-born of Egypt the slaughter of Israels sons.

As it was fabled of Hercules that while a babe in his cradle, he strangled with his infant hands the serpents which came to destroy him, so was it with the chosen nation. While yet feeble as a child in Egypt, it was more than a match for the craft and malice of the dragon, for the Lord was there.

In after years a Pharaoh of like spirit grievously oppressed the people until Jehovah brought them forth with a high hand and with an outstretched arm. They had scarcely been free more than a few hoursthey had gone but a few furlongs from Egypt, when the heart of Pharaoh was hardened and he said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoilmy lust shall be satisfied upon them. Behold the hosts of Israel they are entangled in the landthe wilderness has shut them in. The Red Sea rolls before them. Now Pharaoh, now may you destroy them at a blow! How is the prey snatched from the hand of the mighty! How gloriously is captivity led captive! The sea divides, the waters stand upright like an heap and the chosen people of God are led through the deep as through a wilderness, for the Lord was there.

After-years present us with numberless occasions in which the people who bore the oracles of God were in imminent peril and were miraculously preserved by her great King. Well did the Psalmist sing, God is in the midst of her. She shall not be moved: God shall help her and that right early. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered His voice, the earth melted. The Lord of Hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge.

To single out one case among many, let us remember the boastings and the shame of Sennacherib. The great king has taken the defended cities of Judah and sent his foul-mouthed servant, Rabshakeh, to demand the surrender of Jerusalem, that he may carry away all the people of the land. Hezekiah comforts the minds of the people, saying, The Lord will deliver us. Rabshakeh writes a blasphemous letter and cries to the people on the wall, Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, the Lord will deliver us. Has any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hands of the king of Assyria?

Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim? And have they delivered Samaria out of my hands? Who are they among all the gods of these lands that have delivered their land out of my hands, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hands? Thus he boasts against the living God and counts upon the ready possession of the Holy City. And what happens? He had calculated that his ferocious troops would cut to pieces the insignificant armies of Hezekiah. He looked upon Jerusalem as a cauldron, and all the inhabitants thereof as the pieces of flesh that are boiled thereinbut he forgot that *the Lord was there*. He knew not Jehovah-Shammah.

He little dreamed of the secret reason why the virgin daughter of Zion despised him and laughed him to scorn. But when the hook was in his nose, when the thousands of his troops had fallen like leaves in autumn, and when he himself was smitten by his own sons in the house of Nisroch, his god, then all the nations knew that God was great and greatly to be feared in the mountain of His holiness. Had not the Lord been on Judahs side, she would have been as stubble to the fire. But the Lord was there, and her foe could not prevail.

Fly on still in your vision of the Lords marvelous works, till you come to the Church of God properly called. How easy it seemed to Herod to destroy once and for all the followers of Jesus! They are but a handful. He will take James to begin with and Peter shall follow. The Apostles shall be the first fruits of the bloody harvest which he means to reap. Aha! Aha! Foolish Herod, a greater Herod than you are sought to destroy Him who was King of the Jews. In his blind fury he smote all the young children of Bethlehem, but the newborn Prince escaped the murderous sword and so shall this young child, the new-formed Church, escape out of your wolfish fangs.

She shall fly to the uttermost ends of the earth and shall be free. Her

Word shall go forth throughout every land and people. Need I say that you have but to change name and circumstances and this story may be repeated thousands of times? During the first centuries, the dragon incessantly persecuted the womanThe serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. One of the Roman emperors set up a monument, In the memory of a destroyed superstition called Christianity. But was our holy religion destroyed?

Could the dragon prevail against the remnant which kept the Commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ? Behold the multitudes who this day bow the knees at the name of Jesus of Nazareth! Diocletian dyed the earth red with the blood of saints, and if it had not been that *the Lord was there*, certainly the Roman sword must have cut off forever the womans seed. But why do I linger here? All ages and all lands witness to the same struggle. Our own country, at the Reformation, is a clear instance. Mary hunted out the saints of God. As the bloodhound tracks the fugitive slave, so she tracked the faithful wherever they were hidden.

But the stakes of Smithfield and the dungeons of the Lollards Tower were not sufficient to destroy the people of God. And Elizabeth, equally bloody against those who followed the Lord fully, having set up a semipapal hierarchy, sought to parry Puritans out of the land. Her successors followed in her steps, but neither the hangmans rope, nor loathsome dungeons, nor the dragoons of Claverhouse, nor fines, nor banishment, nor death could destroy the separated Church of Godfor her God was her refuge and high tower. How came it, let us ask, that all the regal and priestly power was foiled and could not stand against the people scattered and peeled?

How did this anvil break so many hammers? How could this earthwork stand against the fire of such well-manned batteries? Was there any human force in the Church capable of resisting these bloody persecutions? Brethren, there was none but this*Jehovah-Shammah*, the Lord was there. The Lord being there, immortality, no, *eternity* was in the Church. God is eternal, He is in the Church and His Church is immortal, too. Who shall quench immortality? Where is the sword that can snap the links of eternity? When God the Immortal shall bow His head to weakness. When age shall palsy His arm and death shall send His terrible shaft into His heart, then may the Church of God be destroyed. But not till then, because the Lord was there.

2. The enemies of the Church have frequently shown their scorn of her by *the ridicule which they have cast upon her attacks*. When the Church defies the world, the proud servants of Satan are filled with derision. Even as Midian rested in unguarded security, fearless of Gideon and his three hundred men, comparing him to a poor barley-cake which they could eat at once if it were not unworthy of their notice, so the ungodly despise the zeal of the godly. But as the cake of barley-bread fell upon the tent of Midian and smote it that it lay along, even so the Church is more than conqueror.

How loudly did Goliath mock at David! How he cursed him by his godsCome to me and I will give your flesh unto the fowls of heaven and to the beasts of the field. But Goliath falls like a tottering tower headlong upon the ground. His own sword slays him and the despised David bears the monsters head triumphantly in his hand. So, doubtless, in Apostolic times, the world ridiculed the armies of the Lord. These poor men! said kings and princesand they smiled in royal scorn of the mendicant band, what kingdom can they set up?

Unlearned and ignorant men! muttered the philosophers, as they cast their mantles about them and mocked at the strange doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. This handful of weaklings, said the commander of the legions of Rome. This handful! A miserable eleven, what can they do against innumerable priests and worshippers supported by the eagles of an universal empire? Aha! Aha! said the world, was anything ever so despicable, so fanatical, so foolish! Eleven fishermen!

Get back to your nets and to your boats! Go back to the lake of Gennesaret! Transform the fishes into men and then come back and think to turn us from the ancient gods of our fathers into worshippers of the crucified Man of Nazareth. Yet for all their wisdom, their laughter was illspent, for *the Lord was there* and therefore the attacks of the brave eleven were followed by speedy victory. Wherever they marched they cast down the idols temples. No, they hurled the gods themselves to the moles and to the bats and the few, the ignorant, the poor, the weakin the course of a few score years had cast the pomps of priesthood, the pride of philosophy, and even the might of kingsfrom the abodes of their glory and trod them like mire in the streets, because Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord was there.

How constantly has the world ridiculed the Church in every effort she has put forth for her own enlargement? What of these feeble Jews, said Sanballat and Tobiahwill they fortify themselves, will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish? Even that which they build, if a fox goes up, he shall break down their stone wall. But they built the wall and the timbers were fixed in their places. How vexed must Tobiah and Sanballat have been when they saw the city rising upon its heap.

The same has been the case in all time. To quote a modern instance of what has ever been the caseSydney Smith said when Carey talked of evangelizing India, that a consecrated cobbler was going out to preach the Gospel to educated and enlightened Hindus. But the consecrated cobbler took his post and dug in India a well of which thousands shall yet drink. That man of God has placed the battering ram of the Gospel in such a position, that before long the hoary bastions of idolatry will tremble and the world shall see that the weakness of God is stronger than man.

It is really an absurd thing for us to talk about overcoming the world and converting the heathen and comforting Gods people and enlarging the borders of the Church. It is, I say, an absurd thing if we talk so in our *own* strength, but it is not absurd when this little word comes in Whereas the Lord was there. Then we have Omnipotence in our midst. If God is there, the Church has Gods Omnipotence. And little do our enemies know our might. Omnipotence walks forth, in the youthful David to

fight Goliath. Omnipotence goes forth in the consecrated cobbler to fight with Juggernaut and the gods of the heathen. And feeble though the Church may be to this day, unlearned and to a great extent still made up of the poor of this world, yet the day shall come when the earth shall know that the Church is mightier than the mightiest of her foes, because Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord was there.

3. Let me again remind you that the worlds estimation of the Church has frequently been seen in the way in which *it will mock at all her teachings*. The wise men of this world have always something far superior to anything that the Bible can reveal. Even bishops make great discoveries and find out that perfect wisdom has made very many blunders in the book of Exodus. New theologians are every now and then starting most remarkable schemes of doctrinetheir own wood, hay and stubble, being, in their own opinion, infinitely superior to the gold and the silver and precious stones of Gods Inspiration.

Well, they may go on and tell us that the Gospel is a vulgar thing and only fit for the poor. They may assure us that it will suit very well the uneducated masses, but the intellectual and enlightened few want something better. Ah, we can well endure their boasting, for the Doctrines of Grace are the loftiest of all philosophy and the most intellectual of all teachingsbecause Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord is in them. And where God is, there is perfect wisdomwhere God is, there is incomprehensible knowledge.

The sum total of all human knowledge is but as a drop in the bucket compared with the wisdom of God. And the wisdom of God is in and with the teachings of His Church, wherever Jesus Christ is lifted up. *He* is the wisdom of God and the power of God, and therefore in answer to the worlds railing against our folly, we reply, Yes, but the foolishness of God is wiser than man, and, in Scripture, Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord is there.

4. Do they not, also, very frequently *cast in our teeth our trials*? They will say of the Christian, Where is He now? When Israels hills were desolate, then Edom said, Where is their God? The sons of Esau boasted and said, Let us go up and take possession. It is ever the part of the ungodly, when they find a Christian in distress, to say, Where is your God? God has forsaken him. Let us persecute and take him. Yes, and we should have been swallowed up quickly by our fierce foes, only that, in the worst moments of the Church, God is there.

If she is in prison, God is there. At the stakes where her martyrs burn, God is there. The silenced ministers may have to conceal themselves in the caves and dens of the earth, but God is there. Tried though the Christian is, God is with him in the furnace. Nebuchadnezzar can cast in but three, he cannot, however, cast out the Fourth! Where the Church shall be Christ shall walk the coals with His people and they shall come out of their trials triumphantfor God is there. Where God is, there is everlasting love. Where God abides, there is immutable affection. And, therefore, let this be our comfort, God is with you, Israel, passing through the fire. Beloved, the world shows its disrespect of us by *the way in which it often treats the Christian*. It sees him poor and naked and miserable, and therefore pushes him about as though he were a beggar and not one of the royal blood. Little do they know that however poor the Christian may be, *the Lord is there*. The image of Jesus Christ is in every Christians face, but especially in the face of a poor Believer. The Holy Spirit dwells in that body, however clothed with rags, however emaciated by hunger and disease.

You remember the other day that certain young men treated rudely a pale-faced person whom they saw sitting in the railway carriagepushed him about, struck him and so forth and went to their homes, no doubt, boasting of the way in which they treated a poor fool who had not the spirit, as they would say, to defend himself. To their consternation it turned out to be a peer of the realm whom they had thus ill-treated. And then how small they seemed. What abject apologies they offered. Ah, it was quite a different thing then. They would not have pushed *his grace*, his lordship, the duke. Oh if they had only known itthey thought him only some common man.

And so nowadays the world elbows the Christian, pushes him, strikes him. But when it finds out what a Christian is, then how small their mirth will seemthey would not have done it if they had known who it was. They knew not the Lord of Glory and if they knew not Him, how shall they know His people? Let it ever be remembered that wherever there is a true Christian, there is Glory, because God is there and God is never apart from His own Glory. The very honor and dignity and majesty of Deity itself guards every follower of the Savior, however much he may be despised among men.

O for a celestial tongue to set forth the honor and safety of the chosen people, an honor which streams from the Presence of God as light pours from the sun! You will see how it is. There was a little flocka multitude of ravening wolves all hungry and athirst for blood came howling on. They rushed to the very edge of the fold. They were about to leap in and suck the blood of the sheep, but suddenly they started back like whipped curs. See how they turn tail and take to flight, for lo, a mysterious One lifts His hand over the fold. A voice cries, Get you gone! and back they gothey little dreamed that the Lord was there. Had they known it they would scarcely have attempted a task so impossible as the destruction of a people who had God in the midst of them and therefore could not be moved.

II. But I must leave this for want of time and introduce THE OPPOSED, AND YET A CONQUEROR. Moses saw at the back of the desert a bush burning. It was nothing but a bush. The fire was real. The fire was quite capable of consuming the bush in but the twinkling of an eye, and yet though the bush burned with fire, it was not consumed. It is such a sight as this that I bid you now look upon for a few moments, my Beloved.

In the Lord Jesus Christ a Christian man is constantly opposed and yet perpetually preserved because the Lord is there. The very moment that a Christian is born again, Satan seeks to destroy him. The early *convictions* of a newborn soul are always the subject of Satanic attack. Frequently the devil will employ our old companions to laugh us out of our fearsCome

along, old fellow, they will say, do not give way to this melancholy misery. There is a first-class play tonightcome and see it. We shall meet at the tavernwe will have merriment and a rare time of it.

Satan hopes that with the laughs, the jeers, the jests and merriment, he will destroy utterly all convictions of sin. Little does he dream that *the Lord is there* and where God sends the arrow home, no devil can ever draw it out. Where the Lord convicts of sin, it is not possible that those convictions should be staunched, except by a Saviors wounds. If we should attempt to blow out a candle, since the candle was lit by human power, human power may put it out. But he were the greatest of fools who should try to blow out the sun. For He alone who kindled its matchless rays can ever quench them.

If, then, the convictions of sin are natural, and come from man, man may destroy them. But if the sunlight of God has risen in a human heart, no powerhuman or satanicshall ever be able to destroy the glorious day which the daystar foretold. If I attempt to stop in its course a stone which has been slung from human hand, I may, perhaps, accomplish my purpose. But who is he that could interpose to stop a meteor as it flashes across the sky? Who shall cast a bridle about the neck of the planet as it flies in its tremendous pathway? Who shall bind it fast in its place, or thrust a bit into its jaws? If God is in the thing, it must traverse its destined pathway, in spite of all opposition. So, Beloved, where the Lord begins a true heart-breaking and real conviction of sin, it cannot be destroyed. Why? Because Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord is there.

Then, as the Fiend has tried to destroy conviction, he will next shoot his arrows against our *faith*. Poor, feeble Follower of Jesus, he will worry you. Oh, says he, he is but a little one, I will encounter him in full fury, I will strike him to the ground and spill his soul. But the faith which God gives to us overcomes the worldyes, and overcome the old dragon, too. It is a faith which lives under pressure and loadmountains may be piled upon itbut it still breathes under the terrific weight. It lives in the midst of death, swallowing up death in victory. It defies the power of Hells fiery darts. They are not only turned aside, but they are quenched upon the shield of faith.

Satan may throw all sorts of accusations in our pathway, but faith dies to the Advocate. He may strike us many a cowardly blow with fierce temptations such as suited our former state and the corruptions of our flesh, but if God is in our faith and He *is* in it if it is real and genuine, more is He that is for us than all they that are against us. There shall be this ever for our preservationthe Lord is there.

Beloved, have not you always found that not only your faith but all *your good works* are the subjects of Satans attacks? I never yet had a virtue or possessed a Divine Grace but what it was sure to be the target for hellish bullets, whether it was hope, bright and sparkling, or love, warm and fervent, or patience, all enduring, or zeal, flaming like coals of fire. The old enemy of everything that is good has tried, if he could, to destroy or mar it. And why is it that anything virtuous or lovely survives in you? There can be no reason given except this, God is there.

God dwells in His people. Every good thing which springs up in the human heart is an emanation from the indwelling Deity. And being such, the Destroyer may vent his malice upon it, but as the waves are broken against the rocks, so shall his cruel spite be broken against the power of the most high GodGod is in it.

Note, Beloved, how sedulously Satan aims against *the perseverance* of Gods people. They will never hold on their way, says he. You and I have thought *we* never should. Sometimes we have sat down and become weary in well-doingthe troubles of the way, our non-successes, our frequent sorrows, perhaps the backsliding of our heart from Godall these have made us say, I shall never reach my journeys end and see my God with acceptance. And yet you have not fallen away from Grace yet, not yet have you disgraced your character, not yet gone back to your old lusts.

Old Adam has given you many a grip in the side, as though he would tear the heart out of you, but you have held on your way despite all that he could do. How is this? Why, God was in you, and if He had not been there, then, indeed, had you been a prey unto your adversaries. I went last week into the lighthouse at Holyhead and marked the lights that warn the mariner crossing the sea, or guide him in time of storm into the haven. I noticed in the second story of the lighthouse many large vats filled with oil laid up in store that the lamps might be constantly trimmed for months to come. I compared that in my own mind to that gracious provision of Divine Grace which the Lord lays up in store for His people. The lamps would go out but Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord is therewe have the all-sufficiency of God laying up a store of oil so that our lights may be always trimmed.

A Christian is something like an express train. On some of our railroads you know there are express trains which do not stop to take water, the water lies in a trench in the middle between the rails and as the train runs it sucks up its own supply of cold water and so continues its course without a pause. Our God in Divine Grace has prepared in advance our needs. He prepares supplies for His own people so that without their stopping to seek the streams of creature-confidencesometimes without the use of meansHe is pleased to speed them on their pathway towards Heaven, fed by a Divine arrangement of Grace.

O it is blessed to think that if God is there, everything a Christian can want for his final persevering, for his eternal life, is ready at hand. I have no doubt, Beloved, we shall find that when we come to die, *our dying confidence* will be the object of the enmity of all the powers of Hell. Perhaps Jordan will overflow her banks and Satan will issue his command, Come here, principalities and powers, here is the man that we could not overturn in life, let us at last overthrow him in death.

Perhaps like John Knox, you may have your blackest day at the last, but oh, thanks be unto God that gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! We have no fear for our dying confidence, for God is there, even *there* where the billows are the most tempestuous and the water is most chill. We shall feel the bottom and know that it is good. Our feet shall stand upon the Rock of Ages even in our dying moments. Beloved, from the first of a Christians life to the last, the only reason why he does not perish is because *the Lord is there*.

How often has the devil reckoned without his host? He has thought, Surely I shall destroy and devour that lamb. So, indeed, he would have, if it had belonged to anybody elsebut seeing it belonged to the Lordthe Lord was there to protect it, to pluck it out of the jaws of the lion and out of the paws of the bear and to preserve it even to the end. I think, my Soul, you have learned never to love anything of which you cannot say, The Lord is there. If you have a grace, a virtue, a good work, a prayer and the Lord is not in itaway with it! Away with it!

But if you have the feeblest prayer that ever was prayed and the faintest hope that ever gladdened a man, if God is in it, never give it upfor where there is God there is something firmer than adamant and the axes of your adversaries shall have their edges turned against it.

III. Now, with greater brevity still, I come to dwell upon the third point, which is thisA DESOLATE SOUL, NOT DESTROYED, BECAUSE GOD IS THERE. I wish I could convey, by my words, some little inkling of my own joy of heart while I was thinking over the third part of my subject. I thought of *the dead sinner*. But an elect sinner and the devil, like the sons of Edom, said, I shall have that dead sinner, I shall have him. My purpose is, says Satan, that he shall dwell forever with me, in extreme misery. I have laid hold upon him, says he, and he has made a league with Hell. He is mine, he is mine forever.

But stop, stop, the Lord was there before the devil. Does the devil have a purpose? Ah, but Gods *purpose* is older than the devils purpose. Does the sinner make a covenant? Yes, but then, Gods *Covenant* was made before that sinner was born! And what is the devils purpose compared with Gods purpose? You see God is there before himWhereas the Lord was there. I have purposed says the Lord, to make that sinner My child, a new heart also will I give him and a right spirit will I put within him. I will sprinkle clean water upon him and he shall be clean. From all his filthiness will I cleanse him.

Satan, you are deceived, the purpose of God is before you. Ah, but, said Satan, he is mine, I will have him, I will go and take possession, he is mine. And so he is about to enter the vineyard and take possession of the vines of sour grapes, when lo, someone meets him on the threshold and says, What are you doing here? I am come to take possession, says he. Take possession, says Christ, I have a *claim* upon this vineyard, I bought it and paid for it with drops of blood. What are you doing here? You say, I will possess this land, whereas the Lord was there.

And He shows the Fiend the print of the nails and points him to His wounded side and says, Whatever your claim may be, Mine is a higher claim. I bought, I paid for, I have the acceptance from the Divine hand and this vessel of mercy was Mine. Mine long before you could have any claim upon it. Yes, yes, says the devil, but I have been providing for this soul that it shall lie in Hell forever. I have determined to put suchand-such temptations in its pathway that it may go on step by step till it makes its bed in Hell.

Ah, says the Lord, I have been before you. If you have a providence so have I, and My *Providence is* older than yours. I have watched this man from the cradle even until now. And even when you have been leading him astray further and further from Me, I have overruled it all to bring him nearer and nearer to the predestined spot and to the appointed moment when the Eternal Council shall be fulfilled and that man shall be turned from darkness to light.

Satan, no doubt, thinks he lays his plans very prettily. There is only this to deceive his calculations and baffle his designsWhereas the Lord was there. Perhaps the Evil One led you here this morning to ridicule the Gospel, but the Lord may be in it and you may be brought to His feet. I have known the devil lead men into sin and yet the very sin has been blessed of God to their conviction and conversion. I remember one whose life had been eminently moral before, who was self-righteous, but the devil led him into a trap and his fall opened his eyes to see the depravity of his heart. And so the devil had his head cut off with his own swordhe was taken in his own net.

Beloved, whatever Satan may do in Providence, God is the Master of Providence, and He is waiting to be gracious, still. But the devil will say, Yes, but I have himI have got him now. I have put into his thoughts and into his mind all manner of falsehood and he is mine. No, says Christ, the Lord is there. He knows *the Gospel*today is the Gospel preached in his earsbelieve in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. Yes, says the devil, he may *know* it, but I have the power over him, I have my hand upon the bit and the bridleI will manage and control him.

But I trust the Lord will say to elect souls who are here this morning No, but I have *the power* over you. The Spirit of God shall go with the Word, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan unto God. And then shall it be said once more, The dead soul had almost gone to Hell, but it could not go, for the Lord was there in the road to stop him in his ruinous career.

Do I address a backsliderone who used to be a member of a Christian Church, but who has gone back to the world? Ah, poor Soul, if you ever were a child of God, you will come back, yet. You will never live at ease you cannot live happily, I know. But by Gods Grace you will not live to your lifes end what you now areif the Lord is in you. The devil may get you to give up the means of Divine Grace. He may lead you to attend the public house. He may tempt you to forget the Sabbath and to become as vile as other men. But if God is there, he will be cheated of his prey yet.

At the last moment, if never before, I pray that you may hear the voice that says, Return, return. O that you would hear it this morning! Come, Backslider, God has not cast you away! Having loved you with an everlasting love, He has not forgotten you. Come to His feet. Confess your wanderings and offenses and now, again, enter into His family and rejoice with joy unspeakable and fullness of glory! You cannot be ruined, for the

Lord is there. You shall be saved, for the Lord is there, and will not leave you nor forsake you.

IV. And now lastlyand this is but a hint. The same, dear Friends, is true with regard to THE ENTIRE WORLD. The world cannot be destroyed, because Jehovah is there. This world once shone, like its sister stars, bright and fair. But a sad shadow of eclipse was thrown upon itit became swathed in the mists of sin and though the glory of the Lord has risen upon it, yet still much of the gloom and the thick darkness continues. Shall that darkness cover all the nation? Shall the light become dim forever?

No, no! The whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. Shall its groans and travails end in nothing? No, no. The day comes when, The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

There are signs which we sometimes think portend the speedy coming of the Son of Man, when He shall stand in the latter day upon Mount Olivet and reign with all His ancients gloriously. Then shall it be seen that since God in all ages was in the world with Patriarchs and Prophets, with Christ and His Apostles and with His Church throughout all time, there always was a reason why the world should yet be savedwhy there should be a new Heaven and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness.

Despair not for the world, Beloved. Work on, hope on, pray on and expect every blessing, for God is in the earth still, and therefore it can never be the devils globeit can never be wholly given up to the enemy of Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord is there. Now I do not know where the Great Master is about to conduct some of you. You are, perhaps, about to journey across the sea. You may have, some of you, to go to a bed of sickness, but remember I give you this for your cordialThe Lord is there. It may be, Brothers and Sisters, some of you are appointed unto death, you are come to the borders of the dark valley.

Or else, bereavement will befall you and you will have to visit and revisit the grave with children and friends and relatives. Remember *the Lord is there.* Through floods and flames, if Jesus leads, Ill follow where He goes. Anywhere with Jesus! Anywhere with Jesus! Nowhere would I be without Him. If He says, I am with you, then will I neither fear the floods nor the fires, nor death, nor life, nor things present, or things to come.

This shall be my joyous trust and boastThe Lord is there. God bless you. And in the school, the College and our beloved classes, may it be said, the Lord is there. Amen.

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THE VISION OF THE FIELD
NO. 3001

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 16, 1906.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, IN THE YEAR 1864.
For behold, I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown.
Ezekiel 36:9.

THESE words were addressed to the mountains of Palestine. Albeit that they are now waste and barren, they are yet to be as fruitful and luxuriant as in the days of Israels grandeur. God will turn to themthe vines shall then crown the summits and there shall be harvests again upon the mountaintops.

The mountains of Israel were a soil of glass in which you could see reflected, at a single glimpse, the condition and character of the people. While the Israelites were obedient to God, the mountains dripped with new wine and the little hills seemed to melt with fertility. Honey dripped from the rock and oil appeared to be distilled of the very flint. When the people sinned so that God gave them over to their enemies, irrigation being neglected and the culture of the soil no longer profitable, the mountains straightaway became as blank and barren as though they were a howling wilderness! And then, again, when the people repented and turned to God, the soil began to cover the mountains, carried up there by the industry of the people, the sides of the hills were terraced, the waste places began to blossom and the vines were once more filled with clusters. You could thus read the history of the people in the condition of their hills.

I intend to take the hills of Israel as a representation of our own statethe state of our own heart. As they really did mirror forth the condition of the people of old, the metaphor becomes peculiarly attractive. I shall divide the subject thusfirst, *mans heart, by nature, is like a waste field*. Secondly, *there is no hope for that field unless God shall turn to it in mercy.* Thirdly, *when He does turn to it, He will have to till it,* for, lastly, *not until after tillage can it be sown with any hope of success*.

I. MANS HEART, BY NATURE, IS LIKE A WASTE FIELD. *A waste field produces no harvest*. Reaper, you shall never fill your arms with sheaves, the axle of the wagon shall never creak beneath the load of harvest and the young men shall never dance with the maidens at the harvest home. Let the field lie waste and the fruit it will yield in a whole century will not be sufficient to feed a single individual!
Such is man, we say, by nature. He brings forth no fruit unto God. Leave him alone and he will live unto himself. Perhaps he will be a respectable sinner and, if so, he will selfishly spend all his life in trying to provide for himself, alone, or for his family, which is but a part of himself. He will go through the world from his birth to his sepulcher without a thought of God. He will never do anything for God. His heart will never beat with love to Him. He may sometimes, out of sheer selfishness, go with others to worship, but he will not worship God, whatever difference he may show to the outward form. His heart will be in complete alienation from the God who made him. He will live and he will die a strange monstrosity in the worlda creature that has lived without love to his Creator!
Perhaps, however, he will be a disreputable sinner. He will live in sin, find his comfort in drunkenness, perhaps in lust, possibly in dishonestybut regardless, he will bring forth nothing that God can accept. I think I see the great God coming to look at the man, even as a farmer might come to look upon his fallow field. What can God see? Is there a prayer? Yes, he says a few forms of prayer, but they are dead, lifeless things, and God cannot accept them. Does He see any praise? Perhaps a shriveled hymn growing up in the corner of the field, but since there is no heart in it, it rots and dies, and God abhors it. He looks the whole field through. There is no thought for God, no consecration of time to God, no desire to honor God, no longing to produce in the world fresh glory to God, no effort to raise up to Him fresh voices that shall praise His name. He lives unto himself, or to his fellow men and having so lived, he so dies.
Now you know that there are a great many people who say to themselves, Well, if we do good to our neighbor, if we are kind to others, that is enough. And they expect to have some reward for this. But, mark you, every servant expects his master to pay his wagessurely then, if you serve your fellow men,

they ought to reward you. Let them give you a statue, or let them emblazon your name on one of the rolls of fame. Let them sound down your exploits to future generations! Still, let your debtor and creditor account be fair. If you have not done anything distinctly and avowedly in the service of God, there is no remuneration that you can reasonably expect God to give you! What have you brought forth to Him? Nothing whatever! And we say it sincerely, for we know how sadly true it isthe natural heart of man never does and never can produce so much as one single grain that God can receive as being to His honor and glory. As for the natural children of men in all their generations

Like brutes they live, like brutes they die. Like grass they flourish, till Your breath Blasts them into everlasting death.

Alas for them! Unto You, great God, they render no prayer nor praise, no heart-felt love nor reverent adoration. They pass through this world as though there were no God!

Worse than this, *the field that has never been plowed or sown does produce something*. There is an activity about human nature that will not let us live without doing. Unless you should shut yourselves up in a cell like a monk, or live on the top of a pillar, like Simeon Stylites, you cannot very well pass through life utterly inertwithout any purpose of mind, without any movement of the limbs, without any stir of the passions! And I suppose that even Simeon Stylites did exert some influence, for he led other people to be as great fools as himself. And even monks do some mischief by losing the interest on talents for which they ought to have rendered a good accountand spending their time in laziness which they ought to have employed in useful service. None of us lives to himself. Is there no wheat growing on that soil? No barley? No rye? Very well, then, there will be grass, and cockle, and stickers and all sorts of weeds. So it is with the unrenewed heart. It produces hard thoughts of God, enmity against the Most High. It is prolific of evil imaginations, wrong desires and bitter envying. As these ripen, they bring forth ill wordsidle, or, it may be, lascivious words and perhaps atheistic, blasphemous words! And as these ripen, they come to actionsand the man becomes an offender in his deeds, perhaps against man, certainly against God. He lives to produce sour grapes. The apples of Gomorrah hang plentifully upon him.

I know I am describing some here present. There are many such persons to be found in all our assemblies. They have done no good in their lives. Measuring their lives by the standard of God, they have done nothing. On the other hand, they have been guilty of much evilthey have brought forth fruit unto sin. Nor is this the worst of it. The bad farmer, who lets his fields run to weeds, does mischief to the neighboring farm. Here comes the wind, willing to waft seedgood seed if it can find itinto other soil. It will take the down of the flower seed and bear it into a garden where it will be needed. Or, if it must, it will carry the seeds of the thistle and so, when it comes sweeping by the farmers neglected field, it does damage to all the fields in the neighborhood.

It is so with the sinner. One sinner destroys much good. Is he a father? His children grow up to be as ungodly as himself. Is he a master? Then his men, like him, break the Sabbath and neglect the ways of God. Is he a workman? Then his fellow workmen, who are younger than he, take encouragement from his evil example and they are led into sin while they blindly follow in his wake. Whatever station of life you put him into, he does mischief! The more eminent he is, the more eminently mischievous he is. I do not allude to those who are grave offenders against the laws of society. I mean those good, decent people who have no fear of God before their eyes. I think they do very much mischief, for the devils cause gets respectable through having them on its side! Those who persistently live in violation of Divine Law and who do not bend their necks to the yoke of Christ, may be very amiable, very moral and very excellent. If so, in a certain sense, the more is the pity because they get an increase of power to do evil, for others say, If such good men as these can live without religion and live despising it, why shouldnt we? Thus a bad cause, which would be hissed off the stage if there were none but rascals to side with it, still walks respectably in the light of day because of these persons who back it up! God deliver you, my dear Hearers, from being like a field that does mischief unto others! Beware, you upas tree, lest your poisonous influence should receive the reward of Hell fire! Beware, you cumberer of the ground, standing there and sucking nutriment out of the soil, and cursing the other trees of the vineyard, lest the sharp ax should soon cut you to the core and lay you level with the ground!

A barren field resembles the heart of man in that *all the good influences that fall upon it are wasted*. Comes there sunshineit produces no harvest on the fallow land. Here are the precious drops of dew glistening in the morning, but they cannot produce an ear of corn. And here fall the sweet smiling showers of rain that make the new-mown fields all fragrant, but this field gets no good from it. It is even so with you who are still in a state of nature. You have the blessings of Providence, but they do not make you grateful. You even have the blessings of the outward means of Divine Grace, but they excite in you no longings towards God. Surely, my dear Friends, if this has been long the case with you, you must be near unto cursing!

Yet the waste field does produce something pleasant to the eyes, something worth looking at, for have you not seen the gorgeous poppy and the finest specimens of the ranunculus growing in the field that was never plowed and sown? And there is the dog-rose yonder and the foxglove, and the forget-me-not, all springing up and flourishing where there should have been furrows for wheat! And so a man may have a comely appearance and make a fair show in the flesh, although he does not live near to God. In his character and reputation, there may be many a gaudy floweryes, as red and as conspicuous as the poppy. He may shine among men and men may talk much about him. But, as the Lord lives, if the Lords plow has never gone over him, the bright blushing weeds are still just weeds! A poison and a pest, not a blessing or a balmas the farmer right well knows. Let those of you who are in such a state see an apt emblem of yourselves every time you pass a piece of waste ground, and say, That is just what we are, and what we shall be to the end of our lives, unless the Grace of God shall interfere to retrieve us from endless ruin.

II. THERE IS NO HOPE FOR THIS FIELD UNLESS GOD SHALL TURN TO IT IN MERCY.

Even so, unless the Lord shall turn to men, no good will ever come of them. The text says, I am for you, and I will turn to you. Man never does of himself turn to God, and that for obvious reasons. We are sure he never can, for he is dead in trespasses and sins. We are certain he never will, for by nature he hates anything like a new birth. And if he could make himself a new creature, he would not, for Christ has expressly said, You will not come unto Me that you might have life. Man is unwilling to give up sinhe loves it too muchhe is unwilling to be made holy for he has no time for spiritual things. God, then, must come to man, for how can man, being naturally dead, and naturally unwilling, ever come to God? Experience tells us that he will not. When did you ever find a man who had come to Godwho would say that he came of his own natural inclination? All the saints on earth will tell you that it was Almighty Grace that made them willing in the day of Gods power. If there is any man who ever came to God of himself, I can only say that I know I am not that man

Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God.

If any unconverted person here will tell me that he can turn to God when he likes, I ask him why he does not turn now? What measure of damnation must be his due, when, according to his own confession, he has a power which he will not use! Sinner, talk not vainly of what you can do! Man, you can burn in Hell and you can fit yourself for the flames, but this is about all you can do for yourself! You have destroyed yourself! For that inglorious deed, your will was free and your agency free likewise. But only in God is your help found. For this, be sureyou have neither might nor skill. If ever you are saved, it must be by another power than your own and by another faculty than that which dwells in your puny, wicked heart. God must do it! If you wait till your waste field plows itself, or brings forth a harvest, you may wait till doomsday! And if I wait until my Hearers save their own souls, and turn to God with full purpose of heart, I may wait till these hairs are gray, or till these bones are carried to the tomb! And even then they will not have saved themselves! If you have turned to God, my dear Hearers, you know that the Lord has done it, so give Him the glory! If you have not been converted, God help you to cry to Him instantly and earnestly, Turn us, and we shall be turned. Look to Him who is exalted on high to give repentance and remission of sins. Seek Him and you shall live!

Oh, that you could now see your wretched plight, that you could feel your imminent peril, that you could believe in the Sovereign operations of Gods Grace! Then would I venture to prophesy that salvation had this day come to your houseyes, to your very heart!

III. WHEN THE FIELD IS TO BE PUT UNDER CULTIVATION, IT MUST BE TILLED.

So, when God turns to any man in His mercy, there has to be an operation, a tillage, performed upon his heart! The farmer, unless he is a fool, would never think of sowing his corn upon a field that remains just as it was when it lay fallow. He plows it first. Although we are to scatter the seed everywhere, upon the wayside as well as upon the good ground, God never does. Common calling is addressed to every man, but

effectual calling comes only to prepared men, to those whom God makes willing in the day of His power.

Now, what is the plow needed for? Why, it is needed, first of all, *to break up the soil and make it crumble*. It has gotten hardperhaps it is a heavy clay and then it is all stuck together by the wet and all baked and caked together by the sun that shines on it. Or perhaps it is a light soil. Well, this may not need much plowing, but still, it will cake over, as we all see even in our little gardens. After the rain has gone, the sun comes, the ground cakes over and there will be no place for the seeds to thrust in their tender roots. The corn will not sink down into the earth unless the soil is broken upand the more thoroughly pulverized it becomes, the more like dust you get itthe more hope there is that the seed will take good root.

In such-like manner must human hearts be broken. A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. The more thoroughly pulverized the heart becomes, the better. Hence, there needs to be the sharp plow of the Law of God driven right through the heart to break up its crust and split the clods. And then must come that blessed plow of the Cross, which is the best plow that yet ever went across a fieldthat blessed plow of the Cross, which, as it goes over it, turns up the soil, even the very heart of it, and makes the sinner feel his sin and hate it, too, because of the love of God which is shed abroad by Christ Jesus the Lord. Thus you must be tilled, then, that the heart may be broken, for the Seed of God will never get into an unbroken heart!

And the plow is also needed *to destroy the weeds*, for they must be killed. We cannot have them growing. To spare the weeds would be to kill the wheat. The plow comes and cuts some weeds in two. Others it turns over and throws the heavy clods on and leaves them to lie there and be buried. It turns the roots of others up to the sun, and the sun, by the brightness of its shining, scorches them and they die. Some soils need cross-plowingthey need to be plowed this way and the other way, and then they need someone to go through the furrows, afterwards, and pull up the weeds, or else they will not be all rooted out of the soil. And I am afraid that many of us who have been plowed still have divers weeds left in us! The field must not only be plowed, but the weeds must be killed! And so it must be with you, my dear Hearers. If the Lord really saves you, He must kill your drunkenness, He must kill your swearing, He must kill your whoredom, He must kill your lying, He must kill your dishonesty. These must all go! Every single weed must be torn upthere is no hope for you while there is a weed living!

True, I mean not those weeds which still exist, even in the regenerate, but even they must be doomed. John Wellman, a member of the Society of Friends, tells a strange story on himself. One night, after he had been reading the Scripture, as he lay awake, he heard a voice saying, John Wellman is dead. And, being a Quaker, he was greatly struck therewith and wondered how it was that he could be dead. He asked his wife what his name was and she said, John Wellman. Whereupon he perceived that he must be alive. At last he understood it to mean that he was dead to the worldthat he was henceforth no longer what he formerly had been, but a new creature in Christ Jesus. And it will be a blessed thing for you, my dear Hearers, when the same thing may be said of you in the same sense, He is dead. There is a man I used to knowI wish I did not still know him so well. I used to meet him every day, some years ago, but we parted company. He would not go with me to Christ, so I went without him. I became a new man and he is dead. Oh, how often I wish he were buried, for I have to drag his dead body about with me and, as it putrefies in my nostrils, I have to cry, O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? That rascally old man bears my own name and once he was identical with myself. I could gladly wish he were buried! In like manner, may it come to pass with you that you may die to the flesh and that henceforth you may live in the spirit unto God! And though the old man is still prone to corruption, what a blessed stroke is that which takes the life out of him so that he can no longer rule over you, but the new man reigns supreme!

Plowmen tell us that when they are plowing, if the plow jumps, the work is done badly. They must plow it all alike, from end to end, from headland to headland. If the plow jumps, it has gone over some weeds or knots and not torn them up. I would like always to preach so that my plow may never jump. I sometimes say a hard word because I do not want my plow to jumpI want to tear up all the knots and not leave one in the ground. If one sin is tolerated, or one malicious desire is spared, the life of God is not completely reigning in us! The Lord make a clean sweep of the weeds and burn them all!

Well, now, mark you, *in this tilling there are different soils*. There is the light soil and the heavy soiland so there are different sorts of constitutions. There are some men who are naturally tender and sensitive. Many, too, of our sisters are like Lydiathey soon receive the Word. There are others who are like the heavy clay soil and you know that the farmer doe not plow both soils alike, or else he would make a sad mess of it! And so, God does not deal with all men alike. Some have, as it were, first a little plowing and then the seed is put in and all is done. But some have to be plowed and cross-plowed, and then there is the scarifier and the clod-crusher and I know not what, which have to be rolled over them before they are good for anything. And perhaps, after all, they produce very little fruit. Different constitutions need different modes of action. Let this comfort some of you who have not been so much alarmed as others have been. Different soils must have different methods. Christ does not deal with all men precisely in the same way in His heavenly tillage.
A farmer has a large variety of implements. Go into the shed of a man who is a high farmer and what a number of implements you may see! I mentioned some of them just now, but there are far more than I can talk about. So it is with our Heavenly FatherHe has all kinds of implements. Sometimes it is a Providential trial. One man loses a child. Another has to bury his father. And yonder one has had to follow his wife to the grave. Some have temporal lossesbusiness becomes bad perhaps they are out of work and half starving. Others are stretched upon a bed of sickness and others are brought near to the grave. These circumstances are all so many different sort of plows with which God plows the soil of our hearts!
The laborers whom the Lord employs are dissimilar, likewise, by the diversity of their gifts. Ministers are some of one sort, and some of another. Even the same minister is not always engaged in the same sort of operation. There are some Sundays when I know some of you find me a terrible scarifier, for I have the terrors of the Lord on my conscience and there is very little comfort in the solemn warnings I am constrained to utter. But if, sometimes, I come down upon you like a clod-crusher, it is necessary that with true Grace and good hope, I may at other times drill in the seed and nourish your hearts with the very essence of the Gospel. The faithful evangelist has to become all things to all men to accomplish his Masters work. But you must be tilled, for there is no sowing the ground until it has been first stirred about. And, you know, *the farmer has his proper time for plowing*. Some soils will do better at one season and some at another. There are some soils that break up best after a shower of rain and some that do best when they are dry. There are some hearts, and I think almost all heartsthat are best plowed after a shower of heavenly love has fallen upon them. They are in a grateful frame of mind for mercies received and then the story of a dying Savior comes to them as just that which will touch the strings of their hearts. Anyway, dear Friends, I would like to pass the question around, Have you been tilled? Has your heart been tilled? Has the soil of your heart been turned up? Have the secret things of your heart been discovered and brought to light, just as the plow turns up the ants nest? Have you been brought to know your own corruptions? Are there straight furrows right through you so that you can cry out, O God, You have broken me in pieces, be pleased to come to my help? Then I am glad of it. You are ready to despair of yourself, but I am not ready to despair for you. You tremble, but I am encouraged. I rejoice, not that you are made sorry, but that you sorrow to repentance after a godly manner! God has broken your heart and I know that He will bind it up. If He has plowed you, He will sow you, as He said to the mountains of Israel, I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown.
IV. UNLESS GOD HAS TILLED THE HEART, IT CANNOT BE SOWN WITH ANY HOPE OF SUCCESS.
After plowing, there comes the sowing. When the heart is ready, God sows itsows it with the best of wheat. The wise farmer does not sow tail corn but, as Isaiah says, he casts in the principal wheat. The seed which God sows is living seed. If a farmer were to sow boiled seed that has lost its vitality, what would be the good of it? But he sows living seed. And so the Truth of God which Jesus Christ preaches and bids us to scatter, is living wheatliving seedand when that drops into the soil, God watches over it. The grub may come and the crow may come, but none of these shall get the seed
For Grace insures the crop
and up it shall springfirst the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. It shall grow, for God has prepared the soil for it!
Now, I want to scatter a handful of the good Seed of the Kingdom. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. Trust Jesus, and you are saved. ThereI saw a handful of that Seed go on the wayside and another handful went upon some of you who are choked with thorns. But if there is a broken heart here, the Seed has fallen upon good ground, for that broken heart says, What? If I trust Christ, shall I be saved? Yes, you will be saved in a moment! Every sin forgiven you in a moment, for Jesus Christ took your place and stood and suffered all the punishment of your sins! Therefore God having been just in punishing Christ instead of you, can let you go free, and yet be just as though He had sent you to Hell! If you trust Christ, the merit of His suffering and the virtue of His righteousness shall be yours. You shall go your way rejoicing because you have peace with God through Jesus Christ! Will you believe or not, Sinner? God give you the Grace to trust Christ! Trust Him now. And if you do, then I shall know that God has plowed you, that God has prepared you before He bade me drop in the Seed! Let those of us who know the power of prayer drag the harrow across the field, for when the Seed is once in, it needs harrowing. Thus let us preach the Word, and thus let us pray that the Seed may take root, spring up, grow and bring forth a hundredfold! So sinners shall be saved and so God shall be glorified!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: ECCLESIASTES 11:6-10; 12.

Ecclesiastes 11:6. *In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening withhold not your hand: for you know not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good*. It is our business to sow the good Seed of the Kingdom, to sow it broadcast, to sow it at all timesIn the morning sow your seed, and in the evening withhold not your hand. The result of our sowing does not rest with us, but with the great Lord of the Harvest. Some of the Seed may fall by the wayside, some among thorns, some upon a rock, or upon rocky ground with only a thin layer of earth; but if God has called us to be sowers, and we really sow Gospel Seed, some of it will fall into good ground and bring forth fruit, thirtyfold, sixtyfold, or even a hundredfold!

7. *Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.* And as it is so pleasant for the natural eyes to behold the natural sun, how much more pleasant is it for the *spiritual eyes* to behold the Sun of Righteousness! Sweet as the light of the sun is, the light of the Sun of Righteousness is far sweeter.

8, 9. *But if a man lives many years, and rejoices in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many. All that comes is vanity. Rejoice, O young man, in your youth; and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth, and walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes: but know you that for all these things God will bring you into judgment*. Nobody in his senses supposes that Solomon exhorted young men to walk according to their own heart and according to the sight of their eyes! This is a common way of speakingas we may say to a man who is going to excess in drink, Well, drink your full, and be drunk; but you will have to suffer for it. It will certainly exact a penalty at your hands by-and-by. Nobody would be so foolish as to say that we had exhorted the man to drunkenness! On the contrary, we did, as it were, warn him not to continue in his evil course by reminding him of the penalty which would assuredly follow. So here Solomon seems to say, Do this if you will. Do it if you dare. But remember that there is a Judgment Day coming and God will judge you for all these thingsand according to these things will He measure out your doom.

10. *Therefore remove sorrow from your heart and put away evil from your flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity*. There is no doubt that if we were holy, we would be happy. So, if we advise men to put away sorrow from their heart, we must remind them that they cannot do it except by putting away sin. The roots of evil must be cleared away, otherwise, in the long run, to cut down the shoots and leave the roots may be but to strengthen the evil. The removal of sorrow can only be effected by going deeper and clearing the heart of sinand this can only be accomplished by Gods Grace.

Ecclesiastes 12:1. *Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw near, when you shall say, I have no pleasure in them.* Do not give God the dregs of life. Do not offer in sacrifice to Him anything that is worn out. Remember that among the first fruits which the Jews were to bring to the priest to be offered on Gods altar, there were to be green ears of corn, dried by the fire, even corn beaten out of full ears. The Lord delights to have the hearts of His people while they are yet children. The Lord said through Hosea the Prophet, I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms, as if, while they were but little, God had taught them to take their first steps in walking. There is also that passage in the prophecy of Jeremiah, I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your espousals, when you went after Me in the wilderness. God delights in those early evidences of love in the morning of life, while the dew is upon everything and there is a sparkling freshness all around. I pray that you who are young will remember your Creator in the days of your youth!

2. *While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the star, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain.* As they do in old age, when troubles seem to multiply and the brightness of life seems to have gone.

3, 4. *In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows are darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the street, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the birds, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low.* This is a wonderfully vivid description of the failure of our natural powers. The keepers of the house shall tremble these are our arms which are the guardians of the house of our body. We naturally thrust out our hands and arms to protect ourselves if we are likely to fall, so they are the keepers of the house. The strong men shall bow themselves, that is, our legs and knees begin to shake. The grinders cease because they are few. Our teeth gradually decay and, at last, fall from their places. They are like the first falling stones of a decaying wall, tottering to show how the rest will soon follow. Those that look out of the windows are darkened. The eyes begin to lose their quickness of sight and fresh windowsdouble windowsare sometimes needed to assist the failing sight. The doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low. The voice fails. Then there comes sleeplessness, so that the first little bird that chirps in the morning wakes up the aged man. And as for music, his ears sometimes fail to catch the sweetest melody and his own voice is unable to attune itself as once it didAll the daughters of music shall be brought low.

5. *Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish.* This is one of the most beautiful pieces of poetic description that were ever penned! Here we have a true picture of the nervousness which creeps over men in the decline of life. Then there is the flourishing of the almond treethere are many before me now whose white hair shows that the almond tree is flourishing!

5. *And the grasshopper shall be a burden.* Those things that we treated lightly in our youth become a very heavy burden in our later years. A little work wearies, a little care fatigues and a little trouble frets us as it never used to do.

5. *And desire shall fail.* The whole nature becomes more calm and less ambitiousand less ardent than it used to be.
5, 6. *Because man goes to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: before the silver cord is loosed, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern*. The silver cord is the spinal marrow, which gradually relaxes, for the strength and power of it are gone. The whole frame begins to show symptoms of the paralysis which is creeping on. The golden bowl is the skull, which contains the brain, and whoever has seen a skull must see how appropriate the figure is. Then, in the pitcher and the wheel we have a reference to the circulation of the blood of which Solomon seems to have had at least some inklings. There have been writers who have affirmed that the entire system of anatomy might very well be gathered from these words. They are wonderful, not only because of the poetic imagery which is on the surface, but also because of the depth of meaning which lies beneath.
7. *Then shall the dust return to the Earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.* Thus will it happen to us all unless Christ shall first come. The machinery of our being will stand still. The fountain of life will be dry; no longer will the living floods rush through their appointed courses as they used to do. Please remember that we are not merely talking about people in the street, of whom we know nothing, but about *ourselves,* also, for we are mortalso we must die. Let us believe this and prepare for it.
8. *Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; all is vanity*. This seems to be the conclusion to which Solomon came by the experiment of his own life, as well as by the teaching of God. This Book of Ecclesiastes begins thusThe words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.
9. *And moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yes, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs*. That man is not fit to teach who does not give good heed and set his words in order. He who says whatever comes first into his mind, only gives out chaff which the wind drives away. But he who would scatter his seed broadcast must take care that he has in his seedbasket good seed that is worth sowing in the broad furrows of the worldfield.
10. *The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words.* The Hebrew expression means words of delight, for words that delight the ear may help to win the heart and so prove to be acceptable words.
10, 11. *And that which was written was upright, even words of truth. The words of the wise are as goads, and the words of scholars are as well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd*. The true preachers words pierce us like the sharp ox-goads pierce the cattle, but they are also like nails that are driven into the wood, and clinched so that they cannot come out. There must be something to stir our emotions, and something to retain in our memory. We need the goads, for we are like the ox that is slow at the plow. And we need to have the nails well driven into us for our memory is often like a rotten piece of wood which lets the nail slip out as soon as it has to bear any weight. May the Holy Spirit make all of us, who are preachers, to be wise so as to know how to use the goad and how to drive the nail!
12. *And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there in no end: and much study is a weariness of the flesh*. That is what Solomon said and he had never seen the British Museum, or the Bodleian and other noted libraries, for, if he had done so, he would have said with an emphasis,

There is no end, for the books of his day could scarcely have been one in a thousand, or one in a million, compared with those which are now produced! I should not wonder, however, if the one in a million was quite worth the million. There are many books made that may benefit the printer, the publisher, and the bookseller, but they are not likely to benefit anybody else!
13. *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man*. Reverent walking before the Most High. Reconciliation to Him so that we can thus walk and thus live, and all this proved by a life of obedience to His commandmentsThis is the whole duty of man.
14. *For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it is good, or whether it is evil*. Notice that expression, every secret thing. It is not merely our public actions that God will judge, otherwise we might be more at our easebut He takes account of our most private thoughts, words, deeds and intents. Who among us can endure that ordeal? Yet we must endure it if we are to stand before Him. O Lord, prepare us, by Your Infinite Grace, through faith in Your dear Son, and by the regenerating work of Your gracious Spirit, for this solemn testing time! 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.

HOPE FOR YOUR FUTURE
NO. 2125

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

I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings.
Ezekiel 36:11.

THESE words were spoken to the mountains, valleys and rivers of Judahand we know that the Lord cares not for hills and rivers, but He speaks altogether for the sake of His people. The blessing to the land was intended to be a blessing to the people. We shall do no violence to the text if we take the promise as belonging to *ourselves* and plead it before the Mercy Seat, trusting that the Lord will do this unto us and that our latter end may be better than our beginning.

Have you ever noticed that when nations fall they seldom rise again? Babylon and Nineveh became mountains of rubbish. If the Medo-Persian kingdom falls, the throne is never revived. If Greece and ancient Rome cease from their eminence, we see no more of them than their ruins. But Gods people are not numbered among the nationsso that when Israel falls she revives again. Though for many centuries the ancient people have been scattered and peeled, derided and despised, yet every Israelite may put down his foot with joyous tread and say, No, Israel, you shall never perish!

Even in her ashes live her fires and the days shall come when Israel shall acknowledge her Messiah and her God will fulfill the promise of the text, I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings; and you shall know that I am the Lord. I believe *that* to be the first sense of the passagebut since all the blessings of the Covenant which belong to the seed according to the flesh do spiritually belong to all those who are in that Covenant according to the spirit, we shall take this word as spoken to all Believers.

If a hypocrite falls, he falls like Lucifer, never to hope again. He is a meteor that flashes across the sky and disappearsa wandering star for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. Let Judas fall from his apostleship and there is no restoring the son of perdition. But how different is the case of Gods own when they fall! Alas, that they should do so! Yet of them it is said, Rejoice not against me, O my enemy: when I fall, I shall arise. Peter, at a look from his Master, wept bitterly, and lived to say, You know that I love You.

There is hope of a tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again, for there is life in it and where there is life there is hope. If Mordecai is of the royal seed, the enemy shall never prevail against him. There may come dark times of backsliding, but surely the redeemed of the Lord shall come again with mourning and repenting and they shall seek Him from whom they have wandered. I am not, however, going to dwell much upon the dark side of the subject of declension. I shall invite your attention to the

gracious promise that God will make things better for us than they were at our beginnings.

First, I shall answer the question, *what is there, then, so good in our beginnings?* In the second place, *if so good, can anything be better?* And, in the third place, *how can we secure these better thing*s so that our life shall verify the statement of the text, I will do better unto you than at your beginnings?

I. WHAT IS THERE, THEN, SO GOOD IN OUR BEGINNINGS? Let us look back. Some of us have been converted to God for a good number of years, now, and all that while we have enjoyed spiritual life. Others are young beginners, but their present enjoyment will assist them to answer the questionWhat is there so good about those first days? We read of our first love as the love of our espousals and we all know there was something specially charming about those first hours when forgiving love was precious to us and we rejoiced in the Lord.

One choice enjoyment was our *vivid sense of pardon*. We knew that we were forgivenwe had not the shadow of a doubt of it. We were so dirty lately that being washed from our stains, we *saw* the change. It would not have been possible for Satan, then, to make us doubt it. When we stood at the foot of the Cross and said, Thus my sins were washed away, then things went well with us. When Substitution was a novelty to us and when we seemed to hear a voice like that of the angels before the Throne of God, singing, There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesuswe all knew, then, that we had looked to Jesus, for we felt that we could look nowhere else.

We knew, then, we were newly cleansed sinners! Oh, that blessed period! Our earthly comforts were forgotten in the greater sweetness and our earthly sorrows ceased because guilt was gone. Taken out of the bonds of iniquity, our hearts danced at the very sound of the redeeming name. We sang, I am forgiven! I am forgiven! We wanted to tell the angels this strange wonder of almighty love. That was one of the good things of our beginning. We recollect very well, too, that we had, then, *a delicious enjoyment of the good things of the Covenant of Grace*. We did not know a tenth of what we know now, but we intensely enjoyed what we did know.

When the Israelites first came into Canaan they found it to be a land that flowed with milk and honey. It became afterwards a stony land through their sins, but rare clusters then grew in Eshcol and the wild bees made honey plentifully, even in such a strange place as the carcass of a lion. When we first came to Christ it was so with us as to the things of Godthey were all sweets. We saw one Covenant blessing, then another and then another. And we were enraptured with each one. Whether in the body or out of the body we could scarcely tell, for we did not look, then, without tasting and we did not taste, then, without feastingand we did not feast, then, without feasting again! We grudged the world the hours we spent in businesswe wanted to get back to our Biblesor to the assembly of the saints.

Our Lord was a precious Christ, then, and exceedingly lovely in our eyes that had been so newly opened. Everything about Him, His people, His Word, His day and His Cross was astonishing to us and filled us with an intense delight! It was happy days, indeed, with us then. That was another blessed point in our beginnings. And, at that time, we were like the children of Israel in a third matter, namely, that *we had repeated victories*. Do you remember when your Jericho fell downwhen a high walled-up sin that you feared would never yield to you, was brought down suddenly?

As Israel went from victory to victory and slew king after king, so in those early days did you. As quickly as conscience revealed a sin you smote it as with a two-edged sword. You sometimes wondered at professors, that they could live as they did. You felt *you* could not. Your hand was in for fighting and, like Joshua, you did not stop. The day was not long enough for you in which to slay your sins! You felt inclined to bid the sun stand still and the moon rest so that you might make full work of blessed carnage in putting sin altogether to the sword.

You have had a good many defeats since then, it may be, for which you cannot excuse yourselfbut *then,* Victory! was your watchword and you went on to realize it in the name of the eternal God. From day to day, though attacked by the uprising of corruptions, you said, In the name of the Lord I will destroy them. And you sometimes cried like she of old, O my Soul, you have trodden down strength! You marveled to see how the adversary was subdued beneath the feet of your faith! Those were good times, were they notthose beginnings? In those days, you had *great delight in prayer*. When alone with Christ, it was Heaven belowand in Prayer Meetings, when Gods people were warm at hearthow you delighted to unite with them!

The preaching was marrow and fatness to you. You did not mind walking a long way on a wet night to hear about your Lord and Master. It may be there was no cushion to the seat or you had to stand in the aisle. You did not mind thatbut you are getting wonderfully dainty nowyou cannot hear the poor preacher whose voice was once like music to you. You cannot enjoy the things of God as you once did. Whose fault is that? The kitchen is the same and the food the same I fear the appetite has gone.

How ravenous I was after Gods Wordhow I would wake early in the morning to read those books that are full of the deep things of God! I wanted none of your nonsensical novels, nor your weekly tales for which some of you pine, like children for sugar sticks. Then one fed on Manna that came from Heaven, on Christ Himself! Those were good times in which everything was delightful. You heard a Gospel preacher and perhaps he spoiled the Queens Englishbut you did not care a bit about that. You were hungry and you minded not the knives and the tableclothsyou wanted meat, and plenty of itand so long as it was good spiritual meat, your souls were delighted! That is one of the good things of our beginnings.

In those days we were *full of living fruitfulness*. I hope we have not lost it. Just as the mountains of Judea dropped with wine and ran with milk through the abundance of the soil, so was it with us, then. We could do

anything! Sometimes, in looking back, we wonder how we ever attempted so much. We were not so anxious to keep up our spiritual life as we were to spend what we had got. We thought, then, we would push the Church before us and drag the world behind us! What marvels we were going to do! Yes, and we did many of them by Gods good Grace!

Then, if we had but little strength, yet we kept the Lords Word. If we had but one talent, we made as much use of it, perhaps, as some do with ten. I love to see you young Christians as active as ever you can beand I am going to put my hand on young heads and say, This is right. Do all you can. You may not be so lively by-and-by. If you are not earnest when you begin, what will you soon be? I want you to maintain that earnestness and to let it increase, for no man is doing too much for Jesus! No one is too consecrated! No one is too self-denying! No one is too enthusiastic! There has never been seen on the face of the earth, yet, a man who has laid himself out too much for the cause and kingdom of our Master. That will never be.

But it is one of the good points of our beginnings that we were full of fruitfulness for the Lord our God. This is because the saints begin generally with *abounding love*. Oh, how we loved the Savior when first we discovered how He had loved us with an everlasting love! When we see that the dunghill is never to be our portion again, but yon bright Glory at the right hand of the Eternaloh, then we love our Savior with all our hearts! I am not saying that we do not now love even morebut it is a good beginning when we overflow with love to our Lord Jesus.

II. I could thus keep on reminding you of the days gone by, but I do not care to do so. I am going now, in the second place, to answer the question, CAN ANYTHING BE BETTER THAN THIS? Well, it would be a very great pity if there could not be because I am sure we, when we were young beginners, were not much to boast of and all the joy we had was, after all, but little compared with what is revealed in the Word of God! We ought to get to something betterand it would be a miserable thing if we were to get small by degrees, and miserably less.

It would not look like Christian perseverance if our light were to shine less and less unto the perfect darkness! No, but it is to shine more and more unto the perfect dayand in the beginning our day is only twilight! In coming to God at first we are only in the outer courtswe have not yet entered the Holy of Holies of inward experiencewe stand in the outer court. We are wheat in the blade as yet. Ask the farmer whether he thinks that the green blade is the best thing on the farm. He says, Yes, for the present. But if it is a green blade next July he will not think so. There is something better than before.

All the good that God gives us draws something better behind it. And let me whisper itthere is a best thing yet to comenot yet revealed unto eye or ear of saint, but it will be ours by-and-by when our Lord comes. In what respects, then, can our future be better than that which is behind? I answer very readily, *faith may be stronger*. By the Grace of God it will be firmer and more robust. At first it shoots up like the lily, very beautiful but fragile. Afterwards it is like the oak with great roots that grip the soil and rugged branches that defy the winds. Faith in the young beginner is soon cast down and doubts and fears prevailbut if we grow in Divine Grace we become rooted and grounded.

In these days, when it is fashionable to sneer at the doctrines of Scripture and nobody is thought to be sensible who believes anything, the young Believer is apt to be staggered. But it would take a great many of the critics and divines of the present day, with all their skepticism, to shake some of us. We have tasted and handled and lived upon these thingsand being established in them we are not to be moved from the hope of our calling! Though all the wiseacres in the world should dip their pens in tenfold darkness and write it down as proven that there is no such thing as light, we have seen it with our eyeswe live in it and we are not to be moved from the eternal verities. This is something better than early faith, is it not? Go on and obtain it!

Again, God gives to His people, as they advance, *much more knowledge*. At first they enjoy what they know, but they hardly know what they enjoy! As we grow in Grace we know more. We are surprised to see that what we thought to be one blessing is 50 blessings in one. We learn the art of dissecting the Truth of Godtaking it to pieces and seeing the different veins of Divine thought that run through it! And then we see with delight blessing after blessing conveyed to us by the Person and Sacrifice of our exalted Lord. Brothers and Sisters, if years and experience make us know more, our present is better than our beginnings!

Love to Christ gets to be more constant . It is a passion always, but with Believers who grow in Grace it comes to be a principle as well as a passion. If they are not always blazing with love, there is a good fire banked up within the soul. You know how you bank your fire up when you come to chapel in the evening, and have nobody at home, and want to keep the fire alight till you get home? That is often the condition of a Christian. Even if we do not talk much about assurance and say nothing about getting near perfection, yet we lie humbly before God and do not doubt that we love Him. We are sure that we do, for it becomes a daily delight to us to speak with Christ and, in the speaking, we feel our love glowing!

You do not always feel that you love those whom you never seebut when you talk to the dear objects of your love, your heart is moved. As one of the old Puritans used to say, our Graces are not apparent unless they are in exercise. You walk through a preserve and there may be partridges and pheasants and hares all round youbut you will not see them till one flies out of its hiding, or a hare starts up before you. You see them in *motion*but while they were quiet in the bushes you did not observe them. So may love to Christ and all Christian virtues lie concealed till they are called into action. Our Lords dear Presence attracts them all out of their hiding places and then you perceive that love was always there, and there in strength, too, though it was not always on your lips nor even in your thoughts.

As Christians grow in Divine Grace, *prayer becomes more mighty*. If the

Lord builds you up into true spiritual manhood, you will know how to wrestle. Why did not Jacob meet the angel the *first* time when he went to Bethel? He lay down and slept, and dreamed a dream. He was a spiritual babe and a dream suited his capacity. But when he came backa man who had grown by years of experience*then* the Angel of God came and wrestled with him! It is one part of the teaching of Divine experience that we grow stronger in the art of prayer and know how to win from God greater things than we ever dreamt of asking at first. God grant you better things in the matter of prayer than at your beginnings!

So, I think, it is in *usefulness*. Growing Christians and full-grown Christians are more useful than beginners. They may not, apparently, be doing so much but they are doing it better and there is more result. Their fruit, if not quite so plentiful, is of better quality and more mellow. If there are fewer fruits, they are larger ones and each one of a finer flavor. In fact, this one thing is clear of all Believers who have grown in Gracethat *the work of Grace in them is nearer completion*. They are getting nearer Heaven and they are getting more fit for it. Some of you are sitting very loose by this world. You are expecting very soon to hear the summons which will call you to quit these earth-born things.

As ripe fruit comes from the tree with a gentle touch, so is it getting to be with youthe world had a greater hold upon you when you were young than it has nowand your thoughts of departure from it are more frequent and more full of desire than they used to be. You have come to look at death as though it were only a removal to a neighboring town, or like stepping across the street. You have looked at it so long that you can say like one I knew, I have dipped my foot in the river every morning and I shall not be at all afraid to ford it when the time comes. The Lord has made you to stand on tiptoe, ready to rise. You can say, The time of my departure is at hand. Your chariot is at the door!

Well, now, this is something better than your beginnings! The old Christian may look back upon the new wine and say regretfully, How it sparkled and effervesced! But the old is better. You may think of the days of your youthful vigor when the body kept pace with the spiritand you were young and full of nerve and muscle and enthusiasm. Those animal spirits have now gone from you and you are sobered and even slow. You have become old, and, perhaps, forgetful of many things. You go over the old story, now, instead of inventing new ones. But then, the old storythe old, old storyis as new to you as at the first and you love it better than ever before!

You cannot be driven from it now. I should think Satan himself would hardly like to meddle with some of youhe feels that he cannot shake your faith in the living God! Or if he should shake you, you would in turn shake him! He has had so many brushes with you during the last 50 years that he begins to know that you carry the true Jerusalem blade and he had rather deal with other folks who are fond of the modern thought wooden sword! You have come to the land Beulah and you are sitting on the brink of Jordan, waiting to cross over to the Celestial City. Surely, you have realized that God is dealing better with you than at your beginnings!

III. I will end with the last, which is a practical matter. How can we, dear Friends, we who are beginning a Christian life, HOW CAN WE SECURE THAT IT WILL BE BETTER WITH US, BY-AND-BY, THAN IT IS NOW? Alas, we have seen some start splendidly in appearance. They did run well but they were soon out of breath or turned aside. We hear no more of them. Our fear should be lest the like should happen to us. How can we act so as to hold on our way and go from good to better?

I answer, first, *keep to the simplicity of your first faith*. Never get away from that! You remember the story we used to tell of poor Jack the huckster, who sang

Im a poor sinner and nothing at all,

But Jesus Christ is my All in All?
Questioners could not make him doubt. He said that he could not doubt that he was a poor sinner and nothing at all, for he knew he was! And why should he doubt that Jesus Christ was his All in All? The Word of God says sowhy should he doubt it? Here he stood and would not budge an inch.

By Gods Grace, neither will I. The coney is safe in the rock and he knows better than to come out. I hide in Jesus, and there I mean to remain, whatever the critics or the cultured may say. Jesus is my All in All and I am nobody! My life cost Him His death and His death is my life. He took my sin and diedI take His righteousness and live. You may laugh, but I win. You may sneer, but I sing. O dear Friend, fly to Jesus and hide in Him and stay there! Never get an inch beyond the Cross, for, if you do, you will have to come back. That is your place till you dieyou are *nothing* Christ is everything!

You have to sink lower, and lower and lowerand in your esteem Christ must rise higher, and higher and higher. The nothing at all must be more emphatic the older you growand the All in All must be more emphatic, too. If you get to borrowing wings and trying to fly up with speculations about what you may be in yourself, you will end in coming down heavily with a bruised heartif not with broken bones. Keep at the foot of the Cross and you will maintainno, you will *increase* your joy in the Lord! At the same time, dear Friends, *practice great watchfulness*. Many a child of God has to weep for months because he did not watch for minutes. He closed his eyes a little while and said, It is all right with me. And in that little while the enemy came and sowed tares among his wheat and great mischief came because of a little nap.

We ought to have the eyes of a lynx and they ought never to be closed. We know not which way the most temptation will come. We need to be guarded on all sides and remember the words of our Master, What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch. You will not keep your joy and grow in Divine Grace unless you watch. The next advice is *grow in dependence upon God*. For your watchfulness, depend upon His watching. You cannot keep yourself unless *He* keeps you. You must watch, but it is He that keeps Israel and does neither slumber nor sleep. Remember that. *Determine*, dear Friends, at the very beginning, *to be thorough*.
I love to see young Christians very scrupulous about the mind of the

Lord. I would not have you say, Oh, that is non-essential! Obedience to a command may not be essential to your salvation but it must be essential to the completeness of your holiness. Whatever He says to you, do it. Safe walking can only come of careful walking. I have known the time when I felt afraid to put down one foot before the other for fear I should go wrongand I believe I was never so right as when that feeling was on me continually. You young people must cultivate more and more the Grace of holy fear. You must dread daily lest in anything you should omit to do your Lords will, or should trespass against Him. In this way your joy shall be maintained and you shall be settled after your old estatesand God will do better unto you than at your beginnings.

Lastly, *seek for more instruction*. Try to grow in the knowledge of God that your joy may be full. It will be ill for you to say, I know I was converted and therefore need not care any further. That will not do. No, no, in conversion you began a race from which you are never to cease! You have been born-again and therefore you need spiritual food. You enjoy spiritual life and you are to nurture that life till it is conformed to the perfect image of Christ. Onward, Brothers and Sisters! Onward, for that which is beyond will repay your labor!

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON Ezekiel 36:1-15; 23-34.
HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK675, 889, 867.

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON:
DEAR FRIENDSIn the present epidemic we are, most of us, fellowsufferers. Let us endeavor to be spiritually profited thereby. We would be speedily restored but we would also be graciously instructed. The comfort and joy of life are dependent upon the Divine will as much as life itself. We must look up to the Lord for the joy of our Graces as well as for the existence of our hope. In all things we must pray. The preacher begs that he may not be forgotten by his hearers and readers to whom he hopes speedily to return in renewed health.
Yours most heartily,
Mentone, Jan. 11, 1890.

C. H. SPURGEON.

Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #1921 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

CLEANSINGA COVENANT BLESSING

NO. 1921

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

Then will I sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols, I will cleanse you. Ezekiel 36:25.

THIS is one of the opening words of the glorious Covenant of Grace. Ezekiels copy of the Covenant is full and clear and deserves to be written in letters of gold and hung up in the best chamber of every Believers dwelling This is the *Magna Charta* of saintsthe title deed of the land of our inheritance! Glorious Covenant of Grace, our heart delights in every line of promise wherewith you are enriched!

You perceive that this promise deals with sin and it deals with sin because sin broke the first Covenant and thus ruined us all. Sin must be removed before Covenant relationship can be reestablished. Sin must be purged from the conscience before Covenant communion can be enjoyed. Sin must be abhorred before Covenant union can be consummated. Blessed be God, sin shall be washed away, for thus it is written in the Everlasting Covenant!

Sin is the great plague and pest of our lives, now that we are awakened to discern between good and evil, and now that the new heart and the right spirit have been put within us. Is it not well that this cause of misery should be destroyed? It is sin, my Brothers and Sisters, that keeps us away from God. Should not this barrier be utterly broken down and swept out of the way? It was because of sin that we needed to be reconciled to God by the death of His Son. Should not that atoning death effectually kill sin? Sin has done all the mischief. At first it withered Paradise and sowed the earth with thorns and thistles. And ever since it has brought forth the same painful crop. Still it saps our strength; it destroys our comfort; it robs us of usefulnessit is the foe of all goodit is all evils in one. O curse of curses, fountain of Hell and father of the devil, you unutterably horrible monster, Sin! Shall we not be doubly blessed when we are rid of you? We certainly should never fear death if we had no sinneither need we even fear the devil, himself, for, if there were no traitor within the city, Mansoul might laugh to scorn all the attacks of her enemies outside.

Sin, to the awakened sinner, is his burden, his misery, his horror. It is a nightmare which haunts him! He can never escape from it. Like David, he cries, My sin is ever before me. Even when sin is forgiven, the memory of it often makes a man go softly all his days. We could bear disease if we were cured of sin. We could bear the worlds troubles if there were not these spiritual sorrows. We could be content to pine in prison on bread and water all the rest of our natural lives if we could be clear from sin. Yes, I guarantee you that the darkest dungeon would be a bright paradise to a Believer, if there he could be exempt from the temptation, from the remembrance and from the presence of sin! It is, therefore, a very blessed thought on the part of our God to make the Covenant to bear so much upon our sin and our sinfulnessand especially to make it open with this unconditional promise of infinite loveThen will I sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols, I will cleanse you. As the laver at the Tabernacle door, so stands this promise at the entrance of the Covenant. Let us wash and be clean.

I. Our first remark at this time shall be that GOD BEGINS TO DEAL WITH HIS PEOPLE WHILE THEY ARE YET IN SIN. The text evidently implies this. He does not wait until they are clean before He bestows His love and pity upon them. He does not wait till they have saved themselves and *then* comes to them with a nominal salvation. He does not make promises of purification to them upon condition that they cleanse themselves, but He comes to them according to the riches of His Grace, even when they are dead in trespasses and sins! He finds them in all their defilement, rebellion and iniquityand He deals with them just as they are. Jesus saves sinners! Gods love comes to those who in no degree merit it. His Grace stoops to the ruin of the Fall and lifts us up from it.

These are very simple words, you say, but there are those here to whom these plain sentences will sound like the ringing of the silver trumpets of jubilee! I know them, for I once was one of themthey are a people sighing because of their defilement which they mourn over, but cannot remove. Dear Hearts, you have not to look for any good in yourselves when you come to Godyou are to come just as you are. However filthy, however enslaved by idols you may have been, however much your own heart condemns you, you are to come to Jesus on terms, not of merit, but of Grace! And you are to approach Him as sinners, without any further qualification. Christ is a Savior who came to save His people from their sins. And His salvation, therefore, begins with them while they are yet

in their sins. He does not wait till He spies out some sound spot in the patient, but when he is covered all over with leprosy from head to footand there is not one sound speck on him as big as the point of a pin*then* it is that the Great Physician comes and makes the leprous one to be clean!

This is plain enough, if you will look at the text, for, first, it is clear that *those to whom God makes His promise of His Covenant are unclean and unfit for fellowship with Him*. He speaks of their filthiness, yes of, all their filthiness, so that there was much of it, for Gods alls are, by no means, trifles. There were also idols about and many of them, for He speaks of all your idols. These are abominations unto the Lord, but there they are, and they must be put out of the way. He says, Then will I sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean. Not, You are clean and, therefore, you may come to Me, but, I will come to you and make you clean.

Some time ago we explained the type of the ashes of the red cow, how they were kept in water, ready to be used and applied to all persons who became ceremonially unclean. After this water had been sprinkled upon them, they were permitted to return to the camp and go up to the Lords Tabernacle. But until that purification had been applied, they were shut out from fellowship with God and His people. The people of God could not converse with them. The priest of God could not commune with them. God, Himself, would have nothing to do with them. They were unclean and so were set aside under a kind of quarantine not to come near the camp lest the rest of the people should be polluted by them.

Now that is just where God finds His people when He begins with them. They are not fit for communion. They are not fit that the saints of God should associate with them, nor that they should stand in the Holy Place of the Most High. They are not fit for any service, for the Lord will not have the unclean to bear His vessels. Their prayers are defiled; their praises are defiled; there is nothing about them but what is unclean. In such a condition the man could do nothing acceptable to Godhis uncleanness put him out of court and rendered him altogether incapable of pleasing the pure and holy God. He that was unclean made everything unclean that he touchedthe pollution was most contagious. If he sat upon a chair, no one else might sit there, for the seat was unclean. If he touched a vessel in the tent, the vessel was unclean and the tent was unclean! He was a source of defilement and wherever he went, he spread pollution. Such is every sinner in the sight of God. He is a well of foul waters, a fountain of bitterness. He is defiled and defiling. The God of all Grace visits His people at the first when they are in this terrible condition!

I may be speaking to one who is ready to cry out, I am not fit to be in the House of God tonight. I am not worthy to lift my eyes to the place where His honor dwells. That is where He finds youjust thereand it is to *you* in this sad position that the Covenant of Grace refers. Our Redeemer comes to us in our very worst estate! As I was speaking to an aged Brother in Christ, who is, probably, very near Home, he said, I feel what a blessed thing it is to still come to Christ with the cry, God be merciful to me, a sinner. I do not rest upon past experience, nor upon anything else, but I constantly begin at the beginning. I come to Jesus even as I did at the first, only more humbly and with a more intense sincerity than I ever knew before.

I am sure there is wisdom in this course and in no other. If the Covenant of Grace did not deal with sinners as sinners, I should be afraid to come to Christ. But because it opens its mouth wide to me while I am yet unclean and polluted by sin, I feel that it meets my case. The Free Grace of the Covenant does not come half way and say to me, when I am nearly dead, Get up and take what I give you and I will deliver you. But it comes, like the good Samaritan, where I am. It sees me to be unconscious and it awakens me. When it sees me conscious of my wounds, it pours in the oil and the wine. When it sees my weakness to be so great that I cannot stir a step, it sets me on its own beast and takes me to the inn. When it marks my utter poverty, so that I am not worth so much as two pence, it does not ask me to pay my own way, but discharges everything for me and leaves its promise that whatever more is needed shall be freely given! O blessed charity of Covenant Love! It will not be turned aside by our abominable filthiness, nor will it leave us because of our idols! Glorious Grace, which begins with us where sin and death have left us!

You may notice in the text, or gather it from it by clear inference *that these people with whom God dealt were not only unclean, but they could not cleanse themselves*. It is a rule with miracles, as well miracles of the Spirit as miracles of the body, that God never does what others can do. As long as there is strength left in the natural laws, God does not go beyond them, but our extremity is Gods opportunity. Now, inasmuch as the text brings in God saying, then will I sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean, it is clear that this evil could not be cleansed without the Divine interposition. There was no other way for the purging of the chosen ones but by the direct interposition of the Lord! Oh, but divines have fine notions nowadays! It appears, according to the latest information, that children are not now born in sin as they used to be! They say that certain highly favored children commence life in a most extraordinary waythey are born gracious! They do not need any degeneration or conversion, for the stock is so superior that the branches naturally bring forth good fruit!

I have never read of such people in the Scriptures, but I am often told that there are such, nowadays. At least their parents and their parsons say so. Of old it used to be, That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and only, that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. That, of course, is very old-fashioned doctrine! Well, when we have a new-fashioned god, I dare say we shall have new-fashioned truthbut at present, the Truth of God seems to me to be as Immutable as God Himself! If it is true, today, it was true yesterday and will be true even to the end, even as God, Himself, changes not. As for myself, I know that I was born in sin and I know that in me, that is in my flesh, there dwells no good thing. I know, also, that I once tried to purge and cleanse my own heart and labored at it, I believe, as honestly as any person that lived. I went about to seek a righteousness of my own and I endeavored to stop all sinand my failure was complete!

I do not advise any other person to try self-healing. It brought me to despair. It drove me, almost, to the loss of reason. The more I scrubbed and cleansed, the blacker I became. I washed my Hottentot self and he was more of a Hottentot after I had bathed him than he was before! I only saw how black the black man was when I had whitened him, for the moment, with my soap. Job said, If I wash myself with snow water and make my hands never so clean; yet shall You plunge me in the ditch and my own clothes shall abhor me. And it was so with me. Therefore I speak of my own experience and, taught by my own failure, I cannot urge any man to seek cleansing by his own doings or efforts, but I urge him to accept that cleansing which God has promised in the Covenant of Grace.

Cleansing cannot come from any other place, therefore seek it of the Lord who says, I will sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean. If you go about through Heaven, earth and Hell, you shall find no other detergent that shall take away sin but the precious blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. You shall sooner redden every wave of the Atlantic as you plunge your hands in it than you shall take away one spot of condemnation from off your soul! There is your sin and there it must eternally be unless Jehovah, Himself, shall blot it out! He that is filthy shall be filthy still, throughout the ages, unless the Divine One interpose. Our only hope lies in this faithful Word of God, I will sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean. The Lord begins to save His people when as yet they have no strength and cannot cleanse themselves.

More than that, when God begins to deal with His people, *many of them have a special filthiness*. From all your filthiness and from all your idols, I will cleanse you. When He begins with them, they are given up to their idols. Other lords have dominion over them and these lords lead them into filthiness. Some upon whom God has looked with everlasting love have become, before their conversion, openly, manifestly, loathsomely filthy and yet He begins in His Grace with them! The harlotshe strays into the House of God and feels that she has no right to be thereand yet the day comes when she stands behind the Master, washing His feet with her tears and wiping them with the hairs of her head because she has had much forgiven. The man who has been guilty of foul vices, of which we say but little, but which he would gladly weep over with tears of blood at their remembrancewhen the Lord of Love comes to such a horrible offender in a way of mercy, He says to him, *even to him*, I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and, as a cloud, your sins.

I am afraid I do not always speak plainly enough, though I try to do so. Let me try again to cast in the big net. The Lord Jesus Christ forgives thieves and robbers, liars and drunks and criminals of all sorts. The Lord Jesus has mercy upon those who have been blasphemers. All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men. I have seen, with great joy, cases of infidels who have mocked at the Scriptures, denied the Deity of Christ and persecuted Gods peoplethey have stepped in and heard the Gospel and they have been melted down by itrescued from their obstinacy and cleansed from their iniquity! In fact, there are such here tonight! Such were some of you: but you were washed. Oh, it is not for me to tell all that I know of how the Lord has taken some of the ringleaders in the service of Satan, first in all manner of mischief, and has cast the devil out of them and made them to sit at His feet, clothed and in their right mind! We believe in a sinners Gospel. To the guilty we preach remission!

The heathen of old once reported that ours was the religion of the most abandoned. They laughed at Christianity, for they said it was like the building of Rome when Romulus received everybody that was in debt and discontentedand all the criminals from all the towns round about came to make the city of Rome! There is much truth in the statementit is a very good figure, though meant to be a slander. The Lord does receive the devils runaways. If there is one here that is servant to that black master, I would recommend him to run to Christ tonight and not give his master five minutes notice. Quit the tyrants employment and run for it at once!

But then look at thisthe Lord receives sinners to *cleanse* them. He does not receive them that they may remain as they were! The Lord Jesus receives sinners just as teachers receive children into a Ragged School. It is their glory that it is a Ragged School! The more ragged and the more dirty, the more welcome the child! But why do they receive the ragged child? Why, to wash him, to teach him, to clothe him, to instruct him! We do not receive ragged children for the love of their rags, nor to keep them in their ragsbut that they may be taught, cleansed and elevated. Such is my Masters house of mercy! It is a hospitalsick folk are always welcome. It is not a place for spreading disease, nor for treating it lightlyit is the place where disease is discovered, set apart and made to appear in all its horrorin order that it may be conquered and destroyed! Nobody speaks so sternly against sin as Jesus and those who believe His Gospel, but yet it forever stands true, This Man receives sinners. You may come to Jesus, dear Friend, whoever you are! Into whatever sin and iniquity you have plunged, you may come right now without any hesitation or deliberation, for the gate stands wide open and the blessed Lord, with His nail prints still in His hands, stands there to welcome you and say, Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.

Still is that declaration grandly true, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men. Still does God meet men while they are yet in the blackness and filth and degradation of their sin and then and there, just as they are, He says concerning them, I will sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols, I will cleanse you. O poor wretched sons of Adam, how earnestly would I invite you to Christ! I preach a Savior for the worst and vilest of you! Oh that you would come to Him! I know your house. It is stuffed full with idols of one sort or another. You delight in strong drink! That is your Moloch, or, perhaps, some sin of the flesh has fascinated you and carried you awayand your house is ruled by Venus and Bacchus and other dunghill deities! Ah me, what chambers of imagery there are in this city! Notwithstanding all that, the Lord of Love will come to your house with His salvation, turn those idols out and reign in their place! Your life, it may be, is full of filthiness and as you sit here you are remembering it to your hearts sorrow. Be of good cheer, you broken down ones, for the Lord Jesus will come to you just as you are and put your filthiness away!

Do not think that I am talking, now, only to those who have been grossly immoral, though I do speak to them most certainly in literal terms. But even to those who have never sinned after that similitude I speak at this time. Thank God, there are some who have been kept by the restraints of education from ever going into the more outwardly filthy sins. It was so in my case. I might claim as to most actual sins to be blameless, but, oh, if there ever was a wretch on earth that felt his filthiness more than I did, I pity him! I loathed myselfutterly so. How often I wished that I had never been born! It seemed horrible to me that such a being should have lived at all. To have lived so long in sin and unbelief seemed still more a marveland though I was not then, 15, it appeared horrible to have lived so long without loving Christ! What an awful wretch I judged myself to be to have been surrounded with such mercy and not to have thought of my God!

Is was shocking beyond measure to have lived those years without love, without trust, without delight in God. I felt myself to be so foul and filthy a thing that I ought to be cast into the common sewer of the universe and swept away. But, oh, this blessed Word of GodFrom all your filthiness and from all your idols, I will cleanse you. This is spoken as only God can speak! See, then, how God begins with us, just where we are, to the praise of the Glory of His own Grace. So much upon our first head.

II. The second is thisthat GOD PROVIDES FOR THE CLEANSING OF THOSE TO WHOM HE COMES IN SOVEREIGN GRACE. I will sprinkle clean water upon you. He does not ask them to find the purification, but He brings it Himself. Where could this clean water be found by mortal man? Though he should climb up to the heights of the Alps to melt the virgin snows, or descend into the deep which couches beneath where come the sparkling springs, yet he could find no clean water that could take out the stain of sin! God Himself providesit is His wayin the mount it shall be seen that He is Jehovah Jireh. The type is carried out in its antitype in this waythat God has provided a system of cleansing men, perfect in itself, just, right and effectual. Pure water is the best of purifiers and the Lord has provided that which is the most sure purification from sin. When, under the old Mosaic Law, they took water, scarlet wool and hyssopand sprinkled the unclean, he was *ceremonially* cleansedand now, under the Gospel, God has provided a wondrous way by which, being Himself perfectly pure, He can put away the impurities of our nature and the iniquities of our lives.

It is a righteous way . Do you need that I explain to you the way in which God puts away our filthiness? Whether you do or not, there are many who do and, therefore, we must have the Gospel over again. You put bread and salt on your table at every meal and even so, every sermon should have the Gospel in it! God must be just. Even if He would forgive sin, He must still be just. Sin must not go unpunished. It would be ruinous that such a thing should be. Therefore the Lord took sin and laid it on His Son, that His Son might bear what was due for our transgressions. This, the Lord Jesus did as our Substitute and Savior. He His own Self bore our sins in His own body on the tree. He made a full Atonement and Expiation for the guilt of men so that, whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

In addition to that, God has given the Holy Spirit as a gift of Christ on His Ascensionand that Holy Spirit is here to renew men in their hearts, to take away from them the love of sin, to give them a new life, to create in them a new heart and a right spiritand so to change their inward longings and desires that their outward conduct shall become altogether different from what it was before. Here are *two* cleansingsthe blood of Christ and the work of the Holy Spiritand these are as clean water. God can justly forgive you, my fellow sinner! And God can totally change you and make you to be as though you had been new-born, tonight, and were now to begin afresh. You see it is a clean way which God has devised there is nothing in it which favors wrong or injustice.

And what a *simple way* it is, as well as clean! I will sprinkle clean water upon you. The application of the blood of Jesus Christ to the conscience and the coming of the Holy Spirit to the heart are as simple as the sprinkling of water. The wisdom of God made the rite by which the leper was cleansed under the Law very simple, but even more simple is the act by which God applies the merit of His dear Son to us. Oh, that we might have the blood of Jesus sprinkled on our hearts at once by faith! Oh to feel the Blood of Sprinkling to which every Believer in Christ has come the blood that speaks better things than that of Abel! It is a very simple way.

It is *a way of universal adaptation*, too, for wherever there is a soul on whom God has looked with love, He can apply to that soul the Blood of Sprinkling. Whoever you may be, you cannot cleanse yourself, but God can sprinkle you with this clean water! He can save you by the merit of His Son and by the renewing of the Holy Spirit. No one is outside of this possibility, for the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. If you are guilty, tonight, and you cry for mercy, that mercy can come at you and you can come at that mercy, for so has the Lord put itThen will I sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean.

It is a way of *unfailing efficacy*, for He says, From all your filthiness and from all your idols, I will cleanse you. He does not only attempt the cleansing but He *accomplishes* it. You may have a thousand sins, but this clean water can put the thousand sins away. Your heart may be a very pandemonium of idols, but the power of the Holy Spirit can break them all to pieces and can do it for you at once. The, then, of the text has to do with the time when Israel was full of sin. It has to do with such a time as there is with you unconverted men and women at this hour. Now, even now, in the midst of your filthiness and your idolatry, God can come with a high hand and an outstretched arm and commence the work by which you shall be perfectly delivered! Though your heart is like the Augean stable, the labors of Hercules shall be outdone by the wonders of Jesus! He shall cast your sins into the depths of the sea. Your hardness of heart, your pride, your lust, your unbelief, your enmity, your fickleness shall all go down at a stroke, as when Dagon fell before the Ark of God. Oh, do it, Lord! Do it, we pray You, with many that have strayed into the Tabernacle tonight, that Your name may have the Glory!

Thus we have come so far and we see clearly that God begins with His people in their filthiness and provides the means of their cleansing.
III. Thirdly, GOD HIMSELF APPLIES THIS MEANS OF CLEANSING. See how He puts itThen will I sprinkleI sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols, I will cleanse you.
Ah, dear Sirs! If God had only provided the medicine, but had never brought it to us, we could not have found it, reached it, or applied it! If He had made the plaster and had left it by the side of the wounded man, the poor wretch would have died, for he never could have laid it to his own wound. The same Grace which first devised the way to save rebellious man carries out all the plan from the beginning to the end! Who can sprinkle clean water on the foul sinner? I will do it, says the Lord. I am sure that I speak to many Brothers and Sisters here whose experience will bear out what I am going to sayit was the Lord who made us first to feel that we were filthy and that we loved idols. We were very fine people oncewere we not? Our own righteousness was quite as good as that of anybody else and a little better. If we had sinned, we had a great many excuses for our failings and, besides, we always meant to be so good, byand-by! Therefore we felt that we ought not to be condemned, but rather to be commended!
The Lord fetched us down from the tree and made us lie at the bottom of it and cry for mercy. We would still have refused to taste of His mercy and we would have perished in our sin if Divine Grace had not convinced us of our folly. Some of you remember when the Lord first revealed to you how much you needed to be cleansedthat discovery was a great part of the cleansing. Then did it not seem to you impossible that you could be cleansed from so much defilement? It seemed to meI dare say it did to youthe most extraordinary thing in the world to believe in Jesus! I could not make it out. How could I get to Christ? I could see that He was a Savior. I could see that He saved others and I was glad that He did. But the thing was, how could I ever come to be *personally* a partaker of His power to save?
I heard about that woman touching the hem of the garment and I felt that if Christ were before me, I would touch the hem of His garment with my finger, but I could not understand how I was to touch Him *spiritually*. To this day the simplest thing under Heaven is perverted by our evil hearts into difficulty and mystery! Faith is as clear as the sun, yet many make it as dark as midnight. Our hearers are ingenious at misunderstanding us when we speak of faith. I tried, one evening, to explain faith as simply as I could and I quoted that verse of Dr. Watts
A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On Christs kind arms I fall.
A young man came to me afterwards and said that he could not fall. This perplexed me, for I thought such an assertion was impossible! It may be hard to stand, but it is easy to *fall*. Falling does not require strength, but the very *reverse*. I intended to express the abnegation of all doing and all effort and the yielding all into the hands of Christ. But my young friend could not see it, nor could I make him comprehend it. All electric light would be of no use to stone-blind eyes. O God, it is as much a miracle of Your Grace to give us faith as to give us a Savior to believe in! And he that has faith knows that it is so. Despite the simplicity of faith, no man ever would have savingly believed in Jesus Christ if the Lord had not guided him and *led him into that faith*.
Oh yes, the clean water is provided, but the clean water must be sprinkled by another hand than ours if we are to be cleansed! Are we not witnesses of this? Do we not acknowledge that when, at last, we were made clean through the precious blood of Christ, *the closing act of faith was worked in us by the Holy Spirit*? That was no small thing, that passing from death unto life, that being washed in the fountain filled with blood. Neither was the faith a trifle which brought us that washingall, all was of Grace! I have heard a great deal about human free will. I never felt any inclination to ascribe the great blessing of confidence in Christ and consequent full justification to any uncreated willingness of *mine*. I was made willing in the day of His powerand to God I must give the Glory! Oh, that bright, that happy day when I could say
Tis done! The great transactions done!
I am my Lords and He is mine.
At that day I could not help also saying, He drew me
He drew me, and I followed on,
Charmed to confess the voice Divine.
Yes, it is God that applies the power which purifies!
And all the way through the rest of life it is just the same. All things are of God. If He that has brought me so far towards Heaven does not help me throughout the rest of my journey, I must die even within sight of the promised land! If the Lord is not with you, even if you should get your foot upon the diamond doorstep of Heaven and your finger on the golden latchyou could not enter! Without fresh Grace to carry us the rest of the way, all our previous journey is in vain. When we get to Heaven, it will be, Glory be to God forever, and ever, and ever! We shall not hum even a single note to ourselves for our own glory, or on account of any part of the work for which we deserved creditbut we shall ascribe the whole of our salvation to infinite love, undeserved favor and to the unceasing faithfulness and power of our gracious Covenant God!
Let us come back to this blessed text and read it againand then conclude our sermon with our last pointThen will I sprinkle clean water on you and you shall he clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols, I will cleanse you.
IV. I close with this last remarkTHE LORD EFFECTUALLY CLEANSES ALL HIS PEOPLE.
First, He cleanses them from all their filthiness. I want to dwell on that for a minute. *From all your filthiness* will I cleanse you. All of it. Oh, what a vast *all* that is! All your filthiness. All the filthiness of your birth-sin; all the filthiness of your natural temperament, constitution and disposition. From all your filthiness will I cleanse you. All the filthiness that came out of you in your childhood, that was developed in you in your youth, that still has vexed your manhood and, perhaps, even now dishonors your old age. From all your actual filthiness, as well as from all your original filthiness, will I cleanse you. From all your secret filthiness and from all your public filthinessfrom everything that was wrong in the family; from everything that was wrong in the business; from everything that was wrong in your own heartFrom all your filthiness will I cleanse you.
From all your pride. What a filthy thing that is! From all your unbelief. What an abominable thing that is! From all your tainted imaginations; from all your lusts; from all your wrong words; from all your covetousness; from all your murmuring; from all your anger; from all your malice; from all your envy; from all your distrustFrom all your filthiness will I cleanse you.
Just read right down the Ten Commandments and then stop at each and say, Lord, You have said, From all your filthiness will I cleanse you. Lord, cleanse me in both waystake away the evil of the sin, and take away my tendency to the sin
Let the water and the blood,
From His riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.
Oh, Beloved, that seems to me to be so full of richnessFrom all your filthiness will I cleanse you. Do not believe that any filthiness need stay upon you in practice. As to the matter of sanctification, do not say to yourself, I cannot overcome *this* sin. You can! You must overcome all sin through Jesus Christ. From all your filthiness will I cleanse you. Do not say to yourself, I always was quick-tempered and I must always remain so, for this is a part of my natural temperament. No! From all your filthiness will I cleanse you. I know that a certain troop of our sins are hard to kill in battle and they need to be sharply looked after lest they continue to plague us. They get into the cave of our secret hearts and there they hide themselves away in great quietness, biding their time. They do not even whisperand we half fancy that they are dead. They are alive enough, as we shall soon see, if we are not awake to them.
If we are foolish, we are content to roll a big stone at the mouth of the cave, and let the rascals live in their den. This is dangerous work and when our Joshua comes to us, He puts an end to the perilous experiment! He cries, Bring them out. Hang them up before the sight of the sun, for these enemies must not live. God help us to never tolerate any known sin. We too readily fall into evil habits, but oh, for Grace to keep out of them. Do not excuse sin so much as to call it an infirmitycall it, rather, an *infamy*, and drive it from your presence! We do unguardedly yield to sin but, Brothers and Sisters, we must not excuse ourselveswe must seek with all our might to obtain perfect holiness. Oh, to know the fullness of this blessingFrom all your filthiness will I cleanse you.
And then it is added that we shall be cleansed *from all our idols*. We are, all of us, idolaters by nature and by practice. The unregenerate man always has an idol. He will worship anything rather than his God. Yes, he will sooner worship himself than his Savior! Even the Christian may find, to his own surprise, that his dear Rachel whom he loves so much has managed to hide the idols away under the camels furniture and she is, even now, sitting on them and concealing them. I do not know an idol that is more apt to escape being broken than the idol that some beloved Rachel protects! But it must not bethe idols He shall utterly abolish. Gods way is, From all your idols will I cleanse you. If there is anything, Beloved, that has our love more than God, it is an idol and we must be purged from it.

This is not a threat, but a promiseit is a great blessing to have our images of jealousy put away. If you make an idol of a child, either that child will die, or something else will happen which will make your idol to be your burden. If you want to kill your husband, idolize him. If you desire ill to a beloved one, set him up in Christs place. We can, alas, make idols of baser things than these! We can love gold, or dress, or honor, or rank, or even a forbidden thing. We are so dull and carnal that our affections are soon captured by earthly objects. Whatever it is that we idolize, God says, I will cleanse you from it. And I think that we can say, in response, Lord, be it so

The dearest idol I have known,
Whatever that idol be,
Help me to tear it from its throne,
And worship only Thee.

We have no wish that any of our old lords should retain or regain dominion over us.

Now, poor Sinner! Do you see what the Lord can do with you? He can break you loose from your temptations. He can set you free from every sin that holds you in captivity. Jesus gives pardon and purity most freely. Trust Him to cleanse you and the work shall be surely done. Trust Him that hung upon the tree to redeem His people and you are delivered. Trust Him to sanctify you wholly by His Spirit and He will purify you till every spot and wrinkle is gone. It is His work to save His people from their sins! Believe in Him and you shall triumph in His salvation!

May the Lord add His blessing, for Jesus sake!

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1129 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE HEART OF FLESH
NO. 1129

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 31, 1873, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.
Ezekiel 36:26.

IT is a peculiar feature in our holy religion that it begins its work within and acts first upon the heart. Other religions, like that of the Pharisees, begin with *outward* forms and ceremonies, perhaps hoping to work inwardly from without, although the process never ends, for though the outside of the cup and of the platter is made clean, the inside still remains full of rottenness as before. No Truth of God is more sure than this concerning all the sons of men, You must be born again.

There must be an entire and radical change of mans nature or else where God is he can never comethe Gospel does not flinch from this, but enforces the declaration. The Holy Spirit does not attempt to improve human nature into something better, but lays the axe at the root of the trees and declares that we must become *new* creaturesand that by a supernatural work of the Omnipotent God.

Scripture does not mince matters, or say that some men may be better than others, naturally, and by an improvement of their excellencies may at last become good enough for God. Far from it! It declares concerning all, Except you are converted and become as little children, you shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of Heaven. True religion begins, then, with the *heart*, and the heart is the ruling power of manhood. You may enlighten a mans understanding and you have done much, but as long as his heart is wrong, the enlightenment of the understanding only enables him to sin with a greater weight of responsibility resting upon him. He knows good to be good, but he prefers the evil. He sees the light, but he loves the darkness and turns from the Truth of God because his heart is alienated from God.

If the heart is renewed, the judgment will, before long, follow in the same track. But as long as the heart is wrong, the affections govern the will and bias the character of the man towards evil. If a man loves evil he is evil. If he hates God he is Gods enemy, whatever his outward professions, whatever his knowledge, whatever his apparent good qualities. As a man thinks in his heart so he is. This is more nearly the man than any other of the faculties and powers which God has bestowed upon our nature. What if I say that the heart is the Eve in the little garden of our nature and she it is that first plucks the evil fruit? And though the understanding follows the affections, even as Adam followed Eve, yet the first

power for good or evil lies in the affections.

The heart, when renewed by Grace, is the best part of manhood. Unrenewed, it is the very worst. Aesop, when his master ordered him to provide nothing for a feast but the best things in the market, brought him nothing but tongues, and when, the next day, he ordered him to buy nothing but the worst things in the market, still brought nothing but tongues. And I would venture to correct or spiritualize the story by exchanging hearts for tongues, for there is nothing better in the world than hearts renewed, and nothing worse than hearts unregenerate. It is a great Covenant promise that the heart shall be renewed and the particular form of its renewal is thisthat it shall be made living, warm, sensitive, and tender. It is naturally a heart of stoneit is to become, by a work of Divine Gracea heart of flesh. Therefore, very much of the result of regeneration and conversion will be found to lie in the production of a tender spirit.

Tenderness, the opposite of that which is stout, obstinate, cold, hard tenderness is one of the most gracious signs in a mans character. And where God has given fleshiness, or living sensitiveness instead of stoniness, or dead insensibility of heart, there we may conclude that there is a real work of Grace and that God has created vital godliness within. Concerning this tenderness I am about to speakI will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.

I. Our first remark is that THE TENDERNESS HERE INTENDED IS ABSENT IN THE UNREGENERATE. They frequently have a *natural* sensitivenesssome persons who are not converted are very tender, indeed, as mothers to their children, as fathers to their offspring, as friends to friends. And God forbid that we should say anything amiss concerning that which is good in human nature after its kind! But that is widely different from the *spiritually* tender heart. Some there are who have a tenderness which arises from timidity, a tenderness which sometimes inclines them to good, not because they love the good, but because they are easily ruled by their companyso that they would be just as easily led towards evil if they fell in with bad companions. They have no principle, no root in themselves.

Such a tenderness Rehoboam had, who was tender, and therefore followed evil advisers to his own injury. Such an unmanly softness as this is to be strived *against*, for we need to have some grit in our constitution, some firmness and resolutionand that sort of pliability which unmans a man and makes him a puppet for others to handle is a great evil. There is also a tenderness which arises mainly from legal terror and fear which is very different from the evangelical or saving softness of heart which is described in our text. I know some who exhibit a sort of counterfeit tenderness. When they hear a sermon they are excited by it and if it is about the world to come, the lifting up of the curtain of the future, they are affected for the time being. But then their goodness soon departs from them. They forget the next moment that which affected them a moment backthey are soon hot and soon coldthey are inconstant as the wind. That is a not the kind of tenderness to be desiredgoodness which is as the morning cloud and the early dew which passes away.

In all unregenerate men there is a lack of the real spiritual tenderness of which I have to speak, though all are not equally hardened. In all, for instance, there is a *natural* stoniness of heart. We are not born into this world perfect, so that when sin meets us it receives a kindly reception and is not dreaded and shunned as it should be. Those who notice children in their first acts will not have discovered any strong aversion in them to childrens sins, or horror at the sight of them. How early does the little child give way to unrestrained passion and practice little acts of deceit? As the Prophet said, We go astray from the womb, speaking lies. Our childrens poet was correct when he said

True, you are young, but theres a stone
Within the youngest breast,
Or half the sins which you have done
Would rob you of your rest.

The heart by nature is like the nether millstone and its hardness is increased by contact with the world. A youths flesh from a godly household is not one-half so hard as he who has been for some time in the midst of ungodly company and has seen the ways of the debauched and the profane. Custom has a great power over us and what we see others do with impunity we by-and-by come to think, (unless the Grace of God prevents it), it cannot be quite so bad as our parents and guardians taught us that it was. Familiarity with sin does not breed contempt for it, but often causes a measure of contempt for the *law* which forbids it. We see the sparkling eye of the drunk. We hear his hilarious shout and imagine that there is pleasure in the bowl. Or we hear men speak of the delights of their transgressions and the sweets of lust, and unless we are held back by Providence and Grace, we are apt to think lightly of those things which once we regarded with abhorrence. This world is a petrifying spring and all who are of the world are being putrefied in it and are growing harder and harder as the years roll on.

Moreover, men harden themselves by their own sins. Every time a man sins it becomes more easy for him to sin again. Like a stone falling, sin gains impetus and increased velocity. The man who sins once has a stronger tendency to sin again and there are some sins which almost necessitate a succession of sins. The man who lies, for instance, thinks he must lie a second time to conceal the first. And some transgressions which root themselves in the flesh breed a hunger and a thirst for the sin so that the flesh craves to be indulged againand those who cannot bridle their passions are thus carried away by them with great force. As labor renders the hand hard, so sin makes the heart callous, and each sin makes the stony heart yet more like adamant.

At the same time, all the circumstances around an unregenerate man will be perverted to the same result. If, for instance, a man prospers, nothing is more hardening to the heart than long prosperity. Find me an

ungodly man whose course has been one of perpetual gain and you shall find me, almost certainly, a man who is ready to say unto the Lord, Who is Jehovah that I should obey His voice? Pride is often begotten of fullness of bread. If the man had known what need is, he might, perhaps, have been humbled before God. But now he boasts in his broad acres and his large estates and, like Nebuchadnezzar, he says, Behold this great Babylon that I have built.

It is also a dangerous thing to be for many years in good health without a sickness. This also hardens a man. The sickness which brings a man to the borders of the grave is often sanctified to the breaking of the heart. To be without ache or pain for a long time is so far from being a blessing from God to the wicked, that I scarcely know anything which may turn out to be a greater curse to an ungodly man. Never chastened? Then you are no child of God! Left to find pleasure in sin? Then surely it must be that God will let you have what pleasure you may in this world because He knows a terrible future awaits you! O soul in prosperity, disturb yourself, for you are in solemn danger! Hardness of heart will almost inevitably come upon you. You are at ease from your youthyou have not been emptied from vessel to vesseltherefore your scent remains in you, and that scent is pride and carnal security.

The opposite condition of circumstances will, through sin, produce the same result. Affliction hardens those whom it does not soften. There are men who have been in many storms at sea and, though once they feared, they never tremble now. If the mast had to be cut away and the vessel were almost to go down, they have grown so desperate they would curse and swear in the teeth of the tempest! Those who have escaped many accidents and dire diseases, who have passed unscathed by the hot furnace of fever, or have risen from between the jaws of cholera, are too often men whom nothing can move. What the fire does not melt it anneals as steel. Alas, of how many may it be said, Why should you be stricken any more? You will revolt more and more.

They resemble Ahaz of old, who, the more he was afflicted, the more he sinnedof whom the Spirit of God has written, This is that king Ahaz. This is obduracy, indeed, comparable to that of Pharaoh, whom the Lord hardened by judgments which ought to have melted him to repentance. And alas! Alas, that we should have to add itholy influences will come in to complete this hardening and carry it, still, to a higher degree! The Gospel has a wonderfully hardening power over those who reject it. The sun shines out of the heavens upon wax and softens it, but at the same time it shines upon clay and hardens it. The sunlight of the Gospel shining upon hearers either melts them into repentance or else hardens them into greater obstinacy. You cannot be hearers of the Gospel without its having some effect upon you.

Some of you have attended this place ever since it was built [12 years earlier] and if you are not the better for it, you certainly are the worse. If the Gospel is not a savor of life unto life to you it will be a savor of death unto death. Among hardened sinners the Gospel-hardened sinner is one of the worst. Yet, further, when an unregenerate man dares to put on a Christian profession, this is perhaps the most rapid and certain process for consummating the devils work, for if a man will be audacious enough to join himself with the saints while he is indulging in private sinif he will continue to come to the Communion Table when he knows that his base lusts are still indulgedand if, moreover, he has the face to boast of being a child of God when he knows that he is an utter stranger to Divine Grace, why, such a man is the raw material out of which Satan can make a Judas!

The devil himself could not make a Judas till he had found a false Apostle. You must look among hypocritical professors of religion if you would find the worst of men! And I must add, you may succeed best in your search if you can find a false-hearted *minister*. The higher the place in Gods garden the more the weeds stink. The hardest-hearted men of all are not those who have been guilty of crimes against society and have been put away into our jailsoften a little kindness will melt these savages down. No, the worst of all are those demons in human shape who make a profession of being the people of God and all the while know that they are sinning wickedly with both hands! To cover a vile life with the coverlet of a Christian profession is a sign of reprobation. Take men, however, at any stage, this is still truethat the heart of flesh is not to be found in any unregenerate man.

II. WHEREVER TRUE TENDERNESS IS FOUND, IT IS A SPECIAL GIFT OF THE NEW COVENANT. A heart of flesh is a *gift* of Sovereign Grace and it is always the result of Divine power. No heart of stone was ever turned into flesh by accident, nor by mere Providential dispensations, nor by human persuasions. You might argue with a rock a long while before you would persuade it into flesh. Neither is such a change worked by a mans own actions. How shall a stone, being a stone, produce in itself flesh?

A power from above the man must work upon him. According to the language of the Scriptures, Except a man be born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God. The Spirit of God must change the *nature*, or the heart of stone will never become a heart of flesh! Note that the first works of the Spirit of God upon the soul tend towards this tenderness, for when He comes to a man He convinces him of sin and so softens him. The man convinced of sin does not laugh any longer at sin, neither does he despise the wrath of God on account of it. When the Spirit of God darts the arrows of conviction into the soul, then the heart begins to bleed and the man is conscious of feelings and emotions to which he was a stranger before.

I trust there are some of you who understand this first work of the Spirit in the heartHe has begun to make you feel the guilt of sin, He has compelled you to tremble before an angry God and to dread the wrath to comethis early work of Grace has already made you sensitive as you never were before. And the further the Spirits work proceeds, the more tender will you become. When the soul comes to be really saved and to

obtain peace through Jesus Christ, one great mark of its salvation is tenderness in heart. Oh, what a place for tenderness the Cross is! When for the first time our eyes behold the Savior, we weep! We look and live, but we also look and mourn that we pierced the Lord. Who can behold a bleeding Savior suffering for his sin without being melted down? No heart of stone can bear contact with the Cross.

Let but Jesus dart a look of love and we are dissolved, as once Peters heart was melted and made to flow out in penitential tears. Only let us hear the accents of our Redeemers voice and we shall cry, My soul melted while He spoke to me. The fact that He loved us and gave Himself for us is enough to dissolve a heart of iron, if it could once know it. Now as these first works of the Spirit of God in conviction and conversion lead to tenderness, so it is true of all the Divine operations which follow in due course. The whole tenor of the Gospel is towards tenderness. I cannot remember a promise, I cannot recall a doctrine, I cannot remember a fact connected with the Gospel which could make a Believer hard-hearted. Can you? I think, if you will turn over all that you know and all that God has revealed concerning salvation, you will find nothing to make you stubborn and willful, but everything to make you tender and sensitive.

Oh, to think that salvation should be of the Sovereign Grace of God! How it humbles us. How it lays us in the dust. No more talking about mans rights as a creature, mans claims and what God ought to do! We are broken down and feel that the Lord may do exactly what He wills and thus we are made tender before His face. Oh, to know that there is no pardon except by faith in a Substitute! To understand that God must and *will* punish sinhow it makes us feel that sin is no trifle! How it leads us to abhor sin as a great evil and makes us jealous lest we should offend again! When we read that all our help was laid on Jesus Christ, how it cuts away, by the roots, all our self-confidence and makes us lie low at the foot of the Throne of God!

I might go through all the Truths of God and Doctrines and promises, if we had time, and I think I could prove to a demonstration that their legitimate effect is to render the heart tender, wherever they operate. So it is with every Christian Grace. All the Christian virtues promote warmth and tenderness of heart. Have you zeal for God? I know you will be fearful of sinning. You will hate the very garment spotted by the flesh. Have you patience under the Divine rod? That patience is only softness of heart in one of its sweetest forms. Have you much love? Then I am sure you have much tenderness, for in proportion as the heart is stony it is destitute of affection. Every one of the Divine circle of Graces has an intimate connection with the heart of flesh. And I also venture to say that the more tender a man is the more advanced in Grace he isand that the more callous and unconcerned he is the further is he from what he should be. Let the unfeeling professor know, and rest assured that if he is a child of God at all, he is certainly in a weak and backsliding state, or his insensibility would be a great burden and grief to him.

Every Grace leans towards tenderness, and the whole current of the Divine life sets that way. You cannot be strong in piety unless you are tender in heart. Are you a child? Can a child be good if it is indifferent, haughty, obstinate and stony-hearted towards its parents? Are you a servant? Who is a good servant but he that is tender of his masters reputation and anxious to fulfill his lords command? Are you a soldier? Where is there a good soldier that is not jealous of his captains honor and careful, lest by any means, he should break the martial law? There must be tenderness. It is an essential point. Unless it is melted down the hard metal cannot be poured into the mold and fashioned for use and beauty. The Lord Jesus will never set His seal upon cold wax. He stamps His image on hearts of flesh and not on stones. A tender conscience is an essential ingredient in the perfect Christian character and where it is not, neither is the life and work of God.

III. Let us dwell upon another point, that THIS TENDERNESS, WHEN IT IS GIVEN, IS OBSERVABLE UNDER SEVERAL ASPECTS. The man who has a heart of flesh given him becomes sensitive to fear. He trembles at the thought of a holy God in arms against him. He no longer jokes about Hell and eternity, as so many do, but he says, My heart stands in awe of You and I am afraid of Your judgments. He no longer argues that the Lord is too severe, but he admits that He is just when He judges and clear when He condemns. The renewed heart is afraid of what other men call little sins and flees from them as from a serpent. The regenerate man knows that there is death in every drop of sins wine and he will not venture to sip thereof, nor taste a mouthful of sins most royal dainties. He fears the Lord and dreads to offend because he is made alive, so as to know the Lords holiness and perceive His justice.

The stony heart neither knows nor fears and therefore abides in death. I have little fear for a soul that fears, but I tremble for those who never tremble. I have sometimes wished that certain, very-assured Christians, as they think themselves, who are, I fear, in very truth presumptuous pretendersI wish they could and would have a dash of fear about them. Fear of the kind we now mean is a holy salt to a mans character. Fear and trembling well become even the most eminent saint. God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of His saints. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Though I greatly deplore all doubts of Gods truthfulness, I do not equally deprecate doubts concerning our own condition, for there is such a thing as holy anxiety and I charge you never to think little of it, but remember the poets lines

He that never doubted of his state,
He may, perhaps, he may, too late.
self-examination will often suggest holy fear and deep searching of heartand it will reveal so much of sin in us that we shall be sent to our

knees, with weeping and supplication, to cry out for help and pardon. To live without fear is to live in sin, for one mark of a Believer is that he has the fear of God before his eyes. In this sense, blessed is the man that fears always. Again, a tender heart becomes sensitive as to the decisions of its enlightened conscience. The heart changed by Grace begins to weigh its own actions towards God and it comes to the conclusionI have acted unjustly towards my Creator and Benefactor. He has been all goodness to me. I have received, at His hands, countless benefits and yet I have ungratefully forgotten Him. When I heard of Him I treated Him slightingly. I have lived for myself but not for my good and gracious Creator. The quickened conscience holds a daily court and its sentences are heard and respected by the heart of flesh.

In the ungodly man there is a conscience, but it is asleep and needs a cannon fired to wake it up, so that the stony heart is never troubled. Let our prayer be

Quick as the apple of an eye,
O God, my conscience make.
Awake my soul when sin is near,
And keep it still awake.

The Christian feels that it is a horrible thing to sin against God, against the Saviors love and against the influence of the indwelling Spirit. He starts back from sinhe is not only afraid of the *punishment* but he is wounded by the sin, itself. As smoke to the eyes, as thorns to the flesh and as gall to the palate, such is sin to the heart of flesh.

Then, again, the new heart, the fleshy heart, becomes sensitive of the Divine love. Is it not one of the most amazing things in the world that the story of Calvary does not flood with tears every eye that reads it? Was there ever such touching, affecting love as that shown by the Son of God towards His enemies when He left the dignities of Heaven for the shame and suffering of earth? Silly stories of love-sick maids, or the improbable plots of three-volume romances will bring showers of tears from those who read themwhile this grand narrative, this wondrous tragedy of loveis as a thrice-told tale and the Book which contains it is often put upon the shelf as far too dry for reading! Though it concerns us all and we are lost without itand with it are lifted up to be near akin to Godyet this dying love of Christ is disregarded.

How can it be otherwise while the heart is made of stone? When his heart is turned to flesh, *then* the love of God affects the man, humbles him, melts him, woos him, wins him, captivates him, enchants him, enamors him, inflames him with ardent thankfulness and draws him up towards Heaven! Divine Love begets in the renewed man a sensitiveness to gratitude. Has Jesus done all this for *me*? Then what can I do for Him? Has He bought me with His blood? Then I am His and not my own, or the worlds. What can I do for Him who died to save my grateful soul? The renewed heart feels that the love of Christ constrains it and it judges that if Christ died for all, then were all dead and that He died for all, that they which live should not live from now on to themselves, but unto Him that died for them and rose again.

Moreover, the heart becomes sensitive, from now on, to holy grief. When it has erred, it chastens and humbles itself for having grieved the Savior. It takes revenge upon itself if sin has been indulged. It becomes sensitive to joy and oh, what a joy a Christian feelsa joy to which the ungodly man must forever be a stranger! The renewed heart sings at the sound of the Saviors footsteps and when His love is shed abroad, no precious ointment can be half so sweet! Oh, the exhilarations and delights we have known when we clearly see our acceptance in the Beloved! Oh, the feasts and the banquets when we have fellowship with the Crucified One! Oh, the ravishments and ecstasies when we look through the open gates of pearl and behold our eternal inheritance, the crowns of gold and the palms of victory!

By regeneration we are made capable of an unknown fullness of joy. Every power and faculty is so quickened as to be able to quiver with delight! Heaven itself seems to flash along every nerve when the heart is steeped in fellowship with Jesus! And so we become sensitive with pity for others. I would give nothing for your religion if you do not desire others to share in it. If you can, without emotion, think of a soul being damned, I fear that it will be your own lot. If you can look upon the ignorant, the perverse, the rebellious and think of their destruction with complacency, you are no child of God! Your Savior, who is the first-born of the Divine family, wept over Jerusalem. Have you no tears? Then you are not a member of the family of which He is the Head!

Did Christ over sinners weep,
And can our cheeks be dry?
Let drops of sympathetic grief
Distil from every eye.

A heart of stone says, Let them go where they will: am I my brothers keeper? But a heart of flesh says, Lord, help me by any means to save some; it shall be a delight to me to turn sinners from the error of their ways. Where this tenderness of heart is carried to a high point, as it ought to be in every Christian, the Believer becomes delicately sensitive concerning the things of God. I have seen an instrument for weighing of so exceedingly delicate a nature that it has been affected by a particle of dust quite imperceptible by the naked eye. An invisible atom has turned the scale! We have different kinds of weighing machines. Some are so rough that they would hardly yield to the pressure of an ounce, but others quiver if the smallest particle falls upon them. The Believers heart should be like this last. A Christians heart should resemble the sensitive plant, which the moment it is touched, folds up its leaves as a sailor reefs his canvas, or like a wound in a mans flesh which is pained by the faintest brush.

Spiritual sensitiveness is fullness of lifeinsensibility is death. To feel the slightest motion of the Holy Spirit is a sign of high spirituality. I would not wish to be, in my heart, like the Great Eastern upon the sea, needing

an Atlantic roller to stir it. I would rather desire to be as the anglers float which mounts or sinks by the force of the least ripple. Spirit of the Lord, thus act upon my willing heart! I want to be so sensitive of the Spirit of God that I may be like the aspen leaf which trembles even when the breeze is not perceptible to others. We should watch to do Gods will and not need His whip and bridle to force us to obedience.

Yet I have known professors who have clearly seen a certain duty to be taught in the Bible, but they have said, Well, we think it is Scriptural, but we need to have it brought to us by a deep impression on our mind and our way pointed out by Providential circumstances. This is a disobedient spirit and ought to meet with grave censure! The Lords Word is our *guide*, not our impressions or our circumstances! And to the renewed heart it should be enough to know the Lords will and our obedience should be prompt. On the other hand, if anything is forbidden in the Word, or is clearly wrong, nothing can justify our continuance in it. We are bound, at once, to forsake it. The great need of this age is sensitiveness about revealed Truth and the Divine will.

We have a Church in our land in which there are three distinct classes of men who all declare that they believe the whole of the Book of Common Prayerand it is clearly impossible that they should do so, since these parties have no points of agreement with one another and wage incessant war with each other. Yet they each one receive it all *ex amino,* all of it, when no man living, nor angel, nor devil could believe it allthe book itself being self-contradictory! This, however, is of small consequence to supple consciences trained to play with language. Some ministers of this Church know their position to be a doubtful one and yet retain it on the plea that their usefulness might be impaired if they left the Churchis this reasoning fit for Christians?! Are we to seek a supposititious usefulness by continuing where our conscience is ill at ease? Surely not! Our rule of conduct is the Divine will, and that only.

Oh, I long to see a race of men born among us like the old Covenanters who would die for the least word of Jesus and would give their blood for the smallest jewel of His crown! But now we are to be *charitable* and if any of us speak out for God, straightway we are hounded down for lack of charitywhereas it is our great charity for souls that makes us speak out and run all risks! We have charity for dying men and charity for the age to come! We see deadly error propped up by temporizers and we cannot be silent. If ministers of the Gospel set the example of wresting words and trifling with the Truth of God, where will this nations morals be in the next generation? Brothers, we who preach the Gospel must follow the highest conceivable standard of strict Truth, for Gods sake, for our office sake and for the peoples sake. We cannot afford to be lax in our solemn declarations, for we shall have to answer for them to our Lord at the Last Great Day.

If we are to be teachers of other men we must, ourselves, be beyond suspicion. We must be inflexible in the Truth of God and sooner die than be false of faith, or preach anything that savors of dishonesty or is tainted with equivocation. We shall never lead Gods troops to victory against error and falsehood if we vacillate ourselves! Oh, for great tenderness of heart towards the Truth of God! Even though scrupulosity could beget the revival of a fierce sectarianism, it were infinitely more to be desired than the soul-deceiving charity which is the Diana of this age and the destroyer of souls! Translated into plain English, the current charity of the times only means that it matters not one atom what God has said! Let us make our own systems and mutually agree to shelve all the inconvenient parts of Revelation. Let us be liberal to our fellow men out of our Lords estate what matters our Lords honor so long as we make things pleasant all round? In the teeth of this, the sensitive heart will be faithful and will bear the censure of all men sooner than incur the displeasure of the Lord. Tenderness towards God we must have!

Oh, for the old Elijah spirit of stern determination, tempered with the John spirit of love to those whose errors we condemn! Jehovah must be King in this land and the idols must be utterly abolished!

IV. I shall close with a few reflections on the same subject. TENDERNESS OF HEART IS TO BE GREATLY PRIZED AND EARNESTLY CULTIVATED. Some among you may, for the first time, be distressed on account of sin. I rejoice because of it! Some of you are not what you used to be gay and light-hearted. You are now thoughtful and, with that thoughtfulness, sorrowful. You came here this morning praying that God would give you peace, but you have not obtained it. I pray God to give you your wish, but may you never find peace unless it is the peace of God, peace through Jesus Christ. May your resolution be, I will never rest until I rest in Gods rest, even in His own dear Son.

Beloved, do not try to get rid of soul alarms, conviction, or sin except in Gods way. There are physicians of no value who would heal your wound if you would let themdo not endure them, for they will only film it over and leave an ulcer beneath which will cost you your soul. Ask the Lord to make your minister faithful to you, allow him to use the lance to open the wound and cut out the proud flesh. Yes, ask the Spirit of God to probe you to the quick sooner than allow you to be flattered into the conception that you are healed when you are not!

Go to the Lord for healingall other healing is worthless. Say, Lord, make sure work of it in me. Save me Yourself. Save me thoroughly. Deliver me from trusting in myself or my fellow man and bring me to rely, alone only Yourself and Your dear Son. Do not go to amusements which will help you to forget your true condition. Dont be danced or fiddled, or playacted, into indifference. Be anxious that this bruising and breaking should go on further, that you may be even more conscious of the exceeding guilt of sin. You will never prize the Savior until you loathe yourself. You will never love His blood until you have been ashamed of the crimson of your own sin. Jesus will never be to you a Savior till you are in your

own eyes a poor, lost, ruined sinner. Go to Jesus and put your trust in Him and harden not your heart against Him.

Next, I speak to you, O child of God. Cultivate tenderness of heart more and more. I would say to you who are Christians, do not believe anything, the legitimate result of which would be to make you callous in your spiritual feelings, or lax in your dealings with your follow men, or careless with your God. I dread lest any of the Truths of God which we profess should come to be so held in unrighteousness as to make us feel easy in sin. Whenever I find a Brother perfectly content with himself, I am afraid for him. I know he does not see the sin that God sees in him, or he would rather bemoan himself than give way to boasting. I delight to hear men preaching up a high standard of holinessthe higher the better! But if any man should say that he has reached it, I blush and tremble for him. He had better begin again upon the ladder of sanctification, for he has not put his foot on the first step of it yetfor that is *humility*.

Be very humble, lie very low. Be more and more conscious of your natural guilt and repent more earnestly each day. I proclaim before you all that I believe the very best place for a man to stand in is with his arms around the Cross, saying

I the chief of sinners am,

But Jesus died for me.

I am nothing, but Christ is everything. I am a mass of loathsomeness in myself, but nevertheless accepted in the Beloved. Daily may we fear lest we should fall into a routine religion without life and power. We can sing without real joy or praise. We can pray without any earnestness or fervency. We can read the Bible without feeding on its Truths. And we can know the doctrines of the Gospel without proving their influences upon the heart. Pray against this, yes, pray against all lifeless religion! I would have my soul vital all over and as sensitive towards God as though it were flayed of all earth-hardened skin upon itevery Truth, every promise, every Word of God should make me feel intensely, acutely and at once tenderness of heart.

I beseech you who are Believers to strive after this. Remember how tender the Savior was. There was no stone about His heart. May you be as tender as He was and you will then be fashioned into the likeness for which God is preparing you by His eternal Spirit. Dread growing hard in your thoughts of sin! Dread growing cold in your thoughts of Christ! Dread growing stony in your thoughts of your fellow sinners! And let this promise be pleaded in your prayers before God, I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. The Lord fulfill it to you for His Truths sake and His names sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONEzekiel 36. Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.

THE NEW HEART
NO. 212

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, SEPTEMBER 5, 1858, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.
A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you an heart of flesh.
Ezekiel 36:26.

BEHOLD a wonder of Divine love. When God makes His creatures, one creation He regards as sufficient and should they lapse from the condition in which He has created them, He suffers them, as a rule, to endure the penalty of their transgression and to abide in the place into which they are fallen. But here He makes an exception. Man, fallen man, created by his Maker pure and holy, has willfully and wickedly rebelled against the Most High and lost his first estate. But behold, he is to be the subject of a new creation through the power of Gods Holy Spirit. Behold this and wonder! What is man compared with an angel? Is he not little and insignificant?

And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. God has no mercy upon them. He made them pure and holy and they ought to have remained His, but inasmuch as they willfully rebelled, He cast them down from their shining seats forever. And without a single promise of mercy He has bound them fast in the fetters of destiny, to abide in eternal torment. But wonder, you heavens, the God who destroyed the angels stoops from His highest Throne in Glory and speaks to His creature, man, and thus says unto him, Now, you have fallen from Me even as the angels did. You have grossly erred and gone astray from My waysnot for your sake do I do this, but for My own names sakebehold I will undo the mischief which your own hand has done.

I will take away that heart which has rebelled against Me. Having made you once, you have unmade yourselfI will make you over again. I will put My hand a second time to the work. Once more shall you revolve upon the pottery wheel and I will make you a vessel of honor, fit for My gracious use. I will take away your stony heart and give you a heart of flesh. A new heart will I give you. A new spirit will I put within you. Is not this a wonder of Divine Sovereignty and of Infinite Grace, that mighty angels should be cast into the fire forever and yet God has made a Covenant

with man that He will renew and restore him?

And now, my dear Friends, I shall attempt this morning, first of all to show *the necessity for the great promise contained in my text*that God will give us a new heart and a new spirit. After that, I shall endeavor to show *the nature of the great work which God works in the soul, when He accomplishes this promise*. And afterwards, *a few personal remarks to all my hearers*.

I. In the first place, it is my business to endeavor to show THE NECESSITY FOR THIS GREAT PROMISE. Not that it needs any showing to the quickened and enlightened Christian. But this is for the conviction of the ungodly and for the humbling of our carnal pride. O that this morning the gracious Spirit may teach us our depravity, that we may thereby be driven to seek the fulfillment of this mercy which is most assuredly and abundantly necessary, if we would be saved. You will notice that in my text God does not promise to us that He will

improve our nature or that He will mend our broken hearts. No, the promise is that He will give us *new* hearts and right spirits.

Human nature is too far gone ever to be mended. It is not a house that is a little out of repair, with here and there a slate blown from the roof and here and there a piece of plaster broken down from the ceiling. No, it is rotten throughout, the very foundations have been sapped. There is not a single timber in it which has not been eaten by the worm from its uppermost roof to its lowest foundation. There is no soundness in it. It is all rottenness and ready to fall. God does not attempt to mend, He does not shore up the walls and paint the door. He does not garnish and beautify, but He determines that the old house shall be entirely swept away and that He will build a new one.

It is too far gone, I say, to be mended. If it were only a little out of repair, it might be mended. If only a wheel or two of that great thing called manhood were out of repair, then He who made man might put the whole to rights. He might put a new cog where it had been broken off and another wheel where it had gone to ruin and the machine might work anew. But no, the whole of it is out of repair. There is not one lever which is not broken, not one axle which is not disturbed, not one of the wheels which act upon the others. The whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot, to the crown of the head it is all wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. The Lord, therefore, does not attempt the repairing of this thing. But He says, I will give you a *new* heart and a *right* spirit will I put within you. I will take away the heart of stone, I will not try to soften it, I will let it be as stony as ever it was, but I will take it away and I will give you a new heart and it shall be a heart of flesh.

Now I shall endeavor to show that God is justified in this and that there was an abundant necessity for His resolution to do so. For in the first place, if you consider what human nature has been and what it is, you will not be very long before you will say of it, Ah, it is a hopeless case indeed.

Consider, then, for a moment how bad human nature must be if we think how ill it has treated its God. William Huntingdon says in his autobiography that one of the sharpest sensations of pain that he felt after he had been quickened by Divine Grace was this, I felt such pity for God. I do not know that I ever met with the expression elsewhere, but it is a very expressive one, although I might prefer to say *sympathy* with God and grief that He should be so evilly entreated. Ah, my Friends, there are many men that are forgotten, that are despised and that are trampled on by their fellows. But there never was a man who was so despised as the everlasting God has been. Many a man has been slandered and abused, but never was man abused as God has been. Many have been treated cruelly and ungratefully, but never one was treated as our God has been.

Let us look back upon our past liveshow ungrateful have we been to Him! It was He who gave us being and the first utterance of our lips should have been in His *praise*. And so long as we were here, it was our duty to have perpetually sung His glory. But Instead of that, from our birth we spoke that which was false and untrue and unholy. And since then we have continued to do the same. We have never returned His mercies into His bosom with gratitude and thankfulness. But we have let them lie forgotten without a single hallelujahfrom our carelessness concerning the Most High you would think that He had entirely forgotten us and that therefore we were trying to forget Him.

It is so very seldom that we think of Him that one would imagine that surely He never gave us occasion to think of Him. Addison said ***When all your mercies, O my God,***
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view Im lost
In wonder, love and praise.

But I think if we look back with the eye of penitence we shall be lost in wonder, shame and grief, for our cry will be, What? Could I treat so good a Friend so badly? Have I had so gracious a Benefactor and have I been so unmindful of Him? And so devoted a Father and yet have I never embraced Him? Have I never given Him the kiss of my affectionate gratitude? Have I never studied to do something whereby I might let Him know that I was conscious of His kindness and that I felt a grateful return in my bosom for His love?

But worse than this, we have not only been forgetful of Him, but we have rebelled against Him. We have assailed the Most High. If we knew that anything was God-like we hated it at once. We have despised His people, we have called them cants and hypocrites and Methodists. We have despised His Day. He set it apart on purpose for our good and that day we take for our own pleasure and our own labor instead of consecrating it to Him. He gave us a Book as a love token and He desired us to read it, for it was full of love to us. And we have kept it fast closed till the very spiders have spun their cobwebs over the leaves. He opened a House of Prayer and bade us go there and there would He meet with us and speak to us from off the mercy seat. But we have often preferred the theater to Gods House and have been found listening to any sound rather than the voice which speaks from Heaven.

Ah, my Friends, I say again there never was a man treated by his fellow creatures, even by the worst of men, so bad as God has been and yet while men have been ill-treating Him, He has still continued to bless them. He has put breath into the nostrils of man, even while he has been cursing Him. He has given him food to eat even while he has been spending the strength of his body in warfare against the Most High. And on the very Sabbath, when you have been breaking His Commandment and spending the day on your own lusts, it is He who has given light to your eyes, breath to your lungs and strength to your nerves and sinews. He has been blessing you even while you have been cursing Him. Oh, it is a mercy that He is God and changes not, or else we sons of Jacob would long ago have been consumed, and justly, too.

You may picture to yourselves, if you like, a poor creature dying in a ditch. I trust that such a thing never happens in this land, but such a thing might happen as a man who had been rich on a sudden becoming poor and all his friends deserting and leaving him. He begs for bread and no man will help him, until at last, without a rag to cover him his poor body yields up life in a ditch. This, I think, is the very extreme of human negligence to mankind. But Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was treated even worse than this. It would have been a thousand mercies to Him if they had permitted Him to die unregarded in a ditch. But that would have been too good for human nature. He must know the very worst and therefore God allowed human nature to take Christ and nail Him to a tree. He allowed man to stand and mock His thirst and offer Him vinegar and taunt and jeer Him in the extreme of His agonies. It allowed human nature to make Him its jest and scorn and stand staring with lascivious and cruel eyes upon His stripped and naked body.

Oh, shame on manhoodnever could there have been a creature worse than man! The very beasts are better than man, for man has all the worst attributes of the beasts and none of their best. He has the fierceness of the lion without its nobility. He has the stubbornness of an ass without its patience. He has all the devouring gluttony of the wolf, without the wisdom which bids it avoid the trap. He is a carrion vulture but he is never satisfied. He is a very serpent with the poison of asps beneath his tongue, but he spits his venom afar off as well as near. Ah, if you think of human nature as it acts towards God, you will say, indeed, it is too bad to be mendedit must be made anew.

Againthere is another aspect in which we may regard the sinfulness of human naturethat is its *pride*. It is the very worst phase of manthat he is so proud. Beloved, pride is woven into the very warp and woof of our nature and we shall never get rid of it until we are wrapped in our winding sheet. It is astonishing that when we are at our *prayers*when we try to make use of humble expressions, we are betrayed into pride. It was but the other day, I found myself on my knees, making use of such an expression as thisO Lord, I grieve before You, that ever I should have been such a sinner as I have been. Oh that I should ever have revolted and rebelled as I have done. There was pride in that. For who am I? Was there any wonder in it? I ought to have known that I was myself so sinful that there was *no wonder* that *I* should have gone astray.

The wonder was that I had not been even worse and there the credit was due to God, not to myself. So when we are trying to be humble, we may be foolishly rushing into pride. What a strange thing it is to see a sinful, guilty wretch proud of his morality! And yet that is a thing you may see every day. A man who is an enemy to God, proud of his honesty and yet he is robbing God. A man proud of his chastity and yet if he knew his own thoughts, they are full of lasciviousness and uncleanness. A man proud of the praise of his fellows, while he knows himself that he has the blame of his own conscience and the blame of God Almighty. It is a wild, strange thing to think that *man* should be proud, when he has nothing to be proud of. A living, animated lump of claydefiled and filthy, a living Hell and yet *proud*.

I, a base-born son of one that robbed his Masters garden of old and went astray and would not be obedientof one that sunk his whole estate for the paltry bribe of a single appleand yet proud of my ancestry? I, who am living on Gods daily charity to be proud of my wealthwhen I have not a single farthing with which to bless myself, unless God chooses to give it to me? I, that came naked into this world and must go naked out of it, I, proud of my riches? What a strange thing! I, a wild asses colt, a fool that knows nothing, proud of my learning? Oh, what a strange thing, that the fool called man, should call himself a doctor and make himself a master of all arts when he is a master of none and is most a fool when he

thinks his wisdom culminates to its highest point.

And oh, strangest of all, that man who has a deceitful heartfull of all manner of evil concupiscence and adultery, idolatry and lustshould yet talk about being a good-hearted fellow and should pride himself upon having at least some good points about him which may deserve the veneration of his fellows, if not, some consideration from the Most High. Ah, human nature, this is, then, your own condemnation, that you are insanely proudwhile you have nothing to be proud of. Write Ichabod upon it. The glory has departed forever from human nature. Let it be put away and let God give us something newfor the old can never be made better. It is helplessly insane, decrepit and defiled.

Furthermore, it is quite certain that human nature cannot be made better, for many have tried it but have always failed. A man trying to improve human nature is like trying to change the position of a weathercock, by turning it round to the east when the wind is blowing west. He has but to take his hand off and it will be back again to its place. So have I seen a man trying to restrain naturehe is an angry bad-tempered man and he is trying to cure himself a bit and he does. But it comes out and if it does not burn right out and the sparks do not fly abroad, yet it burns within his bones till they grow white with the heat of malice and there remains within his heart a residuum of the ashes of revenge. I have seen a man trying to make himself religious and what a monstrosity he makes himself in trying to do it, for his legs are not equal and he goes limping along in the service of God. He is a deformed and ungainly creature and all who look at him can very soon discover the inconsistencies of his profession.

Oh, we say it is vain for such a man to try to appear white, as well might the Ethiopian think he could make his skin appear white by applying cosmetics to it, or as well might the leopard think that his spots might be brushed away as for this man to imagine that he can conceal the baseness of his nature by any attempts at religion! Ah, I know. I tried a long time to improve myself, but I never did make much of it. I found I had a devil within me when I began and I had ten devils when I left off. Instead of becoming better, I became worse. I had now the devil of selfrighteousness, of self-trust and self-conceit. And many others had come and taken up their lodging-place. While I was busy sweeping my house and garnishing it, behold the one that I sought to get rid of and which had only gone for a little season, returned and brought with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself and they entered in and dwelt there. Ah, you may try and reform, dear Friends, but you will find you cannot do it. And remember even if you could, still it would not be the work which God requires. He will not have *reformation*, He will have *renovation*He will have a new heart and not a heart changed a little for the better.

But, once again, you will easily perceive we must have a new heart when you consider what are the employments and the enjoyments of the Christian religion. The nature that can feed on the garbage of sin and devour the carrion of iniquity is not the nature that ever can sing the praises of God and rejoice in His holy name. The raven yonder has been feeding on the most loathsome fooddo you expect that she shall have all the kindliness of the dove and toy with the maiden in her bower? Not unless you could change the raven into a dove. For as long as it is a raven its old propensities will cling to it and it will be incapable of anything above the ravens nature. You have seen the vulture gorge to his very full with the very filthiest of flesh and do you expect to see that vulture sitting on the spray singing Gods praises with its hoarse screaming and croaking throat? And do you imagine you will see it feeding like the chick on the clean grain, unless its character and disposition is entirely changed? Impossible!

Can you imagine that the lion will lie down with the ox and eat straw like the bullock so long as it is a lion? No. There must be a change. You may put on it the sheeps clothing but you cannot make it a sheep unless the lion-like nature is taken away. Try and improve the lion as long as you likeVan Amburgh himself, if he had improved his lions for a thousand years, could not have made them into sheep. And you may try to improve the raven or the vulture as long as you please, but you cannot improve them into a dovethere must be a total change of character. And then you ask me whether it is possible for a man that has sung the lascivious song of the drunkard and has defiled his body with uncleanness and has cursed God, to sing the high praises of God in Heaven as well as he who has long loved the ways of purity and communion with Christ?

I answer, no, never, *unless his nature is entirely changed*. For if his nature remains what it is, improve it as you may, you can make nothing better of it. So long as his heart is what it is, you can never bring it to be capable of the high delights of the spiritual nature of the child of God. Therefore, Beloved, there must assuredly be a new nature put into us.

And yet once again and I will have concluded upon this point. God hates a depraved nature and therefore it must be taken away before he can be accepted in Him. God does not hate our sin so much as He does our sinfulness. It is not the overflowing of the spring, it is the well itself. It is not the arrow that does shoot from the bow of our depravity. It is the arm itself that does hold the bow of sin and the motive that wings the arrow against God. The Lord is angry not only against our overt acts, but against the nature which dictates the acts. God is not so short-sighted as

merely to look at the surfaceHe looks at the source and fountain.

He says, in vain shall it be, though you should make the fruit good, if the tree remain corrupt. In vain shall you attempt to sweeten the waters, so long as the fountain itself is defiled. God is angry with mans *heart*. He has a hatred against mans depraved nature and He will have it taken away, He will have it totally cleansed before He will admit that man into any communion with Himselfand above all, into the sweet communion of Paradise. There is, therefore, a demand for a *new nature* and that we must have, or otherwise we can never see His face with acceptance.

II. And now it shall be my joyful business to endeavor, in the second place, to set before you very briefly THE NATURE OF THIS GREAT CHANGE WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKS IN US.

And I may begin by observing that it is a Divine work from first to last. To give a man a new heart and a new spirit is Gods work and the work of God alone. Arminianism falls to the ground when we come to this point. Nothing will do here but that old-fashioned Truth of God men call Calvinism. Salvation is of the Lord alone. This Truth of God will stand the test of ages and can never be moved, because it is the immutable Truth of the living God. And all the way in salvation we have to learn this Truth of God, but especially when we come here to this particular and indispensable part of salvationthe making of a new heart within us. That must be Gods workman may *reform* himselfbut how can man give himself a new heart? I need not enlarge upon the thoughtit will strike you in a momentthat the very nature of the change and the terms in which it is mentioned here puts it beyond all power of man. How can man put into himself a new heart, for the heart being the motive power of all life, must exert itself before anything can be done?

But how could the exertions of an old heart bring forth a new heart? Can you imagine for a moment a tree with a rotten heart, by its own vital energy giving to itself a new young heart? You cannot suppose such a thing. If the heart were originally right and the defects were only in some branch of the tree, you can conceive that the tree, through the vital power of its sap within its heart, might rectify the wrong. We have heard of some kind of insects that have lost their limbs and by their vital power have been able to grow them again. But take away the seat of the vital power the heartlay the disease *there* and what power is there that can, by any possibility, rectify it, unless it be a power from withoutin fact, a power from Above?

Oh, Beloved, there never was a man yet that did so much as the turn of a hair towards making himself a new heart! He must lie passive therehe shall become active afterwardsbut in the moment when God puts a new life into the soul, the man is passiveand if there is anything of activity, it is an active resistance against it, until God, by overcoming and victorious Grace, gets the mastery over mans will.

Once again, this is a gracious change. When God puts a new heart into man it is not because man *deserves* a new heartbecause there was anything good in his nature that could have prompted God to give him a new spirit. The Lord simply gives a man a new heart because He wishes to do it. That is His only reason. But, you say, suppose a man cries for a new heart? I answer no man ever did cry for a new heart until he had one, for the cry for a new heart proves that there is a new heart there already. But, says one, Are we not to seek for a right spirit? Yes, I know it is your dutybut I equally know it is a duty you will never fulfill. You are commanded to make to yourselves new hearts, but I know you will never attempt to do it until God first of all moves you to. As soon as you begin to seek a new heart, it is presumptive evidence that the new heart is there already in its germ, for there would not be this germinating in prayer, unless the seeds were there before it.

But, says one, Suppose the man has not a new heart and were earnestly to seek one, would he have it? You must not make impossible suppositions. So long as the mans heart is depraved and vile, he never will do such a thing. I cannot, therefore, tell you what might happen if he did what he never will do. I cannot answer your suppositions. If you suppose yourself into a difficulty you must suppose yourself out of it. But the fact is that no man ever did or ever will seek a new heart, or a right spirit, until, first of all, the Grace of God begins with him. If there is a Christian here who

began with God, let him publish it to the world. Let us hear for once that there was a man who was beforehand with his Maker. But I have never met with such a case. All Christian people declare that God was first with them and they will all sing

It was the same love that spread the feast, That sweetly forced me in,
Else I had still refused to taste,
And perished in my sin.

It is a gracious change, freely given without any merit of the creature, without any desire or goodwill coming beforehand. God does it of His own pleasure, not according to mans will.

Once more, it is a *victorious* effort of Divine Grace. When God first begins the work of changing the heart, He finds man totally averse to any such a thing. Man by nature kicks and struggles against God. He will not be saved. I must confess I never would have been saved if I could have helped it. As long as ever I could, I rebelled and revolted and struggled against God. When He would have me pray, I would not praywhen He would have me listen to the sound of the ministry, I would not. And

when I heard and the tear rolled down my cheek, I wiped it away and defied Him to melt my heart. When my heart was a little touched, I tried to divert it with sinful pleasures. And when that would not do I tried selfrighteousness and would not then have been saved until I was hemmed inand then He gave me the effectual blow of Graceand there was no resisting that irresistible effort of His Grace.

It conquered my depraved will and made me bow myself before the scepter of His grace. And so it is in every case. Man revolts against his Maker and his Savior. But where God determines to save, save He will. God will have the sinner, if He designs to have him. God never was thwarted yet in any of His purposes. Man does resist with all his might, but all the might of man, tremendous though it is for sin, is not equal to the majestic might of the Most High when He rides forth in the chariot of His salvation. He does irresistibly save and victoriously conquer mans heart.

And furthermore, this change is *instantaneous*. To sanctify a man is the work of the whole life. But to give a man a new heart is the work of an instant in one solitary second. Swifter than the lightning flash, God can put a new heart into a man and make him a new creature in Christ Jesus. You may be sitting where you are today, an enemy of God with a wicked heart withinhard as a stone and dead and cold. But if the Lord wills it, the living spark shall drop into your soul and in that moment you will begin to tremblebegin to feel. You will confess your sin and fly to Christ for mercy. Other parts of salvation are done gradually but regeneration is the *instantaneous work* of Gods Sovereign, effectual and irresistible Grace.

III. Now we have in this subject a grand field of hope and encouragement to the very vilest of sinners. My Hearers, let me very affectionately address you pouring out my heart before you for a moment or two. There are some of you here present who are seeking after mercy. Many a day you have been in prayer in secret, till your very knees seemed sore with your intercession. Your cry to God has been, Create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me. Let me comfort you by this reflection, that your prayer is already heard. You *have a new heart* and a right spirit. Perhaps you will not be able to perceive the truth of this utterance for months to cometherefore continue in prayer till God shall open your eyes so that you may see that the prayer is answered. But rest assured it is answered already.

If you hate sin, that is not human nature. If you long to be a friend of God, that is not human nature. If you desire to be saved by Christ, it is not human nature if you desire that without any stipulations of your own. If you are this day willing that Christ should take you to be His own, to have and to hold, through life and through deathif you are willing to live in His service and if needful to die for His honor, that is not of human naturethat is the work of Divine Grace. There is something good in you already. The Lord has begun a good work in your heart and He will carry it on even unto the end. All these feelings of yours are more than you ever could have attained of yourself. God has helped you up this Divine ladder of Grace and as sure as He has brought you up so many staves of it, He will carry you to the very summit till He grasps you in the arms of His love in Glory everlasting.

There are others of you here however, who have not proceeded so far, but you are driven to despair. The devil has told you that you cannot be saved. That you have been too guilty, too vile. Any other people in the world might find mercy, but not you, for you do not deserve to be saved. Hear me then, dear Friend. Have I not tried to make it as plain as the sunbeam all through this service that God never saves a man for the sake of what he *is* and that He does not either begin or carry on the work in us because there is anything good in us? The greatest sinner is just as eligible for Divine mercy as the very least of sinners. He who has been a ringleader in crime, I repeat, is just as eligible for Gods Sovereign Grace, as he that has been a very paragon of morality. For God wants nothing of us. It is not as it is with the plowman. He does not desire to plow all day upon the rocks and send his horses upon the sand. He wants a fertile soil to begin with, but God does not.

He will begin with the rocky soil and He will pound that rocky heart of yours until it turns into the rich black mold of penitential grief. Then He will scatter the living seed in that mold till it brings forth a hundredfold. But He wants nothing of you, to begin with. He can take you, a thief, a drunkard, a harlot, or whoever you may be. He can bring you on your knees, make you cry for mercy and then make you lead a holy life and keep you unto the end. Oh, says one, I wish He would do that to me, then. Well, Soul, if that is a true wish, *He will*. If you desire this day that you should be saved, there never was an unwilling God where there was a willing sinner.

Sinner, if you will to be saved, God wills not the death of any, but rather that they should come to repentance. And you are freely invited this morning to turn your eye to the Cross of Christ. Jesus Christ has borne the sins of men and carried their sorrows. You are bid to look there and trust there, simply and implicitly. Then you are saved. That very wish, if it is a sincere one, shows that God has just now been begetting you again to a lively hope. If that sincere wish shall endure, it will be abundant evidence that the Lord has brought you to Himself and that you are and shall be His.

And now reflect everyone of youyou that are not convertedthat we are all this morning in the hands of God. We deserve to be damnedif God damns us, there is not a single word that will be heard against His doing it. We cannot save ourselves. We lie entirely in His handslike a moth that lies under the finger, He can crush us now, if He pleases, or He can let us go and save us. What reflections ought to cross our mind, if we believe that? Why, we ought to cast ourselves on our faces as soon as we reach our
homes and cry, Great God, save me, a sinner! Save me! I renounce all merit for I have none. I deserve to be lost. Lord, save me, for Christs sake. And as the Lord my God lives, before whom I stand, there is not one of you that shall do this who shall find my God shut the gates of mercy against you!

Go and try Him, Sinner; go and try Him! Fall upon your knees in your chamber this day and try my Master. See if He will not forgive you. You think too harshly of Him. He is a great deal kinder than you think He is. You think He is a hard Master, but He is not. I thought He was severe and angry when I sought Him, Surely, I said, if He accepts all the world beside, He will reject me. But I know He took me to His bosom. And when I thought He would spurn me forever, He said, I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions and as a cloud, your sins. And I wondered how it was and I do wonder now. But it shall be so in your case. Only try Him, I beseech you. The Lord help you to try Him and to Him shall be the glory and to you shall be happiness and bliss, forever and ever. Amen.

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THE STONY HEART REMOVED
NO. 456

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING, MAY 25, 1862, *BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.
I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.
Ezekiel 36:26.

THE Fall of man was utter and entire. Some things, when they have become dilapidated, may be repaired. But the old house of mankind is so thoroughly decayed that it must be pulled down even to its foundation, and a new house must be erected. To attempt mere improvement is to anticipate a certain failure. Manhood is like an old garment that is torn and rotten. He that would mend it with new cloth does but make the tear worse. Manhood is like one of the old skin bottles of the Orientals. He who would put the new wine into it shall find that the bottle will burst and his wine will be lost.

Old shoes might be good enough for Gibeonites. But we are so thoroughly outworn that we must be made new, or thrown upon the dunghill. It is a wonder of wonders that such a thing is possible. If a tree loses its branch, a new branch may spring out. If you cut into the bark and mark the letters of your name, in process of time the bark may heal its own wound and the marks may be erased. But who could give a new heart to the tree? Who could put new sap into it? By what possibility could you change its inner structure?

If the core were smitten with death, what power but the Divine could ever restore it to life? If a young man has injured his bones, the fractured parts soon send forth a healing liquid and the bone is by-and-by restored to its former strength. But if a mans heart were rotten, how could that be cured? If the heart were a putrid ulcer, if the very vitals of the man were rotten, what human surgery, what marvelous medicine could touch a defect so radical as this? Well did our hymn say

Can anything beneath a power Divine
The stubborn will subdue?
It is Yours, eternal Spirit, Yours,
To form the heart anew.
To chase the shades of death away
And bid the sinner live!
A beam of Heaven, a vital ray,
It is Yours alone to give.

But while such a thing would be impossible apart from God, it is certain that God can do it. Oh, how the Master delights to undertake impossibilities! To do what others can do were but like unto man. But to accomplish that which is impossible to the creature is a mighty and noble proof of the dignity of the Creator. He delights to undertake strange things. To bring light out of darkness. Order out of confusion. To send life into the dead. To heal the leprosy. To work marvels of Divine Grace and mercy, and wisdom, and peacethese, I say, God *delights* to do. And so, while the thing is impossible to us, it is possible to Him. And more, its impossibility to us commends it to Him and makes Him the more willing to undertake it, that He may thus glorify His great name.

According to the Word of God, mans heart is by nature like a stone. But God, through His Grace, removes the stony heart and gives a heart of flesh. It is this miracle of love, this miracle of Grace, which is to engage our attention tonight. I trust we shall speak now, not of something that has happened to others only, but of a great wonder which has been worked in ourselves. I trust we shall talk experimentally, and hear personally, and feel that we have an interest in these splendid deeds of Divine love.

Two things we shall talk of tonight. First, *the stony heart and its dangers*. Secondly, *the heart of flesh and its privileges*.
I. Some few words upon THE STONY HEART AND ITS DANGERS. Why is the heart of man compared to a stone at all?
1. First, because, like a stone it is *cold*. Few persons like to be always treading upon cold stones in their houses, and hence we floor our habitations. And it is thought to be a part of the hardship of the prisoner if he has nothing to sit down or rest upon but the cold, cold stone. You may heat a stone for a little season if you thrust it into the fire, but how soon it loses its heat! And though it glowed just now, how very soon it loses all its warmth and returns again to its native coldness. Such is the heart of man. It is warm enough towards sin. It grows hot as coals of juniper towards its own lusts. But naturally the heart is as cold as ice towards the things of God.
You may think you have heated it for a little season under a powerful exhortation, or in presence of a solemn judgmentbut how soon it returns to its natural state! We have heard of one who, seeing a large congregation all weeping under a sermon, said, What a wonderful thing to see so many weeping under the truth! And another added, But there is a greater wonder than thatto see how they leave off weeping as soon as the sermon is over, concerning those things which ought to make them weep always and constantly.
Ah, dear Friends, no warmth of eloquence can ever warm the stony heart of man into a glow of love to Jesus. No, no force of entreaty can get so much as a spark of gratitude out of the flinty heart of man. Though your hearts renewed by Divine Grace should be like a flaming furnace, yet you cannot warm your neighbors heart with the Divine heat. He will think you are a fool for being so enthusiastic. He will turn upon his heels and think you are a madman to be so concerned about matters that seem so trivial to himthe warmth that is in your heart, you cannot communicate to him, for he is not, while unconverted, capable of receiving it. The heart of man, like marble, is cold as stone.
2. Then, again, like a stone, it is *hard*. You get the hard stone, especially some sorts of stone which have been hewn from granite, and you may hammer as you will, but you shall make no impression. The heart of man is compared in Scripture to the nether millstone, and in another place it is even compared to the adamant stone. It is harder than the diamond. It cannot be cut. It cannot be broken. It cannot be moved. I have seen the great hammer of the Law, which is ten times more ponderous than Nasmyths great steam hammer, come down upon a mans heart, and it has never shown the slightest signs of shrinking.
We have seen a hundred powerful shots sent against itwe have marked the great battery of the Law with its ten great pieces of ordnance all fired against the heart of manbut mans heart has been harder, even, than the sheathing of the iron-clad ships. And the great shots of the Law have dropped harmlessly against a mans consciencehe did not, he would not feel. What razor-edged sentence can cut your hearts? What warning needle can prick your consciences?
Alas, all means are unavailing! No arguments have power to move a soul so steeled, so thoroughly stony, hard and impenetrable. Some of you now present have given more than enough evidence of the hardness of your hearts. Sickness has befallen you, death has come in at your windows, affliction has come up against youbut like Pharaoh, you have said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice? I will not bow my neck, neither will I do His will. I am my own master and I will have my own pleasure and my own way. I will not yield to God. O rocks of iron and hills of brass, you are softer than the proud heart of man!
3. Again, a stone is *dead*. You can find no feeling in it. Talk to it. It will shed no tears of pity, though you recount to it the saddest tales. No smiles will gladden it, though you should tell it the most happy story. It is dead. There is no consciousness in it. Prick it and it will not bleed, stab it and it cannot die, for it is dead already. You cannot make it wince, or start, or show any signs of sensibility. Now, though mans heart is not like this as to natural things, yet *spiritually* this is just its condition. You cannot make it show one spiritual emotion.
You are dead in trespasses and sins, powerless, lifeless, without feeling, without emotion. Transient emotions towards good, men have, even as the surface of a slab is wet after a shower. But real vital emotions of good they cannot know, for the showers of Heaven reach not the interior of the stone. Melancthon may preach but old Adam is too dead for him to quicken him. You may go down into the grave where the long sleep has fallen on humanity, and you may seek to revive it, but there is no power in human tongue to revive the dead.
Man is like the deaf adder which will not be charmed, charm we ever so wisely. Tears are lost on him. Threats are but as the whistling of the wind. The preaching of the Law and even of Christ crucifiedall these are null and void and fall hopelessly to the ground, so long as the mans heart continues what it is by naturedead, and hard, and cold.
4. Those three adjectives might be sufficient to give a full description, for if we add two more we shall but in some degree repeat ourselves. Mans heart is like a stone because *it is not easily to be softened*. Lay a stone in water as long as you will and you shall not find it readily subdued. There are some sorts of stone that yield to the stress of weather, especially in the smoky atmosphere and the sulphurous vapors of London. Certain stones crumble to decay, but the stone of a mans heart no climate can affect, no weathers can subdue. It grows harder whether it is the soft sunshine of love or the harsh tempest of judgment that falls upon it.
Mercy and love alike make it more solid and knit its particles closer together. And surely, until the Omnipotent, Himself, speak the word, the heart of man grows harder, and harder, and harder, and refuses to be broken. There is an invention, I believe, for liquefying flints, and then afterwards they may be poured out in a solution which is supposed to have the virtue of resisting the action of the atmosphere when put upon certain limestones. But you never can liquefy, except by a Divine power, the flinty heart of man. Granite may be ground, may be broken into piecesbut unless God gets the hammer in His hand, and even He must put both hands to itthe great granite heart of man will not yield in any way.
Certain stones have veins and certain crystalloid stones may be so dexterously struck, that they will frequently break even with a slight blow. But you can never find a vein in mans heart by which the attempt to conquer it will be assisted from within. You may smite right and left with death, with judgment, with mercy, with privileges, with tears, with entreaties, with threatsit will not break. No, even the fires of Hell do not melt mans heart, for the damned in Hell grow more hard by their agonies and they hate God and blaspheme Him all the more because of the suffering they endure. Only Omnipotence, Himself, I say, can ever soften this hard heart of man.
5. So then, mans heart is cold, and dead, and hardand cannot be softened. And then, againand this is but an enlargement of a former thought*it is utterly senseless*, incapable of receiving impressions.
Remember, again, I am not speaking of the heart of man *physically*, I am not speaking of it even as I would if I were teaching mental science. We are only now regarding it from a *spiritual* point of view.
Men do receive mental impressions under the preaching of the Word. They often get so uneasy that they cannot shake off their thoughts. But, alas! Their goodness is as the early cloud, and as the morning dew, and it vanishes as a dream. But, spiritually, you can no more impress the heart of man than you might leave a bruise upon a stone. Wax receives an impression from a seal, but not the stern, unyielding stone. If you have hot running wax you may make what mark you please upon it, but when you have the cold, cold stone, though you bear ever so hard upon the stamp, there is no impressionthe surface shows no trace of your labor.
So is mans heart by nature. I know some who say it is not so. They do not like to hear human nature slandered, as they say. Well, Friend, if you have not this hard heart, why is it you are not saved? I remember an anecdote of Dr. Gill which hits the nail on the head. It is said that a man came to him in the vestry of his Chapel and said, Dr. Gill, you have been preaching the doctrine of human inability, I dont believe you. I believe that man can repent and can believe and is not without spiritual power. Well, said the doctor, have you repented and believed? No, said the other. Very well, then, said he, you deserve double damnation.

And so I say to the man who boasts that he has not such a hard heart as thishave you laid hold of Christ? Have you come to Him? If you have not, then out of your own heart you are condemned, for you deserve double destruction from the presence of God for having resisted the influences of Gods Spirit and rejected His Divine Grace. I need not say more about the hardness of the human heart, as that will come up incidentally byand-by, when we are speaking of the heart of flesh.
But now, let us notice the danger to which this hard heart is exposed. A hard heart is exposed to the danger of *final impenitence*. If all these years the processes of nature have been at work within your heart and have not softened it, have you not reason to conclude that it may be so even to the end? And then you will certainly perish. Many of you are no strangers to the means of Divine Grace. I speak to some of you who have been hearing the Gospel preached ever since you were little ones. You attended Sunday school. You were likely in your boy hood to listen to old Mr. So-and-So, who often brought tears to your eyes.
And of late you have been here, and there have been times with this congregation, when the Word seemed enough to melt the very rocks and make the hard hearts of steel flow down in repentance. But you are still the same as ever. What does reason tell you to expect? Surely the natural inference from the logic of facts is you will continue as you are now. Means of Divine Grace will be useless to you. Privileges will become accumulated judgments, and you will go on till time is over and eternity approachesunblest, unsavedand you will go down to the doom of the lost souls.
Oh, says one, I hope not. And I add, I hope not, too. But I am solemnly afraid of it, especially with some of you. Some of you are growing old under the Gospel and you are getting so used to my voice that you could almost go to sleep under it. As Rowland Hill says of the blacksmiths dog, that at first he used to be afraid of the sparks. But afterwards he got so used to it that he could lie and sleep under the anvil. And there are some of you who can sleep under the anvil, with the sparks of Gods wrath flying about your nostrils, asleep under the most solemn discourse. I do not mean with your eyes shut, for I might then point to youbut asleep in your heartsyour souls being given to slumber while your eyes may regard the preacher, and your ears may be listening to his voice.
And further, there is another danger. Hearts that are not softened *grow harder and harder*. What little sensibility they seem to have when they die. Perhaps there are some of you that can remember what you were when you were boys. There is a picture in the Royal Academy at this hour which teaches a good moralthere is a mother putting her children to bed. The father happens to be in just when they are going to their slumbers. The little ones are kneeling down saying their prayers. There is only a curtain between them and the room where the father is, and he is sitting down. He is putting his hand to his head and the tears are flowing very freely, for somehow he cannot stand it.
He recollects when he, too, was taught to pray at his mothers knee. And though he has grown up forgetful of God and the things of God, he remembers the time when it was not so with him. Take care, my dear Hearers, that you do not grow worse and worse. For it will be so. We either grow ripe or rotten, one of the two, as years pass over us. Which is it with you?
Then further, a man who has a hard heart is *Satans throne*. There is a stone they tell us, in Scotland, at Scone, where they were likely to crown their old kings. The stone on which they crowned the old king of Hell is a hard heart. It is his choicest throne. He reigns in Hell but he counts hard hearts to be his choicest dominions.
And then again, the hard heart is *ready for anything*. When Satan sits upon it and makes it his throne, there is no wonder that from the seat of the scorner flow all manner of evil. And besides that, the hard heart is *impervious to all instrumentality*. John Bunyan, in his history of the Holy War, represents old Diabolus, the devil, as providing for the people of Mansoul a coat of armor, of which the breastplate was a hard heart. Oh, that is a strong breastplate! Sometimes when we preach the Gospel, we wonder that there is not more good done. I wonder that there is so much.
When men sit in the House of God armed up to their very chins in a coat of mail, it is not much wonder that the arrows do not pierce their hearts. If a man has an umbrella, it is no marvel if he does not get wet. And so when the showers of Divine Grace are falling, there are many of you who put up the umbrella of a hard heart. And it is no marvel if the dew of Grace and the rain of Grace do not drop into your souls. Hard hearts are the devils lifeguards. When he once gets a man in an armor of proofthat of a hard heartNow, he says, you may go anywhere.
So he sends them to hear the minister and they make fun of him. He lets them read religious books and they can find something to mock there. He will then turn them even to the Bibleand with their hard heart they may read the Bible pretty safelyfor the Word of God, the hard heart can turn to mischief and find something to find fault with even in the Person of Christ and in the glorious attributes of God, Himself. I shall not stay longer upon this very painful subject. But if you feel that your hearts are hard, may your prayer go up to God, Lord, melt my heart. None but a bath of blood Divine can take the flint away. But do it, Lord, and You shall have the praise.
II. Secondly and briefly, A HEART OF FLESH AND ITS PRIVILEGES. I will take away the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. In many very many who are present tonightmy text has been fulfilled. Let us join in praying for others whose hearts are still stony, that God would work this miracle in them, and turn their hearts to flesh.
What is meant by a heart of flesh? It means a heart that can *feel* on account of *sin*a heart that can bleed when the arrows of God stick fast in it. It means a heart that can yield when the Gospel makes its attacksa heart that can be impressed when the seal of Gods Word comes upon it. It means a heart that is warm, for life is warma heart that can think, a heart that can aspire, a heart that can love. Putting it all togethera heart of flesh means that new heart and right spirit which God gives to the regenerate.
But in what way does this heart of flesh consist? In what way does its tenderness consist? Well, its tenderness consists in three things. There is a *tenderness of conscience*. Men who have lost their stony hearts are afraid of sin, even *before sin* they are afraid of it. The very shadow of evil across their path frightens them. The temptation is enough for them, they flee from it as from a serpent. They would not dally and toy with it, lest they should be betrayed. Their conscience is alarmed even at the approach of evil, and away they fly. And in sin, for even tender hearts do sin, they are uneasy. As well might a man seek to obtain quiet rest on a pillow stuffed with thorns, as the tender conscience get any peace while a man is sinning.
And then, *after* sinhere comes the pinchthe heart of flesh bleeds as though it were wounded to its very core. It hates and loathes and detests itself that ever it should have gone astray. Ah, stony Heart, you can think of sin with pleasure, you can live in sin and not care about it. And after sin you can roll the sweet morsel under your tongue and say, Who is my master? I care for none. My conscience does not accuse me. But not so the tender broken heart! Before sin, and in sin, and after sin, it smarts and cries out to God.
So also *in duty* as well as in sin, the new heart is tender. Hard hearts care nothing for Gods Commandments. Hearts of flesh wish to be obedient to every statute. Only let me know my Masters will and I will do it. The hearts of flesh, when they feel that a Commandment has been omitted, or that the command has been broken, mourn and lament before God. Oh, there are some hearts of flesh that cannot forgive themselves, if they have been lax in prayer, if they have not enjoyed Sunday, if they feel that they have not given their hearts to Gods praise as they should.
These duties which hearts of stone trifle with and despise, hearts of flesh value and esteem. If the heart of flesh could have its way, it would never sin, it would be as perfect as its Father who is in Heaven. And it would keep Gods Commandments without flaw of omission or of commission. Have you, dear Friends, such a heart of flesh as this?
I believe a heart of flesh, again, is tender, not only with regard to sin and duty but with regard to *suffering*. A heart of stone can hear God blasphemed, and laugh at it. But our blood runs cold to hear God dishonored when we have a heart of flesh. A heart of stone can bear to see its fellow creatures perish and despise their destruction. But the heart of flesh is very tender over others. Gladly its pity would reclaim and snatch the firebrand from the flame. A heart of flesh would give its very lifeblood if it might but snatch others from going down to the pit, for its heart yearns and its soul moves toward its fellow sinners who are on the broad road to destruction. Have you, oh, have you such a heart of flesh as this?
Then to put it in another light, the heart of flesh is tender in three ways! *It is tender in conscience*. Hearts of stone make no bones, as we say, about great mischiefs. But hearts of flesh repent even at the very thought of sin. To have indulged a foul imagination, to have flattered a lustful thought, and to have allowed it to tarry, even for a minute, is quite enough to make a heart of flesh grieved and torn before God with pain. The heart of stone says, when it has done a great iniquity, Oh, it is nothing, it is nothing! Who am I that I should be afraid of Gods Law?

But not so the heart of flesh. Great sins are little to the stony heart, little sins are great to the heart of fleshif there are little sins. Conscience in the heart of stone is seared as with a hot iron. Conscience in the heart of flesh is raw and very tender. Like the sensitive plant, it coils up its leaves at the slightest touchit cannot bear the presence of evil. It is like a delicate consumptive, who feels every wind and is affected by every change of atmosphere. God give us such a blessedly tender conscience as that!
Then again, the heart of flesh grows *tender of Gods will*. My Lord Willbe-Will is a great blusterer and it is hard to bring him down to subject himself to Gods will. When you have a mans conscience on Gods side, you have only half the battle if you cannot get his will. The old maxim ***Convince a man against his will***
Hes of the same opinion still,
is true with regard to this as well as regard to anything else. Oh, there are some of you that know right, but you still do wrong. You know what is evil, but you will to pursue it. Now, when the heart of flesh is given, the will bends like a willow, quivers like an aspen leaf in every breath of Heaven, and bows like a twig in every breeze of Gods Spirit. The natural will is stern and stubborn, and you must dig it up by the roots. But the renewed will is gentle and pliable, feels the Divine influence and sweetly yields to it.
To complete the picture, in the tender heart there is a *tenderness of the affections*. The hard heart does not love God, but the renewed heart does. The hard heart is selfish, cold, stolid. Why should I weep for sin? Why should I love the Lord? Why should I give my heart to Christ? The heart of flesh says
You know I love You, dearest Lord,
But oh, I long to soar
Far from this world of sin and woe,
And learn to love You more.
O may God give us a tenderness of affection that we may love God with all our heart and our neighbor as ourselves!
Now, the privileges of this renewed heart are these. It is here the Spirit dwells, it is here that Jesus rests. The soft heart is ready, now, to receive every spiritual blessing. It is fitted to yield every heavenly fruit to the honor and praise of God. Oh, if we had none but tender hearts to preach to, what blessed work our ministry would be! What happy success! What sowings on earth! What harvests in Heaven! We may, indeed, pray that God may work this change if it were only that our ministry might be more often a savor of life unto life and not of death unto death. A soft heart is the best defense against sin, while it is the best preparative for Heaven. A tender heart is the best means of watchfulness against evil, while it is also the best means of preparing us for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall shortly descend from Heaven.
Now, my voice fails me and in your hearts I certainly shall not be heard for my much speaking. Great complaints have been brought against somebodys sermons for being too long, though I hardly think they could have been mine. So let us be brief and let us concludeonly we must press this enquiry homeHas God taken away the heart of stone and has He given you a heart of flesh? Dear Friend, you cannot change your own heart. Your outward works will not change it. You may rub, as long as you like, the outside of a bottle, but you could not turn ditch water into wine.
You may polish the exterior of your lantern but it will not give you light until the candle burns within. The gardener may prune a crab tree but all the pruning in the world wont turn it into an apricot. So you may attend to all the moralities in the world, but these wont change your heart. Polish your shilling but it will not change into gold. Nor will your heart alter its own nature. What, then, is to be done?
Christ is the great heart-changer. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. The Holy Spirit gives faith, and then through faith, the nature is renewed. What do you say, Sinner? Do you believe that Christ is able to save you? Oh, trust Him, then, to save youand if you do thatyou are saved! Your nature is renewed and the work of sanctification which shall begin tonight, shall go on until it shall come to its perfection and you, borne on angels wings to Heaven, glad the summons to obey, shall enter into felicity and holiness, and be redeemed with the saints in white, made spotless through the righteousness of Jesus Christ!

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COVENANT BLESSINGS
NO. 1046

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, APRIL 14, 1872, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.
A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes and you shall keep My judgments, and do them.
Ezekiel 36:26, 27.

LUTHER has well said that the experience of the minister is the best book in his library. I am persuaded it is so and that God often leads His servants through peculiar states of mind, not so much for their own benefit as for the sake of those to whom they may afterwards minister. It is not long ago since I felt myself, when engaged in devotion, cold and dead. And in looking into my own heart I saw no ground of comfortable assurance as to my being a possessor of the Grace of Godmy feelings towards the great Father in Heaven were not, as far as I could judge, those of a childmy love towards Jesus Christ for His redemption was almost extinct.

I thought over the story of His Cross without emotion and I recalled to my mind the history of His everlasting love without gratitude. My soul was not, as it sometimes is, like the crystal lake which is ruffled with every passing breath of the breeze, but like some northern sea hardened into iron by the fierce reign of endless winter. The sublime Truths of infinite Grace stirred not my soul. My heart sank within me for a moment, but only for a moment, for there flashed across me this thoughtThe Holy Spirit can produce within your heart all those emotions you are seeking for, all those desires you gladly would feel, all the melting, and the moving, and the yearning, and the rejoicing, which are significant of the Grace of God.

Under the influence of that Truth of God, as in a moment, my deadness and coldness were driven away and I was filled with adoring love. Then I wondered greatly that the Lord should deign to handle such coarse material as our nature, that He should condescend to work upon such gross spirits, such groveling minds, such carnal understandings as ours. And when, by faith, I perceived that He could not only, then and there, give me to feel spiritual life but could maintain it against all hazards, and perfect it beyond all imperfections, and bring me safe into His eternal Kingdom and Gloryan act of faith exerted upon the Holy Spirit through the Cross of Christ made my soul eager for prayer, and my joy and peace in believing were more than restored to me!

Then I said within myself, there may be others in a similar case and especially there may be seeking souls who, seeing what must be worked in them before they can hope to be partakers of the eternal rest, may despair that such a work should ever be done, and looking only to themselves may be inclined to give up all hope, and conclude that within the pearly gates they can never enter. Perhaps, I thought, if I remind them that the Spirit also helps our infirmities, that Jesus Christs bequest to us, in virtue of His having gone to Heaven, is an Omnipotent One who can work all our worlds in us, causing us to will and to do of His own good pleasurethe thought may encourage their hearts and enable them to look with restful confidence to Him who works all our worlds in us.

Our text is a portion of that delightful rendering of the Covenant of Grace which is given us by Ezekiel, and we will, for a single moment, ask you to remember the persons with whom the covenant of Grace was made. An early version of the Covenant of Grace was given to Abraham and this in Ezekiel is a repetition, expansion, or explanation of the same. This Covenant, and that form of it made with Abraham, concern the same individuals. Let us, then, remind ourselves that the Covenant was not made with the *fleshly* seed of Abraham. If it had been, it would have run in the line of Ishmael as well as that of Isaacbut it was not made with Ishmael, for what says the ScripturesCast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.

The Covenant of Grace was not made with the children who are born after the flesh as was Ishmael, but with those who are born according to the promise as was Isaacwho was not born by virtue of the energy of the flesh, for of Abraham it was said that he was as good as dead, and as for Sarah that she was long past bearing. But Isaac, the child of laughter, the child of joy, the heir of the promise, was born according to the power of God and not after the energy of nature. Isaac evidently typifies not the man of *works* but the man of *faith*. The man of works is born after the flesh. He has reformed himself. He has done his besthe continues to do his best. He is the child of his own energy. He is the result of human power. He is under the Lawhe tries to save himself by the Lawhe is, therefore, the son of Hagar the bond-woman and he is under bondage. His destiny may be learned from the words, Cast forth the son of the bondwoman, he shall not be heir with my son.

But the man of faith has received his faith *supernaturally*. It has been worked in him by the Holy Spirit. It is not the fruit of the creatures power, it is the gift of Godit is the child of promise and it is the child of joy and laughter to himit is a fresh spring of joy within his soul. The man of faith, therefore, is the heir of the promise and the partaker of the Covenant since he believes in Jesus, whom God raised from the dead. The man who rests upon the Grace of God and believes in God as holy Abraham didhe is a faithful man and, consequently, he is one of the sons of the father of the faithful. Let every man, therefore, who believes in Jesus Christ this morning know assuredly that every word of this text belongs to him and shall be fulfilled in him.

I earnestly pray that many sinners may put in their claim and say, I have no works, but I believe in Jesus Christ. I come now and rest myself upon the bloody Sacrifice offered upon Calvary and I humbly receive the mercy of God through Jesus Christ by simply depending on Him. To everyone who exercises faith in God, even though it is but a weak and struggling faith, the precious promise we are about to expound is a heritage which cannot be taken away from him! The main promise of the text before us is the *indwelling of the Holy Spirit*. Observe that the text divides itself thusfirst, it contains an assured promise of preparation for the Spirits indwelling. Secondly, a plain promise of that indwelling. And, thirdly, the blessed results which flow from the promise.

I. Observe, first, we have here to all Gods covenanted people, or in other words, to all Believers, a promise of PREPARATION FOR THE SPIRITS INDWELLING. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. This promise is as a cluster of nuts, or a bough with many golden apples. Like the cherubim of Ezekiel it has four faces, all smiling upon the heirs of salvation. Like the new Jerusalem it lies four-square. It is a quadruple treasure worthy of fourfold consideration!

The first of the four blessings is the gift of a new heart. A new heart also will I give you. The Holy Spirit cannot dwell in the old heartit is a filthy place devoid of all goodand full of enmity to God. His very first operation upon our nature is to pull down the old house and build Himself a new one that He may be able to inhabit us consistently with His holy spiritual Nature. A new heart is absolutely essential. We must be born-again or the Spirit of Truth cannot abide within us. Observe where the inward work of Grace begins. All mans attempts at the betterment of human nature begin from without, and the theory is that the work will deepen till it reaches that which is within. They profess to emancipate the man from the grosser vices, trusting that the reform will go furtherthat he will be brought under superior influencesand so be elevated in mind and heart.

Theirs is an outward ointment for an inward diseasea bandage upon the skin to stop the bleeding of the heart. Miserable physicians are they all! Their remedies fail to eradicate the deep-seated maladies of humanity. Gods way of dealing with men is the reverse. He begins within and works towards the exterior in due course. He is not a mere quack, who, seeing in a man the signs of disease, operates upon the *symptoms*, and never looks to the root of the mischief. It is very possible that by potent poisons a charlatan may check unpleasing indicationsand he may kill the man in doing so. But the wise physician looks to the fountain of the disease, and if it is not possible to touch the core and center of it, he leaves the symptoms to right themselves.

If your watch is out of order the watchmaker does not consider it sufficient to clean the silver case, or to remove dust from the facehe looks within and may discover that this wheel is broken, this cog out of orderor the main spring needing to be replaced. He is not much concerned about setting the hands accurately at first, for he knows that the external manifestations of the correct time will follow from the setting to rights the time-keeping machinery within. Look at our brooks and rivulets which have been, by a lax legislature, so long delivered over to the tormentors to be blackened into pestiferous sewersif we need to have them purged it is of no use to cast chloride of lime and other chemicals into the streamthe only remedy is to forbid the pollution, to demand that factories shall not poison us wholesale, but shall in some other manner consume their useless products! The voice of common sense bids us go to the original cause of the defilement and deal with it at its sources.

That is just what God does when He saves a sinner! He begins at the origin of the sinners sin and deals with his *heart*. My Brothers and Sisters, what a difficult work this isA new heart also will I give you. If it had been said, A new garment will I give you, many of us could have conferred the same gift. If it had been said, A new speech will I teach you, this, also, with a little skill, might have been arranged. And, if the promise had been, new habits will I create in you, this, also, we could have attempted, and perhaps successfully, to imitate, for habits are to be engendered. But a new heart? Ah, here human power and wit are nonplussed. Jannes and Jambres in Egypt could imitate some of the miracles. They did so with their enchantment, and there is much in true religion which men can successfully counterfeit.

But, as in Egypt, a point was reached wherein the magicians were foiled, so that they confessed, This is the finger of God. So in the regeneration of our naturein the changing the heartthe Lord alone is seen. Who shall pretend to give another a new heart? Go, boaster, and suspend the laws of gravitation! Recall the thunderbolt! Reverse the chariot of the sun! Transform the Atlantic to a lake of fire and then attempt to change the nature of the heart of man! This, God alone works, for He only does wondrous things! The affections are the most powerful part of our nature! They, to a great extent, mold even the understanding itself. And if the heart is defiled, all the mental faculties become disturbed in their balance. God, therefore, commences at the heartand therein begins a work in which man cannot compete with Him, nor can he even help Him.

God must do it. The same God who made men must make them new, if the new-making is to begin with a change of heart. Blessed be God, He is Omnipotent enough to give us new hearts! He has wisdom enough to renew us! He has purity sufficient to cleanse us! He has abounding mercy to bear with us. Mark, He gives us a *new* heart, not an *old* heart touched-up and mended. Not an old heart a little purified and improved but a new heart which enters into a new life, receives new inspirations, feeds on new food, longs for new happiness, performs new actions, and is, in factan inhabitant of the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwells righteousness! Brethren, I will read this sentence over again, A new heart also will I give you.

And I would call your attention to the style of the language. It is, I will, and yet again, I will. Jehovahs *Ego* is the great word. It is not I will, if, or, I will, perhaps, or, I will upon certain conditions, butI will give. He speaks in a God-like tone. It is royal language, the very word of Him who of old said, Light be, and light was! He who spoke the world into being now speaks the new world of Grace into being in the self-same majestic voice! Turn, now, to the second blessingA new spirit will I put within you. Perhaps this clause may be explained as an interpretation of the former one. It may be that the new heart and the new spirit are intended to represent the same thing. But I conceive there is more than this.

A new spiritdoes not the term indicate that a new vital principle is implanted in men? We have often explained to you that the *natural* man, is correctly and strictly speaking, a compound of soul and body only. The first man, Adam, was made a living soul, and, as we bear the image of the first Adam, we are body and soul only. It is our own belief that in regeneration something more is done than the mere rectifying of what was therethere is in the new birth infused and implanted in man a third and more elevated principlea *spirit* is begotten in him! And, as the second Adam was made a quickening Spirit, so in the new birth we are transformed into the likeness of Christ Jesus, who is the second Adam. The implantation, infusion and putting into our nature the third and higher principle is, we believe, the being born-again. Regarded in this light, the words before us may be regarded as an absolute and unconditional promise of the Covenant of Grace to all the seed that a new spirit shall be put within them.

But, if we view it as some do, we shall then read it thusthe ruling spirit of mans nature shall be *changed*. The spirit which rules and reigns in Godless Christless men is the spirit of a rebellious slave, the spirit of self. Every *natural* mans main motive is *himself*. Even in his religion he only seeks *self*. If he is attentive to prayers and sermons, it is that he, himself, may be saved. And if he fears God, and dreads the terrors of His Law, it is on his own accountnot that he cares for Gods Glory, Gods honor, or the rights of Godnot one whit! He has no more interest in God than a rebellious slave has in the property of his master. He wears the yoke, but he groans under it. He would gladly enough escape from it if he could. He is only happy when he is breaking his masters laws and fulfilling his own selfish will.

But, when the Spirit of God comes upon us to make our spirit a fit place for His residence, He takes away the spirit of the slave and gives us the spirit of a childand from that moment the service of God becomes a different thing. We do not serve Him now because we are afraid of the whip, but nobler motives move us. Gratitude binds us to the Lords service and love gives wings to the feet of obedience. Now the Lord is no more regarded as a tyrant, but as a wise and loving parent. Whatever He may do with us we rejoice in His wisdom and goodness. We view Him no longer with suspicion and dread, but with confidence and joy. No more do we ask, where shall I go from Your Presence? But we desire to come near to Him. And in our sorrows our cry is, Oh that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to His seat. It is a revolution, indeed, when the hatred and dread of a slave are exchanged for the loving subjection of a son! This is one of the precious privileges of the Covenant of Grace, which I trust, Beloved, many of you have already received, and which I hope others who have not received it will seek after. If they have believed in Jesus, a new spirit, a spirit of sonship is their privilegelet them not be content unless they have it now.

A third and further blessing of the text is the removal of the stony heart. I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh. I do not think the Lord removes, all at once, the *evil* heart out of any mans fleshthere it remains to be fought with like the Canaanites in Canaan when Israel had entered thereto prove us and to try us. But He does take away the *stony* heart at once. The stony heart is a hard heart. The moment anything strikes a stone it repels the blow. When the Gospel is heard by a hard heart it throws it off again. It is not moved by it. It is not affected by it. You might as well throw feathers at a wall as preach Gospel sermons to hard hearts if your confidence is in the sermon itself! Only Gods power can make the feather-like sermon penetrate the heart of stone!

The Lord can do it, but the thing itself cannot be done by Nature. The natural heart is an impenetrable heartyou may make scratches on the surfacebut you cannot enter within it to reach its inner core. What a marble heart by nature each one of us has! Till Grace visits us, the Truth of God cannot enter us any more than light can shine into a stone. A stony heart is unfeelingyou can make no impression upon itit cannot smart, it cannot breathe, it cannot sigh, it cannot groan. A stony thing because a dead thing. Bruise it and that which would make flesh black and blue does not affect the stone. Cut it and that which would cause an agony to living flesh makes no disturbance in its granite mass. A cold, insensible thingnot to be warmed even by the rehearsal of the love of Calvarysuch is our heart by nature.

Dear Hearers, such is the heart of every one of you till God deals with youjust a lump of stone! Of course we speak not literally but *spiritually*, yet what we assert is a solemn fact. God says, I will take away the stony heart. What a wonderful operation to take a stone out of the heart! How much more wonderful to take the stony heart, itself, right away and create a fleshy heart in its place! I would ask you again, though it may seem like a repetition, to notice how royally the Lord speaks. He does not say, perhaps I will. He does not say, If you are willing I will, but, he says, I will. Oh, it is gloriously worded, I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh. The Lords Omnipotence can accomplish it!

We have heard of many expedients for softening hard hearts, but none of them are of any use. I know preachers who delight in talking of a mothers tears, and a fathers gray hairsof dying children and consumptive sisters, and I believe these are all legitimate topics. But no hearts are ever turned from stone to flesh merely by natural emotion. You may make a man weep over his dead child or his dead wife till his eyes are redbut his heart will be black for all that. Mens hearts are changed by quite another agency than oratorical or rhetorical appeals to the natural affections. I readily admit that such appeals have their own sphere, but for the renewing of the heart something much more effectual is needed than natural emotion. It is written, *I* will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and *there* is the secret of the matter!

The fourth promise of the preparation of the heart for the indwelling of the Spirit is thisI will give you an heart of flesh, by which is meant a soft heart, an impressible heart, a sensitive heart, a heart which can feel, can be moved to shame, to repentance, to loathing of sin, to desiring, to seeking, to panting, to longing after God. It means a tender heart, a heart that does not require a thousand blows to move it, but, like flesh with its skin broken, feels the very faintest touchsuch is the heart which the Holy Spirit creates in the children of God! It is a teachable heart, a heart willing to be guided, molded, governed by the Divine willa heart which, like young Samuel, cries, Speak, Lord, for Your servant hearsan obedient heart, ready to be run into the mold, putty beneath the sacred hand, anxious to be conformed to the heavenly Pattern.

This is an early work of Grace in the soul, for as soon as ever the Gospel is heard in power and the Spirit of God comes upon a man, long before he enters into the liberty where Christ makes men free, he ceases to have a heart of stone! Long before he can say, Christ is mine, he becomes tender and impressible under the Truth, and it is a great mercy it is so! It is a blessed sign of a work begun which will be effectually carried on where the heart trembles at Gods Word, where there are earnest desires towards Christ and the man is no longer a braggart rebel, but a trembling child come back to his father, and longing to cry, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before You.

Beloved, it is necessary, here, to add a word of caution to some of you. Do not mistake *natural tenderness* for that heart of flesh which God gives. There are many persons who are naturally very impressible, many among women, and some among men. For this characteristic they are rather, to me, admired than censured. But, let them not mistake this for a work of Grace. A heart of wax is soft, but it is not a heart of flesh. The softness of *Nature* is not the sensitiveness of Divine Grace. It is often the case that some persons who are religiously sensitive are equally sensitive the other way, and, while you can influence them for good, others can as easily influence them for evil. They happen to be just now religious because the associations surrounding them have that tendency, but were they under other influences they would be skeptical if not utterly irreligious.

They would have been lovers of the pleasures which others pursue had not home habits sobered their minds, for their hearts are still unrenewed. Mere religious impressibility is not Graceit is Nature aloneand I even fear that to some it is a temptation to be so extremely impressionable. I am not always sanguine concerning persons who are readily excited, for they so soon cool down again. Some are like India rubber and every time you put your finger on them you leave a markbut it is wasted time, because they get back into the old shape again as soon as you have done with them. I was preaching once, in a certain city, and a very worthy but worldly man went out of the congregation while I was in the middle of the sermon, the third sermon he had been hearing from me during the week.

One who followed him out asked him why he left, and he frankly replied that he could not stand it any longer, for, he said, I must have become religious if I had heard that sermon through. I was nearly gone. I have been, he added, like an India rubber doll under this man. But when he goes away I shall get back into the old shape again. Very many are of the same quality. They have so much natural amiability, good sense, and conscientiousness, that the Gospel ministry has a power over them and they feel its influence, though not so as to be *saved* by it. Beware, then, that you do not mistake the gilding of Nature for the solid gold of Grace.

When Gods Grace helps the preacher to wield the Gospel hammer and it comes down with power upon a piece of flint, how speedily the stone flies to shivers and what a glorious work of heart-breaking is done! And then the Lord comes in and gives, by His own almighty Grace, a heart of flesh! *This* is the change we needthe taking away of the stonethe giving of the heart of flesh. Let us read these four promises again, and I hope they will reach any poor trembling soul who may be saying, I would, but cannot repent. I would but cannot feel. If anything is felt tis only pain to find I cannot feel! My heart is so bad, so hard, so cold, I can believe in Christ but I cannot change my nature.

Poor Soul, there is no need you should! For there is One who can do the work for you and these are His absolute promises to you if you are now looking to Christ upon the Cross and resting all your hopes in Him A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

II. But time flies, and therefore let us consider, in the second place, THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. When the Spirit has thus prepared His habitation, He comes to reside within the renewed man. I call your attention to each word of the text. Observe first that the Lord says, I will put My Spirit within you. Now it does not say, the *influences* of the Spirit shall come within younot thatbut, I will put My Spirit within you. It is literally the fact that God Himself, the Eternal Spirit in propria Persona, in His own Person, resides and dwells within the renewed heart. I again remark that it is not said, I will put the *Grace* of My Spirit, I will put the *work* of My Spirit, but, I will put My Spirit within you.

It is the Holy Spirit Himself who, in very deed, lives in every heart of fleshevery new heart and right spirit. Can you get that thought? Simple as it is, it is one of the greatest marvels under the sun! An Incarnate God is a mysterythe Word was made flesh and dwelt among usbut here is another mystery! God *dwells* in every son of God. God *dwells* in us, and we in Him! The mystery of the Incarnation is no greater than that of the Holy Spirits indwelling, nor does it appear to me to involve more condescension. I marvel at Christs dwelling *with* sinners and I marvel, equally, at the Holy Spirits dwelling *in* sinners! God Himself, for whom the universe is not too vast a temple! The ever blessed Spirit in whose Presence the heavens are not clean, yet says, To this man will I look even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembles at My Word.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit within us implies the exercise of His influences, the bestowal of His gifts, and the implantation of His Graces. And, moreover, it involves the exercise of all His sacred offices, for where the Holy Spirit indwells He acts as a Teacher, an Illuminator, a Comforter, a Creator, a Strengthener, a Preserverall that He is in all His offices He will be according to His own will to every man in whom He takes up His abode. Note a little word, also, in the text worthy of your attention. I will put

My Spirit within you. It is not the spirit of angels. It is not the spirit of good menit is Gods own Spirit who takes up His residence in every sinners when God renews it. My Spirit. And perhaps this may allude to the fact that this is the same Spirit which abode without measure in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We have a union of experience with Christ in the fact that the same oil which anointed Him anoints us. The same dew which fell upon His branch refreshes ours. The same holy fire which burned in His breast is kindled in ours. I will put My Spirit within you. Observe also carefully the words, within you. I will put my Spirit *within you*. We thank God that we come near to the Spirit of God when we devoutly read the Holy Scriptures, for He wrote them and His mind is in them. But we have a greater privilege than this! We thank God when the Spirit acts upon us under a sermon, or under any form of Christian teaching so that we feel the Spirit of God to be with us. But we have a privilege richer, even, than this. I will put My Spiritnot with you, nor side by side with you, nor in a book, nor in an oracle, nor in a temple, nor in one of your fellow men, butI will put My Spirit within YOUin your own souls, in your own renewed hearts!

This is marvelous! Augustine, when reflecting upon the various glories which come to God, and the benefits which accrue to men through redemptionnone of which could have been revealed without the fall of Adamexclaimed, O beata culpa. Oh, happy fault! And I have the same expression trembling on my lips. Where sin abounded Grace has much more abounded. Sin, which laid man in the dust and made him like a devil, afforded an opportunity for Mercy to step in and lift humanity higher than before! Where was man in Eden compared with man in Christ? In Paradise he was perfect in beauty, but in Jesus he wears a radiance superlative, for the Holy Spirit is within him!

In Adam man was made a living soul, but in Christ Jesus he has now risen to the dignity and majesty of a quickening Spirit. My brethren, where the Holy Spirit enters He is able to subdue all things unto Himself. When the ark came unto the Philistine temple, down went Dagon. And when the Holy Spirit enters the soul, sin falls and is broken. If the Holy Spirit is within, we may rest assured He will tolerate no reigning sin. He is a Spirit of burning, consuming our dross! He is a Spirit of light, chasing away our darkness. When He makes a heart His temple, He will scourge out the buyers and sellers who pollute it! He is not only the Purifier within but the Protector, toofrom temptations that assail us from without He is as an unconquerable garrison to our soul making us impregnable to all assaults.

Treasonable sins lurk within us, but the Omniscient eye of God discerns each evil ambush and He lays His hands upon every sin which hides itself away in the dark recesses of our nature. With such an Indweller we need not fearthis poor heart of ours will yet become perfect as God is perfectand our nature, through His indwelling, shall rise into complete meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. Oh, what blessings are here, and in what royal language are they all promised! I will put My Spirit within you. How positive! How decisive! Suppose they will not accept the Spirit? Suppose they strive against the Spirit? Suppose their free will should get the mastery? Suppose nonsense!

When the Lord says, I will, nothing remains to be supposed. If He speaks to chaos, it is order. Do not ask, Suppose chaos refuses to be arranged? When Jehovah speaks to darkness, it becomes light! Do not ask, But, suppose the darkness resists? What shall resist His fiat? When the Lord comes forth in His Omnipotence who shall stay His hand or say unto Him, What are you doing? When the Spirit comes to deal in Sovereign Grace with the hearts of men, without violating their wills He has the power to accomplish His Divine purpose, and it shall be accomplished to the praise of the glory of His Grace.

III. Lastly, we must ask you to give your thoughts a moment to THE BLESSED RESULTS which come from all this. The indwelling Spirit leads every man in whom He reigns into obedience to the ways of God. I said that the work of Grace is commenced from *within*, but the work does not end there. Before we have considered the whole of the Covenant promise we shall find that change of life is *guaranteed*a change apparent in works and actions, You shall keep My judgments and do them. We do not begin with works, but we go on to works. Faith first *receives* the blessing and then *produces* holy work. We will not allow the effect to take the place of the cause, but we are equally sure that the effect follows after the cause.

Now, observe the promise of the text before usI will cause you to walk in My statutes. The soul that possesses the Spirit becomes *active*. It walks. It is not passive as one carried by main forceit works because the Spirit works in it, to will and to do of His own good pleasure. The man who has no active godliness may fear whether he has any Grace at all. If I am only a receiver and have never brought forth fruit, I may fear that I am the ground that is near unto cursing, for if I were a field that the Lord has blessed I should yield Him a harvest. The Spirit causes us to walk, but yet we ourselves walk. He works in us to do, but the doing is actually our own. He does not repent, and He does not believeHe has nothing to repent of, and He has nothing to believe. Neither does the Spirit perform works for uswe are led to do these ourselves. We repent and we believe, and we do good works because He causes us to do so.

A willing walk with God is a sweet result of the Holy Spirits indwelling. The Holy Spirit leads us to holy habits, for, mark the phrase, I will cause you to walk in My ways. The figure does not represent us as taking a run now and then, or as leaping a step or two and then lying downbut as walking on and on, steadily and continuously. Here excitement may produce momentary zeal and transient morality, but habitual holiness is the fruit of the Spirit. Note, next, the delight it implies. I will cause you to walk in My waysnot as a man who toils, but as one who walks at ease. The Believer finds it as sweet to walk in Gods ways as Isaac felt it sweet to walk in the fields at eventide. We are not slaves sweating in sore bondage, but children serving with delight! His Commandments are not grievous. His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

It implies, too, holy perseverancethe words have the meaning of continuing to follow after holiness. It is a small matter to begin, but to hold out to the end is the testing point. The text promises to us a complete obedienceI will cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments. A Christian man is obedient to Godhe minds the first table. He is just to manhe does not despise the second table. Statutes and judgments are equally dear to Believers. We are not willing to give a lame, one-sided obedience to God. The Holy Spirit, when He makes us devout God-ward, makes us honest man-ward. And the Holy Spirit also works a holy care for righteousness in the soul. I will cause you to keep My judgmentsthat is, to have an exactness of obediencea precision, a deliberation, a willingness to find out Gods will and a care to attend to it in every jot and tittle.

A man in whom dwells the Holy Spirit is careful not to yield himself to the traditions of men but to the commands of God. He pays no attention to the statutes of the great councils of the Church, or the ordinances of popes, or the laws of priests, or the mandates of bishops. He searches out the will of the Lord, only. The knee of his conscience bows with lowly reverence before the Lord but nowhere else. He who has bound us to His altar has loosed all other bonds, so that the traditions of men and the ordinances of priests are contemptible to us. To God, and God alone the renewed heart renders obedience, but that obedience he does render!

Now, to what a delightful consummation has our text conducted us. It began with a renewed heart and it ends in a purified life. It commenced with taking away the stone and giving the flesh. Now it gives us the life of Christ written out in living characters in our daily practice. Glory be to God for this! O Soul, if you are a partaker of it, you will join in this thanksgiving! And if you are not renewed as yet, I beseech you do not go about to find these good things anywhere but where they are. At the foot of the Cross you will find a change of heartwhere fell the drops of blood from Jesus nailed hands and feetthere is salvation! The Spirit of God will give you a right spirit, and, consequently, a pure life. Look not to your own efforts! Rake not the dunghill of your own heart! Look to the Holy Spirit through the blood of the precious Savior.

Now, to close. All this glorifies God doubly. It glorifies God that a man should walk in His ways. It glorifies God, yet more, that such obedience should be the result of Divine power. The outward life honors God, but the inward, spiritual, gracious work which that life produces, honors Him yet more abundantly. While this glorifies God doubly, it ennobles the soul supremely. To be made holy is to receive a patent of nobility. To be made holy by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, oh, what shall we say to this? Bring here the poorest peasantlet her, if you will, be an aged woman, wrinkled and haggard with labor and with years. Let her be ignorant of all learning, but, let me know that in her there is faith in Christ and that, consequently, the Holy Spirit dwells in her, and I will reverence her above all emperors and kings, for she is above them all!

What are these crowned ones but men who, perhaps, have waded through slaughter to a throne, while she has been uplifted by the righteousness of Jesus? Their dynasty is, after all, of mushroom growth but she is of the blood royal of the skies! She has God within her! She has Christ waiting to receive her into His bliss! Heavens inhabitants without her could not be perfected, nor Gods purpose be fulfilled! Therefore is she noblest of the noble! Judge not after the sight of the eyes, but judge after the mind of God, and let saved sinners be precious in your sight.

Honor, also, the Holy Spirit. Speak of Him with lowly awe. Never take His name in vain. Take heed lest you blaspheme it. Reverently seek His company. Rejoice in His gifts. Love Him. Quench Him not. Strive not against Him. Bow beneath His power, and may He dwell in you and make you fit to dwell with Him forever, for His names sake. Amen.

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THE COVENANT PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT
NO. 2200

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, APRIL 10, 1891, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.
And I will put My Spirit within you.
Ezekiel 36:27.

No preface is needed and the largeness of our subject forbids our wasting time in beating about the bush. I shall try to do two things this morningfirst, I would *commend the text*. And, secondly, I would, in some measure, *expound the text*.

I. First, as for THE COMMENDATION OF THE TEXT, the tongues of men and of angels might fail. To call it a golden sentence would be much too commonplaceto liken it to a pearl of great price would be too poor a comparison! We cannot feel, much less speak, too much in praise of that great God who has put this clause into the Covenant of His Grace. In that Covenant, every sentence is more precious than Heaven and earthand this line is not the least among His choice words of promiseI will put My Spirit within you.

I would begin by saying that *it is a gracious Word*. It was spoken to a graceless people, to a people who had followed their own way and refused the way of Goda people who had already provoked something more than ordinary anger in the Judge of all the earth, for He, Himself, said (v 18), I poured My fury upon them. These people, even under chastisement, caused the holy name of God to be profaned among the heathen wherever they went! They had been highly favored, but they abused their privileges and behaved worse than those who never knew the Lord. They sinned wantonly, willfully, wickedly, proudly and presumptuously and, by this, they greatly provoked the Lord. Yet to them He made such a promise as thisI will put My Spirit within you. Surely, where sin abounded Divine Grace did much more abound!

Clearly this is a Word of Grace, for the Law says nothing of this kind. Turn to the Law of Moses and see if there is *any* Word of God spoken therein concerning the putting of the Spirit within men to cause them to walk in Gods statutes. The Law proclaims the statutes, but only the *Gospel* promises the Spirit by which the statutes will be obeyed. The Law commands and makes us know what God requires of us, but the Gospel goes further and inclines us to *obey* the will of the Lord and enables us, practically, to walk in His ways. Under the dominion of Grace the Lord works in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure!

So great a gift as this could never come to any man by merit. A man might so act as to deserve a reward of a certain kind, in measure suited to his commendable action, but the Holy Spirit can never be the wage of human servicethe idea verges upon blasphemy! Can any man *deserve* that Christ should die for him? Who would dream of such a thing? Can any man deserve that the Holy Spirit should dwell in him and work holiness in him? The greatness of the blessing lifts it high above the range of merit and we see that if the Holy Spirit *is* bestowed, it must be by an act of Divine GraceGrace infinite in bounty, exceeding all that we could have imagined. Sovereign Grace over sin abounding is here seen in clearest light. I will put My Spirit within you is a promise which drops with Graces as the honeycomb with honey! Listen to the Divine music which pours from this Word of Love. I hear the soft melody of Grace, Grace, Grace and nothing else but Grace. Glory be to God, who gives to sinners the indwelling of His Spirit!

Note, next, that *it is a Divine Word* I will put My Spirit within you. Who but the Lord could speak after this fashion? Can one man put the Spirit of God within another? Could all the Church combined breathe the Spirit of God into a single sinners heart? To put any *good* thing into the deceitful heart of man is a great achievement, but to put the Spirit of God into the heart, truly, this is the finger of God! No, here I may say, the Lord has made bare His arm and displayed the fullness of His mighty power! To put the Spirit of God into our nature is a work peculiar to the Godhead and to do this within the nature of a free agent, such as man, is marvelous! Who but Jehovah, the God of Israel, can speak after this royal style and, beyond all dispute, declare, I will put My Spirit within you?

Men must always surround their resolves with conditions and uncertainties, but since Omnipotence is at the back of every promise of God, He speaks like a king, yes, in a style which is only fit for the eternal God! He purposes and promises and He as surely performs. Sure, then, is this sacred saying, I will put My Spirit within you. Sure, because Divine! O Sinner, if we poor creatures had the saving of you, we should break down in the attempt, but, behold, the Lord, Himself, comes on the scene and the work is done! All difficulties are removed by this one sentence, I will put My Spirit within you. We have worked with *our* spirit, we have wept over you and we have entreated youbut we have failed. Lo, there comes One into the matter who will not fail, with whom nothing is impossible! And He begins His work by saying, I will put My Spirit within you. The Word is of Grace and of Godregard it, then, as a pledge from the God of Grace.

To me there is much charm in further thought that *this is an individual and personal Word of God*. The Lord means, I will put My Spirit within you. That is to say, within you, as individuals. I will put My Spirit within you one by one. This must be so, since connection requires it. We read in verse 26, A new heart also will I give you. Now, a new heart can only be given to one person. Each man needs a heart of his own and each man must have a new heart for himself. And a new spirit will I put within you. Within each one this must be done. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of fleshthese are all *personal*, *individual* operations of Divine Grace! God deals with men one by one in solemn matters of eternity, sin and salvation. We are born one by one and we die one by oneeven so we must be born again one by oneand each one, for himself, must receive Spirit of God. Without this, a man has nothing! He cannot be caused to walk in Gods statutes except by infusion of Grace into him as an individual.

I think I see among my hearers one man, or woman, who feels himself, or herself, to be all alone in the world and, therefore, hopeless. You can believe that God will do great things for a nation, but how shall solitary be thought of? You are an odd person, one that could not be written down in any lista peculiar sinner with constitutional tendencies all your own. Thus says God, I will put My Spirit within *you*within *your* hearteven *yours*! My dear Hearers, you who have long been seeking salvation, but have not known the power of the Spiritthis is what you need! You have been striving in energy of flesh, but you have not understood where your true strength lies. God says to you, Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord. And again, I will put My Spirit within you. Oh, that this Word might be spoken of the Lord to that young man who is ready to despair! To that sorrowful woman who has been looking into herself for power to pray and believe! You are without strength or hope in and of yourself, but this meets your case in all points. I will put My Spirit within youwithin *you* as an individual! Enquire of the Lord for it! Lift up your heart in prayer to God and ask Him to pour upon you the Spirit of Grace and of supplications. Plead with the Lord, saying, Let Your good Spirit lead me. Even me! Cry, Pass me not, my gracious Father; but in me fulfill this wondrous Word of yours, I will put My Spirit within you.

Note, next, that *this is a separating word*. I do not know whether you will see this readily, but it must be sothis Word of God separates a man from his fellows. Men by nature are of another spirit from that of God and are under subjection to that evil spirit, the Prince of the power of the air. When the Lord comes to gather out His own, fetching out from among the heathen, He effects separation by doing according to this Word, I will put My Spirit within you. This done, the individual becomes a new man. Those who have the Spirit are not of the world, nor *like* the worldand soon have to come out from among the ungodly and to be separatefor difference of nature creates conflict. Gods Spirit will not dwell with the evil spirityou cannot have fellowship with Christ and with Belialwith the Kingdom of Heaven and with this world.

I wish that the people of God would again wake up to the Truth of God that to gather out a people from among men is the great purpose of the present dispensation. It is still true, as James said at the Jerusalem Council, Simeon has declared how God at first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. We are not to remain clinging to the old wreck with expectation that we shall pump water out of her and get her safe into port. No, the cry is very differentTake to the lifeboat! Take to the lifeboat! You are to quit the wreck and then you are to carry away from the sinking mass, that which God will save. You must be separate from the old wreck, lest it suck you down to sure destruction! Your only hope of doing good to the world is by yourselves being, not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world.

For you to go down to the worlds level will neither be good for it nor for you. That which happened in the days of Noah will be repeated, for when the sons of God entered into alliance with the daughters of menand there was a league between the two racesthe Lord could not endure the evil mixture, but drew up the sluices of the lower deep and swept the earth with a destroying flood. Surely, in that last day of destruction, when the world is overwhelmed with fire, it will be because the Church of God shall have degenerated and the distinctions between the righteous and the wicked shall have been broken down. The Spirit of God, wherever He comes, does speedily make and reveal the difference between Israel and Egyptand in proportion as His active energy is felt, there will be an everwidening gulf between those who are led of the Spirit and those who are under the dominion of the flesh.

The possession of the Spirit will make you, my Hearer, quite another sort of man from what you are now, and then you will be actuated by motives which the world will not appreciate, for the world knows us not because it knew Him not. Then you will act, speak, think and feel in such a way that this evil world will misunderstand and condemn you. Since the carnal mind knows not the things that are of Godfor those things are *spiritually* discernedit will not approve your objectives and designs. Do not expect it to be your friend. The Spirit which makes you to be of the seed of the woman is not the spirit of the world! The seed of the serpent will hiss at you and bruise your heel. Your Master said, Because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world; therefore the world hates you. This is a separating Word of God, this. Has it separated you? Has the Holy Spirit called you alone and blessed you? Do you differ from your old companions? Have you a life they do not understand? If not, may God in mercy put into you that most heavenly deposit, of which He speaks in our textI will put My Spirit within you!

But now notice, that *it is a very uniting Word*. It separates from the world, but it joins to God. Note how it runs I will put *My* Spirit within you. It is not merely *a* spirit, or *the* spirit, but *My* Spirit. Now when Gods own Spirit comes to reside within our mortal bodies, how near akin we are to the Most High! Know you not that your body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit? Does not this make a man sublime? Have you never stood in awe of your own selves, O you Believers? Have you regarded enough even this poor body as being sanctified and dedicated, and elevated into a sacred condition, by being set apart to be the Temple of the Holy Spirit? Thus are we brought into the closest union with God that we can well conceive of. Thus is the Lord our Light and our life, while our spirit is subordinated to the Divine Spirit. I will put My Spirit within youthen God Himself dwells in you! The Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead is in you! With Christ in God your life is hid and the Spirit seals you, anoints you and abides in you. By the Spirit we have access to the Father! By the Spirit we perceive our adoption and learn to cry, Abba, Father. By the Spirit we are made partakers of the Divine Nature and have communion with the thrice holy Lord!

I cannot help adding here that *it is a very condescending Word*I will put My Spirit within you. Is it really so, that the Spirit of God who displays the power and energetic force of God, by whom Gods Word is carried into effectthat the Spirit who of old moved upon the face of the waters and brought order and life from chaos and deathcan it be so that He will deign to sojourn in *men*? God in our nature is a very wonderful conception! God in the Babe at Bethlehem, God in the Carpenter of Nazareth, God in the Man of Sorrows, God in the Crucified, God in Him who was buried in the tombthis is all marvelous! The Incarnation is an infinite mystery of lovebut we believe it. Yet, if it were possible to compare one illimitable wonder with another, I should say that Gods dwelling in His peopleand that repeated ten thousand times overis more marvelous!

That the Holy Spirit should dwell in millions of redeemed men and women is a miracle not surpassed by that of our Lords espousal of human nature, for our Lords body was perfectly pure and the Godhead, while it dwells with His holy Manhood, does at least dwell with a perfect and sinless Nature. But the Holy Spirit bows Himself to dwell in *sinful* men! To dwell in men who, after their conversion, still find the flesh warring against the Spirit and the Spirit against the fleshmen who are not perfect, though they strive to be somen who have to lament their shortcomings and even to confess with shame a measure of unbelief! I will put My Spirit within you means the abiding of the Holy Spirit in our imperfect nature. Wonder of wonders! Yet is it as surely a fact as it is a wonder. Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have the Spirit of God, for, if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, He is none of His.

You could not bear the suspicion that you are not His and, therefore, as surely as you are Christs, you have His Spirit abiding in you! The Savior has gone away on purpose that the Comforter might be given to dwell in youand He does dwell in you. Is it not so? If it is so, admire this condescending God, and worship and praise His name! Sweetly submit to His rule in all things. Grieve not the Spirit of God. Watch carefully that nothing comes within you that may defile the Temple of God. Let the faintest monition of the Holy Spirit be law to you. It was a holy mystery that the Presence of the Lord was specially within the veil of the Tabernacle and that the Lord God spoke by Urim and Thummim to His people. It is an equally sacred marvel that now the Holy Spirit dwells in our spirits and abides within our nature and speaks to us whatever He hears of the Father. By Divine impressions which the opened ear can apprehend and the tender heart can receive, He speaks to us. God grant us to know His still small voice so as to listen to it with reverent humility and loving joythen shall we know the meaning of these words, I will put My Spirit within you.

Nor have I yet done with commending my text, for I must not fail to remind you that *it is a very spiritual Word*. I will put My Spirit within you has nothing to do with our wearing a peculiar garbthat would be a matter of little worth. It has nothing to do with affectations of speechthose might readily become a deceptive peculiarity. Our text has nothing to do with outward rites and ceremonies, but goes much further and deeper. It is an instructive symbol when the Lord teaches us our death with Christ by burial in Baptismit is to our great profit that He ordains bread and wine to be tokens of our communion in the body and blood of His dear Sonbut these are only outward things and if they are unattended with the Holy Spirit they fail of their design.

There is something infinitely greater in this promiseI will put My Spirit within you. I cannot give you the whole force of the Hebrew, as to the words, within you, unless I paraphrase them a little, and read, I will put My Spirit in the midst of you. The sacred deposit is put deep down in our lifes secret place. God puts His Spirit not upon the surface of the man, but into the center of his being. The promise meansI will put My Spirit in your heart, in the very soul of you. This is an intensely spiritual matter, without admixture of anything material and visible. It is spiritual, you see, because it is the Spirit that is givenand He is given internally within our spirit. It is true the Spirit operates upon the external life, but it is through the secret and internal life, and of that inward operation our text speaks.

This is what we so greatly require. Do you know what it is to attend a service and hear Gods Truth faithfully preached and yet you are forced to say, Somehow or other it did not enter into me; I did not feel the unction and taste the savor of it? I will put My Spirit within you, is what you need. Do you not read your Bibles and even prayand do not both devotional exercises become too much *eternal* acts? I will put My Spirit *within* you meets this evil! The good Spirit fires your heart. He penetrates your mind. He saturates your soul. He touches the secret and vital springs of your existence. Blessed Word of God! I love my text. I love it better than I can speak of it!

Observe once more that *this Word is a very effectual one*. I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments and do them. The Spirit is operativefirst upon the inner life in causing you to love the Law of the Lordand then it moves you openly to keep His statutes concerning Himself and His judgments between you and your fellow men. Obedience, if a man should be flogged to it, would be of little worth. But obedience springing out of a life withinthis is a priceless breastplate of jewels. If you have a lantern, you cannot make it shine by polishing the outside glass, you must put a candle in itand this is what God doesHe puts the light of the Spirit within us and then our light shines! He puts His Spirit so deep down into the heart that the whole nature feels it! It works upward, like a spring from the bottom of a well. It is, moreover, so deeply implanted that there is no removing it. If it were in the memory, you might forget it. If it were in the intellect, you might err in it. But, within you, it touches the whole man and has dominion over you without fear of failure. When the very kernel of your nature is quickened into holiness, practical godliness is effectually secured. Blessed is He who knows by experience our Lords WordsThe water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

If I should fail in expounding the text, I hope I have so fully commended it to you that you will turn it over and meditate upon it yourselvesand so get a home-born exposition of it! The key of the text is within its own self, for if the Lord gives you the Spirit, you will then understand His WordsI will put My Spirit within you.

II. But now I must work upon THE EXPOSITION OF THE TEXT. I trust the Holy Spirit will aid me. Let me show you how the good Spirit manifests the fact that He dwells in men. I have to be very brief on a theme that might require a great length of time and can only mention a part of His ways and workings.

One of the first effects of the Spirit of God being put within us is *quickening*. We are dead by nature to all heavenly and spiritual things, but when the Spirit of God comes, then we begin to live. The man visited of the Spirit begins to feelthe terrors of God make him tremble, the love of Christ makes him weep. He begins to fear and he begins to hopea great deal of the first and a very little of the second, it may be. He learns spiritually to sorrow. He is grieved that he has sinned and that he cannot cease from sinning. He begins to desire that which once he despisedhe especially desires to find the way of pardon and reconciliation with God. Ah, dear Hearers!

I cannot make you feel, *I* cannot make you sorrow for sin, *I* cannot make you desire eternal lifebut it is all done as soon as this is fulfilled by the Lord, I will put My Spirit within you. The quickening Spirit brings life to the dead in trespasses and sins!

This life of the Spirit shows itself by causing the man to pray. The cry is the distinctive mark of the living child. He begins to cry in broken accents, God be merciful to me. At the same time that he pleads, he feels the soft tug of repentance. He has a new mind towards sin and he grieves that he should have grieved his God. With this comes faith, perhaps feeble and tremblingonly a touch of the hem of the Saviors robebut still Jesus is his only hope and his sole trust. To Him he looks for pardon and salvation. He dares to believe that Christ can save even him. Then has life come into the soul when trust in Jesus springs up in the heart!

Remember, dear Friends, that as the Holy Spirit gives quickening at the first, so He must revive and strengthen it. Whenever you become dull and faint, cry for the Holy Spirit. Whenever you cannot feel in devotion as you wish to feel and are unable to rise to any heights of communion with God, plead my text in faith and beg the Lord to do as He has said, namely, I will put My Spirit within you. Go to God with this Covenant clause, even if you have to confess, Lord, I am like a log. I am a helpless lump of weakness. Unless You come and quicken me I cannot live to You. Plead importunately the promise, I will put My Spirit within you. All the life of the flesh will gender corruption. All the energy that comes of mere excitement will die down into the black ashes of disappointment. Only the Holy Spirit is the life of the regenerated heart! Have you the Spirit? And if you have Him within you, have you only a small measure of His life, and do you wish for more? Then go where you went at first! There is only one river of the Water of Lifedraw from its floods. You will be lively enough, bright enough, strong enough and happy enough when the Holy Spirit is mighty within your soul!

When the Holy Spirit enters, after quickening he gives *enlightening*. *We* cannot make men see the Truth of Godthey are blindbut when the Lord puts His Spirit within them, their eyes are opened. At first they may see rather hazily, but still they see. As the light increases and the eye is strengthened, they see more and more clearly. What a mercy it is to see Christ, to look unto Him and so to be lightened! By the Spirit, souls see things in their realitythey see the actual truth of them and perceive that they are facts. The Spirit of God illuminates every Believer so that he sees still more marvelous things out of Gods Lawbut this never happens unless the Spirit opens his eyes. The Apostle speaks of being brought out of darkness into His marvelous light and it is a marvelous light, indeed, to come to the blind and dead! Marvelous because it reveals the Truth of God with clearness. It reveals marvelous things in a marvelous way! If hills and mountains, if rocks and stones were suddenly to be full of eyes, it would be a strange thing in the earth, but not more marvelous than for you and for me by the illumination of the Holy Spirit to see *spiritual* things!

When you cannot make people see the Truth of God, do not grow angry with them, but cry, Lord, put Your Spirit within *them*! When you get into a puzzle over the Word of the Lord, do not give up in despair, but believingly cry, Lord, put Your Spirit within me! Here lies the only true light of the soul. Depend upon it, all that you see by any light except the Spirit of God, you do not see *spiritually*. If you only see intellectually, or rationally, you do not see to salvation. Unless intellect and reason have received the heavenly Light of God, you may see, and yet not seeeven as Israel of old. Indeed, your boasted clear sight may aggravate your ruin, like that of the Pharisees, of whom our Lord said, But now you say, We see, therefore your sin remains. O Lord, grant us the Spirit within, for our souls illumination!

The Spirit also works *conviction*. Conviction is more forcible than illumination. It is the setting of a Truth before the eye of the soul, so as to make it powerful upon the conscience. I speak to many here who know what conviction means. Still, I will explain it from my own experience. I knew what sin meant by my reading, but yet I never knew sin in its heinousness and horror till I found myself bitten by it as by a fiery serpent, and felt its poison boiling in my veins! When the Holy Spirit made sin to appear sin, then was I overwhelmed with the sight and I would gladly have fled from myself to escape the intolerable vision. A naked sin stripped of all excuse and set in the light of the Truth of God is a worse sight than to see the devil himself! When I saw sin as an offense against a just and holy God, committed by such a proud and yet insignificant creature as myself, then was I alarmed.

Sirs, did you ever see and feel yourselves to be sinners? Oh, yes, you say, we are sinners. O Sirs, do you mean it? Do you know what it means? Many of you are no more sinners in your own estimation than you are Hottentots. The beggar who exhibits a sham sore knows not disease if he did, he would have enough of it without pretences. To kneel down and say, Lord, have mercy upon us miserable sinners, and then to get up and feel yourself a very decent sort of person, worthy of commendation, is to mock Almighty God! It is by no means a common thing to get hold of a real sinner, one who is truly so in his own esteem. But it is as pleasant as it is rare, for you can bring to the real sinner the real Savior, and Jesus will welcome him! I do not wonder that Hart said

A sinner is a saved thing,
The Holy Spirit has made him so.

The point of contact between a sinner and Christ is sin. The Lord Jesus gave Himself for our *sins*. He never gave Himself for our righteousnesses. He comes to heal the sick and the point He looks to is our sickness. When a physician is called in, he has no patience with things apart from his calling. Tut, tut! he cries, I do not care about your furniture, nor the number of your cows, nor what income tax you pay, nor what politics you admire! I have come to see a sick man about his disease and if you will

not let me deal with it I will be gone.

When a sinners corruptions are loathsome to himself. When his guilt is foul in his own nostrils. When he fears the death that will come of it, *then* it is that he is really convicted by the Holy Spiritand no one ever knows sin as his own personal ruin till the Holy Spirit shows it to him! Conviction as to the Lord Jesus comes in the same way. We do not know Christ as our Savior till the Holy Spirit is put within us. Our Lord saysHe shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. And you never see the things of the Lord Jesus till the Holy Spirit shows them to you. To know Jesus Christ as your Savior, as one who died *for you* in particular, is a knowledge which only the Holy Spirit imparts! To apprehend present salvation as your own, personally, comes by your being convinced of it by the Spirit. Oh, to be convinced of righteousness and convinced of acceptance in the Beloved! This conviction comes only of Him that has called you, even of Him of whom the Lord says, I will put My Spirit within you.

Furthermore, the Holy Spirit comes into us for *purification*. I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments, and do them. When the Spirit comes, He infuses a new life, and that new life is a fountain of *holiness*! The new nature cannot sin because it is born of God and, it is a living and incorruptible seed. This life produces good fruit and only good fruit. The Holy Spirit is the life of holiness. At the same time, the coming of the Holy Spirit into the soul gives a mortal stab to the power of sin. The old man is not absolutely dead, but it is crucified with Christ. It is under sentence and before the eyes of the Law it is dead, but as a man nailed to a cross may linger long, yet he cannot live, so the power of evil dies hard, but die it must! Sin is an executed criminalthose nails which fasten it to the Cross will hold it fast till no breath remains in it. God the Holy Spirit gives the power of sin its death wound.

The old nature struggles in its dying agonies, but it is doomed and die it must. But you will never overcome sin by your own power, nor by any energy short of that of the Holy Spirit. Resolves may bind it, as Samson was bound with cords, but sin will snap the cords asunder. The Holy Spirit lays the axe at the root of sin and fall it must. The Holy Spirit within a man is the Spirit of Judgment, the Spirit of Burning. Do you know Him in that character? As the Spirit of Judgment, the Holy Spirit pronounces sentence on sin and it goes out with the brand of Cain upon it. He does moreHe delivers sin over to burning. He executes the death penalty on that which He has judged. How many of our sins have we had to burn alive! And it has cost us no small pain to do it. Sin must be got out of us by fire, if no gentler means will serveand the Spirit of God is a consuming fire. Truly, our God is a consuming fire. They paraphrase it, God out of Christ is a consuming fire, but that is *not* Scriptureit is, *our* God, our Covenant God, who is a consuming fire to refine us from sin! Has not the Lord said, I will purely purge away all your dross, and take away all your tin? This is what the Spirit does and it is, by no means, easy work for the flesh, which would spare many a flattering sin if it could.

The Holy Spirit bedews the soul with purity till He saturates it. Oh, to have a heart saturated with holy influences till it shall be as Gideons fleece, which held so much dew that Gideon could wring out a bowl full from it! Oh, that our whole nature were filled with the Spirit of Godthat we were sanctified wholly, body, soul, and spirit! Sanctification is the result of the Holy Spirit being put within us.

Next, the Holy Spirit acts in the heart as the Spirit of *preservation*. Where He dwells, men do not go back to perdition. He works in them a watchfulness against temptation day by day. He works in them to wrestle against sin. Rather than sin, a Believer would die 10,000 deaths. He works union to Christ in Believers, which is the source and guarantee of acceptable fruitfulness. He creates in the saints those holy things which glorify God, and bless the sons of men. All true fruit is the fruit of the Spirit. Every true prayer must be praying in the Holy Spirit. He helps our infirmities in prayer. Even the hearing of the Word of the Lord is of the Spirit, for John says, I was in the Spirit on the Lords Day, and heard behind me a great voice. Everything that comes of the man, or is kept alive in the man, is first infused and then sustained and perfected of the Spirit. It is the spirit that quickens; the flesh profits nothing. We never go an inch towards Heaven in any other power than that of the Holy Spirit. We do not even stand fast and remain steadfast except as we are upheld by the Holy Spirit.

The vineyard which the Lord has planted, He also preserves, as it is written, I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. Did I hear that young man say, I should like to become a Christian, but I fear I should not hold out? How am I to be preserved? A very proper inquiry for, He that endures to the end, the same shall be saved. Temporary Christians are not Christians! Only the Believer who continues to believe will enter Heaven. How, then, can we hold on in such a world as this? Here is the answer. I will put My Spirit within you. When a city has been captured in war, those who formerly possessed it seek to win it back again, but the king who captured it sends a garrison to live within the walls. And he says to the captain, Take care of this city that I have conquered and let not the enemy take it again. So the Holy Spirit is the garrison of God within our redeemed humanity and *He* will keep us to the end. May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. For preservation, then, we look to the Holy Spirit.

Lest I weary you, I will be very brief upon the next point. The Holy Spirit within us is for *guidance*. The Holy Spirit is given to lead us into all the Truth of God. Truth is like a vast grotto and the Holy Spirit brings torches and shows us all the splendor of the ceiling. And since the passages seem intricate, He knows the way, and He leads us into the deep things of God. He opens up to us one Truth after another by His light and by His guidance, and thus we are taught of the Lord. He is also our practical Guide to Heaven, helping and directing us on the upward journey. I wish Christian people oftener inquired of the Holy Spirit as to guidance in their daily life. Know you not that the Spirit of God dwells in you? You need not always be running to this friend and to that to get directionwait upon the Lord in silencesit still in quiet before the oracle of God. Use the judgment God has given you, but when that suffices not, resort to Him whom Mr. Bunyan calls, the Lord High Secretary, who lives within, who is infinitely wise, and who can guide you by making you to hear a voice behind you saying, This is the way, walk you in it. The Holy Spirit will guide you in life. He will guide you in death and He will guide you to Glory. He will guard you from modern error and from ancient error, too. He will guide you in a way that you know notand through the darkness He will lead you in a way you have not seenthese things will He do for you and not forsake you.

Oh, this precious text! I seem to have before me a great cabinet full of rich and rare jewels. May God the Holy Spirit, Himself, come and hand these out to you and may you be adorned with them all the days of your life!

Last of all, I will put My Spirit within you, that is, by way of *consolation*, for His choice name is, The Comforter. Our God would not have His children unhappy and, therefore, He Himself, in the third Person of the blessed Trinity, has undertaken the office of Comforter. Why does your face wear such mournful colors? God can comfort you! You that are under the burden of sin, it is true no man can help you into peace, but the Holy Spirit can! O God, to every seeker here who has failed to find rest, grant Your Holy Spirit! Put Your Spirit within him and he will rest in Jesus! And you dear people of God who are worried, remember that worry and the Holy Spirit are very contradictory one to another! I will put My Spirit within you means that you shall become gentle, peaceful, resigned and acquiescent in the Divine will. Then you will have faith in God that all is well!

That text with which I began my prayer this morning was brought home to my heart this week. Our dearly beloved friend, Adolph Saphir, passed away last Saturday and his wife died three or four days before him. When my dear Brother, Dr. Sinclair Patteson, went to see him, the beloved Saphir said to him, God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. Nobody would have quoted that passage but Saphir, the Bible student, the lover of the Word, the lover of the God of Israel. God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. His dear wife is gone and he, himself is ill, but, God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. This is a deep well of overflowing comfort, if you understand it well. Gods Providence is light as well as His promiseand the Holy Spirit makes us know this. Gods Word and will and way are all light to His people and in Him is no darkness at all for them. God Himself is purely and only light.

What if there is darkness in me? There is no darkness in Him and His Spirit causes me to fly to Him! What if there is darkness in my family? There is no darkness in my Covenant God and His Spirit makes me rest in Him! What if there is darkness in my body by reason of my failing strength? There is no failing in Him and there is no darkness in HimHis Spirit assures me of this! David saysGod my exceeding joyand such He is to us. Yes, my own God is He! Can you say, My God, my God? Do you need anything more? Can you conceive of anything beyond your God? Omnipotent to work all forever! Infinite to give! Faithful to remember! He is all that is good! Light onlyin Him is no darkness at all. I have all light, yes, all things, when I have my God! The Holy Spirit makes us apprehend this when He is put within us. Holy Comforter, abide with us, for then we enjoy the Light of Heaven! Then are we always peaceful and even joyful, for we walk in the unclouded Light of God. In Him our happiness sometimes rises into great waves of delight, as if it leaped up to Glory. The Lord make this text your ownI will put My Spirit within you. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONEzekiel 36:16-38. **HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK916, 489, 468.** Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #251 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

THE NECESSITY OF THE SPIRITS WORK
NO. 251

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MAY 8, 1859, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.
And I will put My Spirit within you.
Ezekiel 36:27.

THE miracles of Christ are remarkable for one fact, namely that they are none of them unnecessary. The pretended miracles of Mahomet and of the Church of Rome, even if they had been miracles, would have been pieces of folly. Suppose that Saint Denis had walked with his head in his hand after it had been cut offwhat practical purpose would have been subserved thereby? He would certainly have been quite as well in his grave, for any practical good he would have conferred on men. The miracles of Christ were never unnecessary. They are not freaks of power. They are displays of power, it is true, but they all of them have a practical end. The same thing may be said of the promises of God.

We have not one promise in the Scripture which may be regarded as a mere freak of grace. As every miracle was necessary, absolutely necessary, so is every promise that is given in the Word of God. And hence from the text that is before us, may I draw and I think very conclusively the argument, that if God in His Covenant made with His people has promised to put His Spirit within them, it must be absolutely necessary that this promise should have been made and it must be absolutely necessary, also, to our salvation that everyone of us should receive the Spirit of God.

This shall be the subject of this mornings discourse. I shall not hope to make it very interesting, except to those who are anxiously longing to know the way of salvation. We start, then, by laying down this propositionthat the work of the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary to us, if we would be saved.

1. In endeavoring to prove this, I would first of all make the remark that this is very manifest if we remember what man is by nature. Some say that man may of himself attain unto salvationthat if he hears the Word, it is in his power to receive it, to believe it and to have a saving change worked in him by it. To this we replyyou do not know what man is by natureotherwise you would never have ventured upon such an assertion. Holy Scripture tells us that man by nature is dead in trespasses and sins. It does not say that he is sick, that he is faint, that he has grown callous and hardened and seared, but it says he is absolutely dead. Whatever that term death means in connection with the body, that it also means in connection with mans soulviewing it in its relation to spiritual things. When the body is dead it is powerless. It is unable to do anything for itself. And when the soul of man is dead, in a spiritual sense, it must be, if there is any meaning in the figure, utterly and entirely powerless and unable to do anything of itself or for itself.

When you shall see dead men raising themselves from their graves, when you shall see them unwinding their own sheets, opening their own coffin lids and walking down our streets alive and animate, as the result of their own powerthen perhaps you may believe that souls that are dead in sin may turn to God, may recreate their own natures and may make themselves heirs of Heaven, though before they were heirs of wrath. But mark, not till then. The drift of the Gospel is that man is dead in sin and that Divine life is Gods gift. And you must go contrary to the whole of that drift before you can suppose a man brought to know and love Christ, apart from the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit finds men as destitute of spiritual life as Ezekiels dry bones. He brings bone to bone and fits the skeleton together and then He comes from the four winds and breathes into the slain and they live and stand upon their feet, an exceeding great army, and worship God. But apart from that, apart from the vivifying influence of the Spirit of God, mens souls must lie in the valley of dry bones, dead and dead forever. But Scripture does not only tell us that man is dead in sin. It tells us something worse than this, namely, that he is utterly and entirely averse to everything that is good and right. The carnal mind is enmity against God. For it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be (Rom. 8:7). Turn all through Scripture and you find continually the will of man described as being contrary to the things of God.

What did Christ say in that text so often quoted by the Arminian to disprove the very doctrine which it clearly states? What did Christ say to those who imagined that men would come without Divine influence? He said, first, No man can come unto Me except the Father which has sent Me draw him. But He said something more strongYou will not come unto Me that you might have life. No man will come. Here lies the deadly mischief. Not only that he is powerless to do good, but that he is powerful enough to do that which is wrong and that his will is desperately set against everything that is right. Go, Arminian, and tell your hearers that they will come if they please, but know that your Redeemer looks you in the face and tells you that you are uttering a lie. Men will not come. They never will come of themselves. You cannot induce them to come. You cannot *force* them to come by all your thunders, nor can you *entice* them to come by all your invitations.

They will not come unto Christ, that they may have life. Until the Spirit draws them, come they neither will, nor can. Hence, then, from the fact that mans nature is hostile to the Divine Spirit, that he hates grace, that he despises the way in which grace is brought to him, that it is contrary to his own proud nature to stoop to receive salvation by the deeds of anotherhence it is necessary that the Spirit of God should operate to change the will, to correct the bias of the heart, to set man in a right track and then give him strength to run in it. Oh, if you read man and understand him, you cannot help being sound on the point of the necessity of the Holy Spirits work. It has been well remarked by a great writer, that he never knew a man who held any great theological error, who did not also hold a doctrine which diminished the depravity of man.

The Arminian says man is fallen, it is true, but then he has power of will left and that will is free. He can raise himself. He diminishes the desperate character of the Fall of man. On the other hand, the Antinomian says man cannot do anything, but that he is not at all responsible and is not bound to do itit is not his duty to believeit is not his duty to repent. Thus, you see, he *also* diminishes the sinfulness of man, and has not right views of the Fall. But once get the correct viewthat man is utterly fallen, powerless, guilty, defiled, lost, condemnedand you must be sound on all points of the great Gospel of Jesus Christ. Once believe man to be what Scripture says he isonce believe his heart to be depraved, his affections perverted, his understanding darkened, his will perverseand you must hold that if such a wretch as that is saved, it *must* be the work of the Spirit of God and of the Spirit of God alone!

2. I have another proof. Salvation must be the work of the Spirit in us, because the means used in salvation are of themselves inadequate for the accomplishment of the work. And what are the means of salvation? Why, first and foremost stands the *preaching* of the Word of God. More men are brought to Christ by preaching than by anything elsefor it is Gods chief and first instrument. This is the sword of the Spirit, quick and powerful, to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow. It pleases God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. But what is there in preaching, by which souls are saved, that looks as if it would be the means of saving souls? I could point you to many Churches and Chapels into which you might step and say, Here is a learned minister, indeed, a man who would instruct and enlighten the intellect. You sit down and you say, Well, if God means to work a great work, He will use a learned man like this.

But do you know any learned men that are made the means of bringing souls to Christ, to any great degree? Go round your Churches, if you please, and look at them and then answer the question. Do you know any great menmen great in learning and wisdomwho have become spiritual fathers in our Israel? Is it not a fact that stares us in the face that our fashionable preachers, our eloquent preachers, our learned preachers are just the most useless men in creation for the winning of souls to Christ? And where are souls born to God? Why, in the house around which the jeer and the scoff and the sneer of the world have long gathered. Sinners are converted under the man whose eloquence is rough and homely and who has nothing to commend him to his fellowswho has daily to fall on his knees and confess his own follyand when the world speaks worst of him, feels that he deserves it all, since he is nothing but an earthen vessel in which God is pleased to put His heavenly treasure.

I will dare to say it, that in every age of the world the most despised ministry has been the most useful. And I could find you at this day poor Primitive Methodist preachers who can scarce speak correct English, who have been the fathers of more souls and have brought to Christ more

than any one bishop on the bench. Why, the Lord has been pleased always to make it so, that He will clothe with power the weak and the foolish, but He will not clothe with power those who, if good were done, might be led to ascribe the excellence of the power to their learning, their eloquence, or their position. Like the Apostle Paul, it is every ministers business to glory in his infirmities.

The world says, Pshaw upon your oratory! It is rough and rude and eccentric. Yet, tis even so, but we are content, for God blesses it. Then so much the better that it has infirmities in it. For now it is plainly seen that it is not of man or by man, but the work of God and of God alone. It is said that once upon a time a man exceedingly curious desired to see the sword with which a mighty hero had fought some desperate battles. Casting his eye along the blade, he said, Well, I dont see much in this sword. No, said the hero, but you have not examined the arm that wields it. And so when men come to hear a successful minister, they are apt to say, I do not see anything in him. No, but you have not examined the eternal arm that reaps its harvest with this sword of the Spirit. If you had looked at the jawbone of the ass in Samsons hand, you would have said, What? Heaps on heaps with this! Nobring out some polished bladebring forth the Damascus steel! NO. God must have all the glory and, therefore, not with polished steel, but with the jawbone must Samson get the victory.

So with ministersGod has usually blessed the weakest to do the most good. Well, now, does it not follow from this that it must be the work of the Spirit? Because, if there is nothing in the instrument that can do it, is it not the work of the Spirit when the thing is accomplished? Under the ministry dead souls are quickened, sinners are made to repent, the vilest of sinners are made holy, men who came determined not to believe are compelled to believe. Now, who does this? If you say the ministry does it, then I say farewell to your reason, because there is nothing in the successful ministry which would warrant it. It must be that the Spirit works in man *through* the ministry or else such deeds would never be accomplished.

You might as well expect to raise the dead by whispering in their ears, as hope to save souls by preaching to them, if it were not for the agency of the Spirit. Melancthon went out to preach, you know, without the Spirit of the Lord and he thought he should convert all the people. But he found out at last that old Adam was too strong for young Melancthon and he had to go back and ask for the help of the Holy Spirit before he saw a soul saved. I say that the fact that the ministry is blessed proves, since there is nothing in the ministry, that salvation must be the work of a higher power.

Other means, however, are made use of to bless mens souls. For instance, the two ordinances of Baptism and the Lords Supper. They are both made a rich means of grace. But let me ask you, is there anything in Baptism that can possibly bless anybody? Can immersion in water have the slightest tendency to be blessed to the soul? And then with regard to the eating of bread and the drinking of wine at the Lords Supper, can it by any means be conceived by any rational man that there is anything in the mere piece of bread that we eat, or in the wine that we drink?

And yet, doubtless, the Grace of God does go with both ordinances for the confirming of the faith of those who receive them and even for the conversion of those who look upon the ceremony. There must be something, then, beyond the outward ceremony. There must, in fact, be the Spirit of God witnessing through the water, witnessing through the wine, witnessing through the bread, or otherwise none of these things could be means of grace to our souls. They could not edify. They could not help us to commune with Christ. They could not tend to the conviction of sinners, or to the establishment of saints. There must, then, from these facts, be a higher, unseen, mysterious influencethe influence of the Divine Spirit of God.

3. Let me again remind you, in the third place, that the absolute necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart may be clearly seen from this factthat all which has been done by God the Father and all that has been done by God the Son would be ineffectual to usunless the Spirit shall reveal these things to our souls. We believe, in the first place, that God the Father elects His people from before all worlds He chooses them to Himself. But let me ask youwhat effect does the doctrine of election have upon any man until the Spirit of God enters into him? How do I know whether God has chosen me from before the foundation of the world? How can I possibly know? Can I climb to Heaven and read the roll? Is it possible for me to force my way through the thick mists which hide eternity and open the seven seals of the Book and read my name recorded there? Ah, noelection is a dead letter both in my consciousness and in any effect which it can produce upon me, until the Spirit of God calls me out of darkness into marvelous light.

And then, through my *calling*, I see my election and, knowing myself to be called of God, I know myself to have been chosen of God from before the foundation of the world. It is a precious thingthat doctrine of electionto a child of God. But what makes it precious? Nothing but the influence of the Spirit. Until the Spirit opens the eyes to read, until the Spirit imparts the mystic secretno heart can know its election. No angel ever revealed to any man that he was chosen of Godbut the Spirit does it. He, by His Divine workings bears an infallible witness with our spirits that we are born of God. And then we are enabled to, read our title clear to mansions in the skies. Look, again, at the Everlasting Covenant. We know that there was a covenant made with the Lord Jesus Christ by His Father from before all worlds and that in this Covenant the persons of all His people were given to Him and were secured. But of what use, or of what avail is the Covenant to us, until the Holy Spirit brings the blessings of the Covenant to us? The Covenant is, as it were, a holy tree laden with fruit. If the Spirit does not shake that tree and make the fruit falluntil it comes to the level of our standinghow can we receive it?

Bring here any sinner and tell him there is a Covenant of Grace, what is his advantage from knowing this? Ah, he says, I may not be included in it. My name may not be recorded there. I may not be chosen in Christ. But let the Spirit of God dwell in his heart richly by faith and love which is in Christ Jesus and that man sees the Covenant, ordered in all things and sure, and he cries with David, It is all my salvation and all my desire. Take, again, the redemption of Christ. We know that Christ did stand in the place of all His people and that all those who shall appear in Heaven will appear there as an act of justice as well as of graceseeing that Christ was punished in their place and that it would have been unjust if God punished themseeing that He had punished Christ for them. We believe because Christ paid all their debts, they have a right to their freedom in Christthat Christ having covered them with His righteousness they are entitled to eternal life as much as if they had themselves been perfectly holy. But of what avail is this to me, until the Spirit takes of the things of Christ and shows them to me? What is Christs blood to any of you until you have received the Spirit of grace?

You have heard the minister preach about the blood of Christ a thousand times, but you passed by. It was nothing to you that Jesus should die. You know that He atoned for sins that were not His own. But you only regarded it as a tale, perhaps, even an idle tale. But when the Spirit of God led you to the Cross and opened your eyes and enabled you to see Christ crucified, ah, then there was something in the blood, indeed! When His hand dipped the hyssop in the blood and when it applied that blood to your spirit, then there was a joy and peace in believing such as you had never known before! But ah, my Hearer, Christs dying is nothing to you unless you have a living Spirit within you. Christ brings you no advantage, saving, personal and lastingunless the Spirit of God has baptized you in the fountain filled with His blood and washed you from head to foot.

I only mention these few, out of the many blessings of the Covenant, to prove that they are, none of them, of any use to us unless the Holy Spirit gives them to us. There hang the blessings on the Nailon the Nail, Christ Jesus. But we are short of stature. We cannot reach them. The Spirit of God takes them down and gives them to us and there they are. They are ours. It is like the manna in the skies, far out of mortal reach. But the Spirit of God opens the windows of Heaven, brings down the bread and puts it to our lips and enables us to eat. Christs blood and righteousness are like wine stored in the wine vat. But we cannot get there. The Holy Spirit dips our vessel into this precious wine and then we drink. But without the Spirit we must die and perish just as much, though the Father elect and the Son redeem, as though the Father never had elected and though the Son had never bought us with His blood. The Spirit is absolutely necessary. Without Him neither the works of the Father, nor of the Son, are of any use to us.

4. This brings us to another point. The experience of the true Christian is a reality. But it never can be known and felt without the Spirit of God. For what is the experience of the Christian? Let me just give a brief picture of some of its scenes. There is a person come into this hall this morningone of the most reputable men in London. He has never committed himself in any outward vice. He has never been dishonest. He is known as a staunch, upright tradesman. Now, to his astonishment, he is informed that he is a condemned, lost sinner and just as surely lost as the thief who died for his crimes upon the cross. Do you think that man will believe it? Suppose, however, that he does believe it, simply because he reads it in the Bible. Do you think that man will ever be made to feel it? I know you say, Impossible! Some of you, even now, perhaps, are saying, Well, I never should! Can you imagine that honorable, upright tradesman, saying, God be merciful to me, a *sinner*?standing side by side with the harlot and the swearer and feeling in his own heart as if he had been as guilty as they were and using just the same prayer and saying, Lord, save, or I perish?

You cannot conceive it, can you? It is contrary to nature that a man who has been so good as he should put himself down among the chief of sinners. Ah, but that will be done before he will be saved. He must feel that before he can enter Heaven. Now, I ask, who can bring him to such a leveling experience as that but the Spirit of God? You know very well proud nature will not stoop to it. We are all aristocrats in our own righteousness. We do not like to bend down and come among common sinners. If we *are* brought there, it must be the Spirit of God who casts us to the ground. Why, I know if anyone had told me that I should ever cry to God for mercy and confess that I had been the vilest of the vile, I should have laughed in their face. I should have said, Why I have not done anything particularly wrong. I have not hurt anybody. And yet I know this very day I can take my place upon the lowest form and if I can get inside Heaven I shall feel happy to sit among the chief of sinners and praise that Almighty love which has saved even *me* from my sins. Now, what works this humiliation of heart? Grace. It is contrary to nature for an honest and an upright man in the eyes of the world to feel himself a lost sinner. It must be the Holy Spirits work, or else it never will be done.

Well, after a man has been brought here, can you conceive that man at last conscience-stricken and led to believe that his past life deserves the wrath of God? His first thought would be, Well, now, I will live better than I ever have lived. He would say, Now, I will try and play the hermit and pinch myself here and there and deny myself and do penance. And in that way, by paying attention to the outward ceremonies of religion, together with a high moral character, I doubt not I shall blot out whatever slurs and stains there have been. Can you suppose *that* man brought at last to feel that, if ever he gets to Heaven, he will have to get there through the righteousness of Another? Through the righteousness of another? says he, I dont want to be rewarded for what another man doesnot I. If I go there, I will go there and take my chances. I will go there through what I do myself. Tell me something to do and I will do it. I will be proud to do it, however humiliating it may be, so that I may at last win the love and esteem of God.

Now, can you conceive such a man as *that* brought to feel that he can do *nothing*? That, good man as he thinks himselfhe cannot do anything whatever to merit Gods love and favor? And, if he goes to Heaven, he must go through what Christ did? Just the same as the drunkard must go there through the merits of Christ, so this moral man must enter into life, having nothing about him but Christs perfect righteousness and being washed in the blood of Jesus. We say that this is so contrary to human nature, so diametrically opposed to all the instincts of our poor fallen humanity, that nothing but the Spirit of God can ever bring a man to strip himself of all self-righteousness and of all creature strength and compel him to rest and lean simply and wholly upon Jesus Christ, the Savior.

These two experiences would be sufficient to prove the necessity of the Holy Spirit to make a man a Christian. Let me now describe a Christian as he is *after* his conversion. Trouble comes, storms of trouble and he looks the tempest in the face and says, I know that all things work together for my good. His children die, the partner of his bosom is carried to the grave. He says, The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord. His farm fails, his crop is blighted. His business prospects are cloudedall seem to go and he is left in povertyhe says, Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines. The labor of the olive shall fail and the fields shall yield no meat. the flocks shall be cut off from the fold and there shall be no herd in the stallsyet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

You see him next laid upon a sick bed, himself, and when he is there, he says, It is good for me that I have been afflicted, for before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept Your Word. You see him approaching at last the dark valley of the shadow of death and you hear him cry, Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. Your rod and Your staff they comfort me, and You Yourself are with me. Now, I ask you, what makes this man calm in the midst of all these varied trials and personal troubles, if it is not the Spirit of God? O, you that doubt the influence of the Spirit, produce the like without Him. Go and die as Christians die and live as they live and if you can show the same calm resignation, the same quiet joy and the same firm belief that adverse things shall, nevertheless, work together for good, then we may be, perhaps, at liberty to resign the point but not till then.

The high and noble experience of a Christian in times of trial and suffering proves that there must be the operation of the Spirit of God. But look at the Christian, too, in his joyous moments. He is rich. God has given him all his hearts desire on earth. Look at himhe says, I do not value these things at all, except as they are the gifts of God. I sit loose by them all and, notwithstanding this house and home and all these comforts, I am willing to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. It is true, I want nothing here on earth. But still I feel that to die would be gain to me, even though I left all these. He holds earth loosely. He does not grasp it with a tight hand, but looks upon it all as dusta thing which is to pass away. He takes but little pleasure therein, saying

Ive no abiding city here,

I seek a city out of sight.
Mark that man. He has plenty of room for pleasures in this world, but he drinks out of a higher cistern. His pleasure springs from things unseen. His happiest moments are when he can shut all these good things out and when he can come to God as a poor guilty sinner and come to Christ and enter into fellowship with Him and rise into nearness of access and confidence and boldly approach to the throne of heavenly grace.

Now, what is it that keeps a man who has all these mercies, from setting his heart upon the earth? This is a wonder, indeed, that a man who has gold and silver and flocks and herds, should not make these his god, but that he should still say

Theres nothing round this spacious earth That suits my large desire.
To boundless joy and solid mirth
My nobler thoughts aspire.

These are not his treasurehis treasure is in Heaven and in Heaven only. What can do this? No mere moral virtue. No doctrine of the stoic ever brought a man to such a pass as that. No, it must be the work of the Spirit and the work of the Spirit alone, that can lead a man to live in Heaven, while there is a temptation to him to live on earth.

I do not wonder that a poor man looks forward to Heaven. He has nothing to look upon on earth. When there is a thorn in the nest, I do not wonder that the lark flies up, for there is no rest for him below. When you are beaten and chafed by trouble, no wonder you say

Jerusalem! My happy home!
Name ever dear to me.
When shall my labors have an end,
In joy and peace and you?

But the greatest wonder is, if you line the Christians nest ever so softly, if you give him all the mercies of this life, you still cannot keep him from saying

To Jesus, the crown of my hope,
My soul is in haste to be gone.
Oh bear me, you cherubim, up,
And waft me away to His Throne.

5. And now, last of all, the acts, the acceptable acts, of the Christians life, cannot be performed without the Spirit. And hence, again, the necessity for the Spirit of God. The first act of the Christians life is repentance. Have you ever tried to repent? If so, if you tried without the Spirit of God you know that to urge a man to repent without the promise of the Spirit to help him, is to urge him to do an impossibility. A rock might as soon weep and a desert might as soon blossom, as a sinner repent of his own accord. If God should offer Heaven to man, simply upon the terms of repentance of sin, Heaven would be as impossible as it is by good works. For a man can no more repent of himself, than he can perfectly keep Gods Law. Repentance involves the very principle of perfect obedience to the Law of

God. It seems to me that in repentance there is the whole law solidified and condensed. And if a man can repent of himself then there is no need of a Saviorhe might as well go to Heaven up the steep sides of Sinai at once.

Faith is the next act in the Divine life. Perhaps you think faith very easy. But if you are ever brought to feel the burden of sin you would not find it quite so light a labor. If you are ever brought into deep mire, where there is no standing, it is not so easy to put your feet on a rock, when the rock does not seem to be there. I find faith just the easiest thing in the world when there is nothing to believe. But when I have room and exercise for my faith, then I do not find I have so much strength to accomplish it. Talking one day with a countryman, he used this figureIn the middle of winter I sometimes think how well I could mow. And in early spring I think, oh, how I would like to reap. I feel ready for it. But when mowing time comes and when reaping time comes, I find I have not strength to spare. So when you have no troubles, couldnt you mow them down at once? When you have no work to do, couldnt you do it? But when work and trouble come you find how difficult it is.

Many Christians are like the stag, who talked to itself, and said, Why should I run away from the dogs? Look what a fine pair of horns Ive got and look what heels Ive got, too. I might do these hounds some mischief. Why not let me stand and show them what I can do with my antlers? I can keep off any quantity of dogs. No sooner did the dogs bark, than off the stag went. So with us. Let sin arise, we say, we will soon rip it up and destroy it. Let trouble come, we will soon get over it. But when sin and trouble come, we then find what our weakness is. Then we have to cry for the help of the Spirit. And through Him we can do all things, though without Him we can do nothing at all. In all the acts of the Christians life, whether it is the act of consecrating ones self to Christ, or the act of daily prayer, or the act of constant submission, or preaching the Gospel, or ministering to the necessities of the poor, or comforting the desponding in all these the Christian finds his weakness and his powerlessness unless he is clothed about with the Spirit of God.

Why, I have been to see the sick at times and I have thought how I would like to comfort them. And I could not get a word out that was worth their hearing, or worth my saying. And my soul has been in agony to be the means of comforting the poor, sick, desponding Brother. But I could do nothing and I came out of the chamber and half wished I had never been to see a sick person in my life. I had so learned my own folly. So has it been full often in preaching. You get a sermon up, study it, and come and make the greatest mess of it that can possibly be. Then you say, I wish I had never preached at all.

All this is to show us, that neither in comforting nor in preaching can one do anything right, unless the Spirit works in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure. Everything, moreover, that we do without the Spirit is unacceptable to God. And whatever we do under His influence, however we may despise it, is not despised of God, for He never despises His own work and the Spirit never can look upon what He works in us with any other view than that of complacency and delight. If the Spirit helps me to groan, then God must accept the groaner. If you could pray the best prayer in the world without the Spirit, God would have nothing to do with it. But if your prayer is broken and lame and limpingif the Spirit made itGod will look upon it and say, as He did upon the works of creation, It is very good. And He will accept it.

And now let me conclude by asking this question. My Hearer, have you the Spirit of God in you? You have some religion, most of you, I dare say. Well, of what kind is it? Is it a homemade article? Did you make yourself what you are? Then, if so, you are a lost man up to this moment. If, my Hearer, you have gone no further than you have walked yourself, you are not on the road to Heaven yet. You have got your face turned the wrong way. If you have received something which neither flesh nor blood could reveal to you. If you have been led to do the very things which you once hated and to love that thing which you once despised and to despise that on which your heart and your pride were once setthen, Soul, if this is the Spirits work, rejoice! For where He has begun the good work He will carry it on.

And you may know whether it is the Spirits work by thishave you been led to Christ and away from self? Have you been led away from all feelings, from all doings, from all willings, from all praying as the ground of your trust and your hope and have you been brought naked to rely upon the finished work of Christ? If so, this is more than human nature ever taught any man. This is a height to which human nature never climbed. The Spirit of God has done that and He will never leave what He has once begun. You shall go from strength to strength and you shall stand among the blood-washed throng, at last, complete in Christ and accepted in the Beloved.

But if you have not the Spirit of Christ, you are none of His. May the Spirit lead you to your chamber to weep, to repent and to look to Christ and may you now have a Divine life implanted, which neither time nor eternity shall be able to destroy. God, hear this prayer and send us away with a blessing, for Jesus sake. Amen.

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THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE COVENANT
NO. 3048

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 11, 1907.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON A LORDS-DAY MORNING IN 1856.
And I will put My Spirit within you.
Ezekiel 36:27.
THE Holy Spirit is the third Person in the Covenant. We have considered God in the Covenant and Christ in the Covenant [See Sermons #93 and 103, Volume 2GOD IN THE COVENANT and CHRIST IN THE COVENANTRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] and now, this morning,

we have to consider the Holy Spirit in the Covenant. For, remember, it is necessary that the Triune God should work out the salvation of the Lords people if they are to be saved at all. And it was absolutely requisite that when the Covenant was made, all that was necessary should be put into it and, among the rest, the Holy Spirit, without whom all things done even by the Father and by Jesus Christ would be ineffectual, for He is needed as much as the Savior of men, or the Father of spirits. In this age, when the Holy Spirit is too much forgotten, and but little honor is accorded to His sacred Person, I feel that there is a deep responsibility upon me to endeavor to magnify His great and holy name. I almost tremble, this morning, in entering on so profound a subject, for which I feel myself so insufficient. But, nevertheless, relying on the aid, the guidance and the witness of the Holy Spirit, Himself, I venture upon an exposition of this text, I will put My Spirit within you.

The Holy Spirit is given, in the Covenant, to all the children of God and received by each in due course. And yet upon our Lord Jesus Christ did the Spirit first descend and alighted upon Him as our Covenant Head, like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aarons beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments. The Father has given the Holy Spirit without measure unto His Sonand from Him, in measure, though still in abundance, do all the brethren who dwell together in unity (or union with Christ) partake of the Spirit. This holy anointing flows down from Jesus, the Anointed One, to every part of His mystical body, to every individual member of His Church. The Lords declaration concerning Christ was, I have put My Spirit upon HIM. And He said, The Spirit of the Lord is upon ME, because He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted. The Spirit was first poured upon Christ and from Him descends to all those who are in union with His adorable Person. Let us bless the name of Christ if we are united to Himand let us look up to our Covenant Head, expecting that from Him will flow down the heavenly unction which shall anoint our souls!

My text is one of the unconditional promises of Scripture. There are many conditional promises in the Word of God given to certain characters, although even these promises are in some sense unconditional, since the very condition of the promise is by some other promise secured as a giftbut this one has no condition whatever. It does not say, I will put My Spirit within them if they ask for Him. It says plainly, without any reservation or stipulation, I will put My Spirit within them. The reason is obvious. Until the Spirit is put within us we cannot feel our need of the Savior, neither can we ask for or seek Him and, therefore, it is necessary that there should be an absolutely unconditional promise made to all the elect children of Godthat they should have given to them the waiting Grace, the desiring Grace, the seeking Grace, the believing Grace which shall make them pant and hunger and thirst after Jesus! To everyone who is like Christchosen of God and preciousto every redeemed soul, however sunken in sin, however lost and ruined by the Fall, however much he may hate God and despise his Redeemer, this promise still holds good, I will put My Spirit within you and, in due course, every one of them shall have that Spirit who shall quicken them from the dead, lead them to seek pardon, induce them to trust in Christ and adopt them into the living family of God!

The promise is also concerning an internal blessing to be bestowedI will put My Spirit *within* you. Remember, we have the Spirit of God in His written Word and with every faithful minister of the GospeI the Spirit is likewise vouchsafed to us in the ordinances of Christs Church. God is perpetually giving the Spirit to us by these means. But it is in vain for us to hear of the Spirit, to talk of Him, or to believe in Him unless we have a realization of His power *within* us! Here, therefore, is the promise of such an internal blessingI will put My Spirit within you.

We come now to consider this promise in all its comprehensiveness. May the Holy Spirit Himself assist us in so doing! We shall take the various works of the Holy Spirit, one by one, and shall remember that in all the works which He performs, the Spirit is put in the Covenant to be possessed by every Believer.

I. In the first place we are told by Christ, IT IS THE SPIRIT THAT QUICKENS.
Until He is pleased to breathe upon the soul, it is dead to any spiritual life. It is not until the Spirit, like some heavenly wind, breathes upon the dry bones and puts life into them, that they can ever live. You may take a corpse and dress it in all the garments of external decency. You may wash it with the water of moralityyes, you may bedeck it with the crown of profession and put upon its brow a tiara of beauty. You may paint its cheeks until you make it like life itself. But remember, unless the Spirit is there, corruption will, before long, seize on the body. So, Beloved, it is the Spirit who is the Quickeneryou would have been as dead in trespasses and sins now as ever you were if it had not been for the Holy Spirit who made you alive! You were lying, not simply cast out in the open field, but worse than thatyou were the very prey of mortality! Corruption was your father, the worm was your mother and your sisteryou were noxious in the nostrils of the Almighty. It was thus that the Savior beheld you in all your loathsomeness and said to you, Live. In that moment you were begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Life entered into you at His biddingthen it was that the Spirit quickened you! The words of Jesus, so He told His disciples, They are Spirit, and they are life. You were made alive entirely through the might of the quickening Spirit ***The Spirit, like some heavenly wind***
Blows on the sons of flesh
Creates a newa heavenly mind
And forms the man afresh.
If, then, you feel at any time death working in you, as doubtless you will, withering the bloom of your piety, chilling the fervor of your devotions and quenching the ardor of your faith, remember that *He who first quickened you must keep you alive.* The Spirit of God is the sap that flowed into your poor, dry branch because you were grafted into Christ. And as by that sap you were first made green with life, so it is by that sap, alone, you can ever bring forth fruit unto God. By the Spirit you drew your first breath when you cried out for mercyand from the same Spirit you must draw the breath to praise that mercy in hymns and anthems of joy! Having begun in the Spirit, you must be made perfect in the Spirit. The flesh profits nothing. The works of the Law will not help you. The thoughts and devices of your own hearts are of no avail. You would be cut off from Christ, you would be more depraved than you were before your conversion, you would be more corrupt than you were previous to your being regeneratedtwice dead, plucked up by the rootsif God the Holy Spirit were to withdraw from you! You must live in His life, trust in His power to sustain you and seek of Him fresh supplies when the tide of your spiritual life is running low.
II. WE NEED THE HOLY SPIRIT AS AN ASSISTANT SPIRIT IN ALL THE DUTIES WE HAVE TO PERFORM.
The most common Christian duty is that of *prayer,* for the meanest child of God must be a praying child. Remember, then, that it is written, The Spirit also helps our infirmities, for we know not what to pray for as we ought. The Spirit of God is in the Covenant as the Great Aid to us in all our petitions to the Throne of Grace. Child of God, you know not what to prayrely, then, on the Spirit as the Inspirer of prayer who will tell you how to pray! Sometimes you know not how to express what you desirerely upon the Spirit, then, as the One who can touch your lips with the live coal from off the altar, whereby you shall be able to pour out your fervent wishes before the Throne of God. Sometimes even when you have life and power within you, you cannot express your inward emotionsthen rely upon that Spirit to interpret your feelings, for He makes intercession for us with groans which cannot be uttered. When, like Jacob, you are wrestling with the Angel and are nearly thrown down, ask the Holy Spirit to nerve your arms. The Holy Spirit is the chariot wheel of prayer. Prayer may be the chariot, the desire may draw it forth, but the Spirit is the very wheel whereby it moves. He propels the desire and causes the chariot to roll swiftly on and to bear to Heaven the supplication of the saints when the desire of the heart is according to the will of God.
Another duty to which some of the children of God are called is that of *preaching.* And here, too, we must have the Holy Spirit to enable us. Those whom God calls to preach the Gospel are assisted with might from on high. He has said, Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. It is a solemn thing to enter upon the work of the ministry. I will just make an observation here for in this place there are young men who are striving to enter into the ministry before they scarcely know the alphabet of the Gospel. They set themselves up as preachers of Gods Word when the first thing they ought to do is to join the infant class in a school and learn to read properly. I know there are some to whom God has given the desire to seek the glory of His name and the welfare of souls and who humbly wait till He has opened the way. God bless them and speed them! Butwould you believe it?a young man was baptized and received into the Church one Sundayand he positively went off to a College on the Monday or Tuesday to ask if they would receive him! I asked him whether he had ever preached before, or addressed half-adozen Sunday scholars. He said, No. But what surprised me most was that he said he was called to the work before he was converted! It was a call from the devil, I verily believenot a call from God in the least degree! Take heed that you touch not Gods Ark with unholy fingers! You may all preach if you can, but take care that you do not set yourselves up in the ministry without having a solemn conviction that the Spirit from on high has set you apartfor if you do, the blood of souls will be found on your skirts! Too many have rushed into the Holy Place uncalled of God who, if they could have rushed out of it on their dying beds would have had eternal cause for gratitude! But they ran presumptuously, then preached unsent and, therefore, unblessed! And when dying, they felt a greater condemnation from the fact that they had taken on themselves an office to which God had never appointed them! Beware of doing that! But if God has called you, however little talent you may have, fear not anyones frown or rebuke. If you have a solemn conviction in your souls that God has really ordained you to the work of the ministry and if you have obtained a seal to your commission in the conversion of even one soul, let not death or Hell stop yougo straight on and never think you must have certain endowments to make a successful preacher! The only endowment necessary for success in the ministry is the endowment of the Holy Spirit.

When preaching in the presence of a number of ministers last Friday, I told the Brothers, when one of them asked how it was God had been pleased to bless me so much in this place, There is not one of you whom God could not bless ten times as much if you had ten times as much of the Spirit. For it is not any ability of the *man*it is not any human qualificationit is simply the influence of Gods Spirit that is necessary! And I have been delighted to find myself abused as ignorant, unlearned and void of eloquenceall which I knew long before, but so much the betterfor then all the glory belongs to God! Let men say what they please, I will always confess to the truth of it. I *am* a fool! I have become a fool in glorying, if you please. I will take any opprobrious title that worldlings like to put upon me, but they cannot deny the fact that God blesses my ministry, that harlots have been saved, that drunks have been reclaimed, that some of the most abandoned characters have been changed and that God has worked such a work in their midst as they never saw before in their lives! Therefore, give all the Glory to His holy name! Cast as much reproach as you like on me, you worldlingsthe more honor shall there be to God who works as He pleases, and with what instrument He chooses, irrespective of man!

Again, dearly-Beloved, whatever is your work, *whatever God has ordained you to do in this world, you are equally certain to have the assistance of the Holy Spirit in it.* If it is the teaching of an infant class in the Sunday school, do not think you cannot have the Holy Spirit! His succor shall be granted as freely to you as to the man who addresses a large assembly. Are you sitting down by the side of some poor dying woman? Believe that the Holy Spirit will come to you there as much as if you were administering the sacred elements of the Lords Supper. Let your strength for the lowliest work as much as for the loftiest be sought from God! Spiritual plowman, sharpen your plowshare with the Spirit! Spiritual sower, dip your seed in the Spirit so it shall germinateand ask the Spirit to give you Grace to scatter it that it may fall into the right furrows! Spiritual warrior, whet your sword with the Spirit and ask the Spirit, whose Word is a two-edged sword, to strengthen your arm to wield it!

III. The next point we refer to shall be that THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GIVEN TO THE CHILDREN OF GOD AS A SPIRIT OF REVELATION AND OF INSTRUCTION.

He brings us out of darkness into marvelous light. By nature we are ignorant, extremely so, but the Holy Spirit teaches the family of God and makes them wise. You have an unction from the Holy One, said the Apostle John, and you know all things. Student in the School of Christ, would you be wise? Ask not the theologian to expound to you his system of divinity, but, sitting down meekly at the feet of Jesus, ask that His Spirit may instruct you. For I tell you, student, though you should read the Bible many a year and continually turn over its pages, you would not learn anything of its hidden mysteries without the Spirit. But perhaps, in a solitary moment of your study, when suddenly enlightened by the Spirit, you may learn a Truth of God as swiftly as you see the lightning flash. Young people, are you laboring to understand the Doctrine of Election? It is the Holy Spirit alone who can reveal it to your heart and make you comprehend it. Are you tugging and toiling at the Doctrine of Human Depravity? The Holy Spirit must reveal to you the depth of wickedness of the human heart. Are you wanting to know the secret of the life of the Believer as he lives by the faith of the Son of God and the mysterious fellowship with the Lord he enjoys? It will always be a mystery to you unless the Holy Spirit shall unfold it to your heart. Whenever you read the Bible, cry to the Spirit, Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Your Law. The Spirit gives eye-salve to the blind and if your eyes are not now open, seek the eye-salve and so you shall seeyes, and see so clearly that he who has only learned in mans school, shall ask, How knows this man letters, having never learned?

Those who are taught of the Spirit often surpass those who are taught of man. I have met with an entirely uninstructed clod-hopper in the country who never went to school for one hour in his lifewho yet knew more about the Holy Scriptures than many a clergyman trained at the University! I have been told that it is a common practice for men in Wales, while they are at work breaking stones on the road, to discuss difficult points in theology which many a Divine cannot master! How? Because they humbly read the Scriptures, trusting only to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, believing that He will lead them into all Truthand He is pleased so to do. All other instruction is very well. Solomon says that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good. We should all seek to know as much as can be known, but let us remember that in the work of salvation real knowledge must be obtained by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. And if we would learn in the heart and not merely in the head, we must be taught entirely by the Holy Spirit. What you learn from man, you can unlearnbut what you learn of the Spirit is fixed indelibly in your heart and conscienceand not even Satan himself can steal it from you. Go, you ignorant ones, who often stagger at the Truths of Revelationgo and ask the Spirit, for He is the Guide of benighted souls! Yes, and the Guide of His own enlightened people, too, for without His aid, even when they have been once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, they would not understand all Truths of God unless He led them into it.

IV. I desire further to mention that GOD WILL GIVE THE SPIRIT TO US AS A SPIRIT OF APPLICATION.

Thus it was that Jesus said to His disciples, He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. [See Sermons #465,

Volume 8THE HOLY SPIRIT GLORIFYING CHRIST; #2213, Volume 37HONEY IN THE MOUTH! Mr. Spurgeons *last* sermon to the Members and Associates of the Pastors College Evangelical Association, on April 24th, 1891 and #2382, Volume 40THE SPIRITS CHIEF OFFICE

Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] To make

the matter still more plain, our Lord added, All things that the Father has are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you. Let me remind you how frequently Jesus impressed on His disciples the fact that He spoke to them the words of His FatherMy Doctrine, said He, is not Mine, but His that sent Me. And again, The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwells in Me, He does the works. As Christ thus made known the will of God the Father to His people, so the Holy Spirit makes known to us the words of Christ. I could almost affirm that Christs words would be of no use to us unless they were applied to us by the Holy Spirit! Beloved, we need the application to assure our hearts that they are our own, that they are intended for us and that we have an interest in their blessedness! And we need the unction of the Spirit to make them bedew our hearts and refresh our souls.

Did you ever have a promise applied to your heart? Do you understand what is meant by *application* as the exclusive work of the Spirit? It is as Paul says the Gospel came to the Thessalonians, not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance. Sometimes it comes all of a suddenyour heart may have been the scene of a thousand distracting thoughts, billow dashing against billow till the tempest rose beyond your control. But soon some text of Scripture, like a mighty fiat from the lips of Jesus, has stilled your troubled breast and immediately there has been a great calmand you have wondered from where it came. The sweet sentence has rung like music in your ears. Like a wafer made of honey it has moistened your tongue. Like a charm it has quelled your anxieties while it has dwelt uppermost in your thoughts all dayreining in all your lawless passions and restless strivings. Perhaps it has continued in your mind for weeks! Wherever you went, whatever you did, you could not dislodge it nor did you wish to do so, so sweet, so savory was it to your soul. Have you not thought of such a text as that as the best in the Bible, the most precious in all the Scriptures? That was because it was so graciously applied to you!

Oh, how I love applied promises! I may read a thousand promises as they stand recorded on the pages of this Sacred Volume and yet get nothing from them. My heart would not burn within me for all the richness of the storebut one promise brought home to my soul by the Spirits application has such marrow and fatness in it that it would be food enough for forty days for many of the Lords Elijahs! How sweet it is, in the times of deep affliction, to have this promise applied to the heart 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! Perhaps you say, That is all enthusiasm. Of course it appears so to you, if, as natural men you discern not the things of the Spirit! But we are talking about *spiritual things to spiritual men* and to them it is no mere enthusiasmit is often a matter of life or death. I have known numerous cases where almost the only plank on which the poor troubled saint was able to float was just one text of which, somehow or other, he had got so tight a grasp that nothing could take it away from him! Nor is it only His Word which needs to be applied to us. He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you, may be referred, likewise, to our Saviors precious blood. We sometimes sing

There is a Fountain filled with blood

and we talk of bathing in it. Now faith does not apply the blood to the soulthat is the work of the Spirit. True, I seek it by faith, but it is the Spirit who washes me in the fountain opened...for sin and for uncleanness. It is the Spirit who receives of the things of Christ and shows them to me. You would never have a drop of blood sprinkled on your heart unless it was sprinkled by the hand of the Spirit. So, too, the robe of Christs righteousness is entirely fitted on us by Him. We are not invited to appropriate the obedience of Christ to ourselvesbut the Spirit brings all

to us which Christ has made *for* us. Ask, then, of the Spirit, that you may have the Word applied, the blood applied, pardon applied and Grace appliedand you shall not ask in vainfor Jehovah has said, I will put My Spirit within you.

V. But now we have to mark another very important point. WE MUST RECEIVE THE SPIRIT AS A SANCTIFYING SPIRIT.

Perhaps this is one of the greatest works of the Holy Spirit sanctifying the soul. It is a great work to purge the soul from sin. It is greater than if one should wash a leopard till all his spots were obliterated, or an Ethiopian till his sable skin became white, for our sins are more than skin-deepthey have entered into our very nature! Should we be outwardly washed white this morning, we would be black and polluted before tomorrow! And if all the spots were taken away today, they would grow again tomorrow, for we are black all through! You may scrub the flesh, but it is black to the lastour sinfulness is a leprosy that lies deep within. But the Holy Spirit sanctifies the soul. He enters the heart, beginning the work of sanctification by conversion. He keeps possession of the heart and preserves sanctification by perpetually pouring in fresh oil of Grace till at last He will perfect sanctification by making us pure and spotless, fit to dwell with the blest inhabitants of Glory!

The way the Spirit sanctifies is thisfirst He reveals to the soul the evil of sin and makes the soul hate it. He shows it to be a deadly evil, full of poisonand when the soul begins to hate it, the next thing the Spirit does is to show it that the blood of Christ takes all the guilt away and, from that very fact, to lead it to hate sin even more than it did when it first knew its blackness. The Spirit takes it to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel. And there He tolls the death-knell of sin as He points to the blood of Christ and says, He shed this for you, that He might purchase you unto Himself to be one of His peculiar people, zealous of good works. Afterwards, the Holy Spirit may, at times, allow sin to break out in the heart of the child of God that it may be more strongly repressed by greater watchfulness in the future. And when the heir of Heaven indulges in sin, the Holy Spirit sends a sanctifying chastisement upon the soul until the heart, being broken with grief by the blueness of the wound, evil is cleansed away and Conscience, feeling uneasy, sends the heart to Christ who removes the chastisement and takes away the guilt!

Again, remember Believer, *all your holiness is the work of the Holy Spirit.* You have not a Grace which the Spirit did not give you! You have not a solitary virtue which He did not work in you. You have no goodness which has not been given to you by the Spirit. Therefore, never boast of your virtues or of your Graces. Have you now a sweet temper, whereas you once were passionate? Boast not of ityou will be angry if the Spirit leaves you. Are you now pure, whereas you were once unclean? Boast not of your purity, the seed of which was brought from Heavenit never grew within your heart by natureit is Gods gift. Is unbelief prevailing against you? Do your lusts, your evil passions and your corrupt desires seem likely to master you? Then I will not say, Up, and at em! but I will sayCry mightily unto God that you may be filled with the Holy Spirit so shall you conquer at last and become more than conqueror over all your sinsseeing that the Lord has engaged to put His Spirit within you.

VI. When I have spoken of two more points, I shall conclude. THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS PROMISED TO THE HEIRS OF HEAVEN AS A DIRECTING SPIRIT to guide them in the path of Providence.

If you are ever in a position in which you know not what road to take, remember that your strength is to sit still, and your wisdom is to wait for the directing voice of the Spirit saying to you, This is the way, walk you in it. I trust I have proved this myself and I am sure every child of God who has been placed in difficulties must have felt, at times, the reality and blessedness of this guidance. And have you never prayed to Him to direct you? If you have, did you ever find that you went wrong afterwards? I do not mean the sort of prayers that they present who ask counsel, but not of the Lordwho walk to go down into Egyptto strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and then ask God to bless them in a way that He never sanctioned. No, you must start fairly by renouncing every other trust. It is only thus that you can make proof of His promise, Commit your way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. Take with you, then, child of God, an open confession. Say, Lord, I desire, like a sheet of water, to be moved by the breath of the Spirit. Here I lie, passive in Your hands. Gladly would I know no will but Yours. Show me Your will, O Lord! Teach me what to do and what to refrain from doing.

To some of you this may seem all fanaticism. You believe not that God the Holy Spirit ever guides men in the way they should take. So you may suppose if you have never experienced His guidance. We have heard that when one of our English travelers in Africa told the inhabitants of the intense cold that sometimes prevailed in his country, by which water became so hard that people could skate and walk upon it, the king threatened to put him to death if he told anymore lies, for he had never felt or seen such things. And what one has never seen or felt is certainly fit subject for doubt and contradiction. But with regard to the Lords people who tell you that they are led by the Spirit, I advise you to give heed to their sayings and seek to make the trial for yourselves! It would be a good thing if you were just to go to God, as a child, in all your distresses. Remember that as a Solicitor whom you may safely consult, as a Guide whose directions you may safely follow, as a Friend on whose protection you may safely rely, the Holy Spirit is personally present in the Church of Christ and with each of the disciples of Jesus! And there is no fee to pay but the fee of gratitude and praise, because He has directed you so well!

VII. Just once moreTHE HOLY SPIRIT WILL BE GIVEN TO GODS CHILDREN AS A COMFORTING SPIRIT.

This is peculiarly His office. Have you ever felt, immediately before a great and grievous trouble, you have had a most unaccountable season of joy? You scarcely knew why you were so happy or so tranquil. You seemed to be floating upon a very Sea of Elysiumthere was not a breath of wind to ruffle your peaceful spirit, all was serene and calm. You were not agitated by the ordinary cares and anxieties of the world. Your whole mind was absorbed in sacred meditation. By-and-by, the trouble comes and you say, Now I understand it all. I could not, before, comprehend the meaning of that grateful lull, that quiet happiness, but I see now that it was designed to prepare me for these trying circumstances. If I had been low and dispirited when this trouble burst upon me, it would have broken my heart. But now, thanks be to God, I can perceive through Jesus Christ how this light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for me, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. But, mark you, I believe that it is worthwhile to have the troubles in order to get the comfort of the Holy Spiritit is worthwhile to endure the storm in order to realize the joys!

Sometimes my heart has been shaken by disgrace, shame and contempt, for many a brother minister, of whom I thought better things, has reviled meand many a Christian has turned on his heels away from me because I had been misrepresented to him and he has hated me without a cause. But it has so happened that at that very time, if the whole Church had turned its back on me and the whole world had hissed me, it would not have greatly moved me, for some bright ray of spiritual sunshine lit up my heart and Jesus whispered to me those sweet words, I am My Beloveds, and My Beloved is Mine. At such times the consolations of the Spirit have been neither few nor small with me! O Christian, if I were able, I would bring you yet further into the depths of this glorious passage but, as I cannot, I must leave it with you. It is full of honeyonly put it to your lips and get the honey from it. I will put My Spirit within you.
In winding up, let me add a remark or two. *Do you not see here the absolute certainty of the salvation of every Believer?* Or rather, is it not absolutely certain that every member of the family of Gods Israel must be saved? For it is written, I will put My Spirit within you. Do you think that when God puts His Spirit within men, they can possibly be damned? Can you think God puts His Spirit into them and yet they perish and are lost? You may think so if you please, Sir, but I will tell you what God thinksI will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes; and you shall keep My judgments, and do them. Sinners are far from God by wicked works and they will not come unto Him that they may have life. But when God says, I will put My Spirit within you, He compels them to come to Him!
What a vain pretense it is to profess to honor God by a Doctrine that makes salvation depend on the will of man! If it were true, you might say to God, We thank You, O Lord, for what You have doneYou have given us a great many things and we offer You Your wages of praise, which are justly due to Your name, but we think we deserve more, for the deciding point was in our free will. Beloved, do not any of you swerve from the free Grace of God, for the babblings about mans free agency are neither more nor less than lies, right contrary to the Truth of Christ and the teachings of the Spirit.
How certain, then, is the salvation of every elect soul! It does not depend on the will of manhe is made willing in the day of Gods

power. [See Sermon #74, Volume 2A WILLING PEOPLE AND AN IMMUTABLE LEADER. This remarkable sermon was *given by God to Mr. Spurgeon in his* sleep, during the night of Saturday, April 12, 1856, and preached by him the next morning!] He shall be called at the set time

and his heart shall be effectually changed, that he may become a trophy of the Redeemers power. That he was unwilling before is no hindrance, for God gives him the will, so that he is then of a willing mind. Thus, every heir of Heaven must be saved because the Spirit is put within him and thereby his disposition and affections are molded according to the will of God!

Once more, *how useless is it for any persons to suppose that they can be saved without the Holy Spirit!* Ah, dear Friends, men sometimes go very near to salvation without being savedlike the poor man who lay by the side of the pool of Bethesda, always close to the water, but never getting in. How many changes in outward character there are which very much resemble conversion but, not having the Spirit in them, they fail after all! Deathbed repentances are often looked upon as very sincere, although too frequently, we fear, they are but *the first gnawing of the worm that never dies.* I have read, this week, an extraordinary anecdote, told by Dr. Campbell, of a woman who, many years ago, was condemned to death for murdering her child and was hung in the Grass Market at Edinburgh. She very diligently improved the six weeks allowed her by the Scottish law, previous to her execution, and the ministers who were with her continually gave it as their opinion that she died in the sure and certain hope of salvation. The appointed day came. She was hung, but it being very rainy, and no awning having been prepared, those who had the charge of her execution were in a great hurry to complete it and get under shelterso she was cut down before the legal time and, as the custom is, the body was given up to her friends to be buried. A coffin was provided and she was moved in it to East Lothian where her husband was going to bury her. They stopped at a public-house on the road, to refresh themselves, when, to their great surprise and alarm, in rushed a boy and said he heard a noise in the coffin! They went out and found that the woman was alive! The vital powers had been suspended, but the life was not extinct and the jolting of the cart had restored her circulation. After a few hours she became quite well. They moved their residence and went to another part of the country. But the sad part of the tale is that the woman was as bad a character afterwards as she ever was before and, if anything, worse. She lived as openly in sin and despised and hated religion even more than she had previously done.

This is a most remarkable case. I believe that you would see that the great majority of those who profess to repent on their deathbeds, if they could rise again from their graves, would live a life as profane and godless as ever. Rely on thisit is nothing but the Grace of the Spirit of God that makes sure work of your souls. Unless He shall change you, you may be changed, but it will not be a change that will endure! Unless He shall put His hand to the work, the work will be marred, the pitcher spoiled on the wheel. Cry unto Him, therefore, that He may give you the Holy Spirit, that you may have the evidence of a real conversion and not a base counterfeit! Take heed, Sirs, take heed! Natural fear, natural love, natural feelings are not conversion! Conversion, in the first instance, and by all subsequent edification, must be the work of the Holy Spirit and of Him alone! Never rest comfortable, then, until you have the Holy Spirits operations most surely effected in your hearts!

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #3519 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A GOSPEL PROMISE
NO. 3519

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 6, 1916.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments, and do them. Ezekiel 36:27.

THE blessing here promised is one of the most essential that men can need, or that God can give. Without this blessing, all the other benefits of the Covenant would be null and void. It is vain to have a Savior if we have not spiritual power to believe in Him! Of what use is it to us that there should be provided precious promises if we have no faith worked in us by the Holy Spirit whereby we can grasp those promises, plead them in prayer and obtain their fulfillment? Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord, but holiness grows not in any human heart by nature. Therefore, without the Spirit of God, who is the Author of holiness, no man could ever become an heir of immortality, or enter into the rest which remains for the people of God! The Holy Spirit is needed for the very least form of spiritual life and is equally necessary for its highest development. Without the Holy Spirit, we cannot go through the first gate and without the Spirit we cannot pass the last. No man can say in his heart that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Spiritmuch less can any man attain to the perfection which is necessary to Heaven except through the work and power of the Spirit of the living God!

I am always apprehensive lest by any means in my ministry I should even *seem* to obscure this blessed and indispensable agency of the Holy Spirit. Oh, if the Spirit of God is not honoredif He takes offense at our neglectif He withdraw from usof what use will be our congregations? Of what use our earnestness, even if we could maintain it? To what purpose your assembling for prayer if you had not any wish to gather? Without Him, we can do nothing! He breathes all the animation into the Christian Church! Jesus is gone from us into Heaven, but He continues to reign and rule in our midst by His Vicegerent, the Holy Spirit! Let us honor Him. Let us rely upon Him. Let us earnestly seek Him. Let it be ours to declare Him, those of us who have to speak, and yours to receive Him, those of you who have to hear!

I. WHO IS THIS SPIRIT?
He is spoken of in this text and often elsewhere. It is very necessary that we should talk over the commonplaces of the Gospel and the simplicities of the Word of God. I do not doubt but that there are some here who do not understand the Doctrine of the Divine Trinity. I have been annoyedI would have been amused but for the sadness of the reflectionat the ignorance of some who have come in here and learned, for the first time, the most elementary Truths of the Gospel. They know them, now, and rejoice in them! They are even able to teach others. But when they first came, though not uneducated people, but well versed in some other mattersthey had no more knowledge of the plan of Salvation, or even of the plain and simple fundamental Truths of the Gospel of Jesusthan if they had come here from the center of China, or some region into which our Bible had never been carried! Let it then be understood that the Holy Spirit, of whom we so often speak, is a Person. He is not a mere *influence*. We speak of the influences of the Holy Spirit, and very properly so, but those influences proceed from a Person who works upon the minds of men by His influence. It is right to pray for the influences of the Holy Spirit, but it is not right to think of the Holy Spirit, Himself, as though He were an influence, for He is a Person!

Actions are ascribed to Him which could not be ascribed to influences. He is said to be grieved, to be vexed, to have despite done unto Him. Wonderful things are ascribed to Him, which influences could not accomplish! The Spirit of God brooded over this earth when it was as yet without form and voidand darkness was upon the face of the deep. He brought order out of confusion. He garnished the heavens. The beauty of the Tabernacle is attributed to the skill that He Inspired. Or, turning to the holier Tabernacle of our Saviors body, it was formed and fashioned by the power of the Holy Spirit! The holy Thing that was born of Mary was not born of natural generation, but by the energy of the Holy One of Israel. Not an influence, but a Person was the agent! And when our Lord was raised again from the dead, His Resurrection is ascribed in Scripture to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit worked many signs and wonders in the early Church. He enabled the Apostles to speak with many tongues. Through Him they had power to work many miracles. He even gave commandment to separate Paul and Barnabas for the work whereunto He had called them. And still, Beloved, He is in the Church and we have fellowship with Him! We commune with Him! We can bear our witness that He makes intercession for us with groans that cannot be uttered, that He helps our infirmities and performs for us a thousand offices of love which make us feel, experimentally and consciously, that the agent of such things is a very Person!

He is, moreover, God truly God! Never let us think lightly of the Holy Spirit, as though He were in any secondary sense, Divine. In your Baptism the three names were put together. You were baptized into the triple name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Take care that the three Persons be always associated in your minds with equal affection and with equal awe! The Benediction, which so constantly concludes our worship, gives to each His placeMay the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of the Father, and the fellowship or communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. The Holy Spirit, then, is Divine! We do not now attempt to prove that which it is our business at present dogmatically to assert. The thing is capable of abundant proof from Holy Writ. Let it suffice that we teach you the fact. How is it that the Father is God, that the Son is God and that the Holy Spirit is Godand yet that there are not three Gods, but one God? I cannot tell you. I know it is so, for so it is revealedbut how it is so, it is not for us to guess because it is not revealed or explained. Our understanding can adventure as far as the testimony and no farther! Many attempts have been made by Divines to find parallels in Nature to the Unity and the Trinity of God, but they all seem to me, to fail. Perhaps the very best one is that of St. Patrick, who, when preaching to the Irish and wishing to explain this matter, plucked a shamrock and showed them its three leaves all in onethree, yet one. Yet there are flaws and faults even in that illustration! It does not meet the case. It is a Doctrine to be emphatically asserted as it is expounded in that Athanasian Creed, the soundness of whose teaching I do not question, for I believe it all, though I shrink with horror from the abominable anathema which asserts that a man who hesitates to endorse it, will, without doubt perish everlastingly.

It is a matter to be reverently accepted as it stands in the Word of God and to be faithfully studied as it has been understood by the most scrupulous and intelligent Christians of succeeding generations. We are not to think of the Father as though anything could detract from the homage due to Him as originally and essentially Divine, nor of the only begotten Son of the Father as though He were not God over all, blessed forever, nor of the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son, as though He had not all the attributes of Deity! We must abide by this, Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one Jehovah. But we must still hold to it that in three Persons He is to be worshipped, though He is but One in His essence. Understand, then, you who know but little of the Doctrines of the Gospel, that you must worship the Holy Spirit and exercise your faith on Him as God! Lay particular stress upon this, because it is written, Whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in the world to come. Such awful sanctity surrounds the Spirit of God! As I think of Him, I seem to see Sinai in a blaze with a bound set around aboutand I hear a Voice that says to me, Draw not near here, for this is holy ground.

That unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit, I know not what it is in vain might I assay to define it. It stands like a beacon, as if God saw that an ungodly and stiff-necked generation would vex the Holy Spirit and venture far in blasphemy! Therefore, while all manner of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, the sin against the Holy Spirit shall never be forgiven. Take heed you do not harden your heart, lest you should commit it! I do not believe you have. I know you have not if you desire to be saved. I am sure you have not if you are willing to come and put your trust in Jesus Christ. Still, I admonish you to take care and treat with reverence the very *thought* of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Instructor of your souls. Your second question will be

II. HOW DOES HE FULFILL THIS PROMISE?

We understand by these words that those who formerly loved sin shall be made to love righteousness. That those who found it hard, at one time, to break off their evil ways, shall be induced to run with alacrity in the way of Gods Commandments. Now this is a great thing to be promised and a very great thing to be obtained! By no human power could it be brought to pass. As easily might the Blackamoor change his skin to whiteness, or the leopard get rid of his spots, as could the man who is accustomed to do evil reverse the entire current of his habits and instinctsand learn to do well! The Divine Power that first fashioned the soul of man must re-mold it. Only the Creator who made the instrument can re-tune it, or restore its harmony! No unskillful hands can mend it. People sometimes quibble at the Doctrine of Human Impotence, but I can assure you that the actual evidence is far more convincing than the abstract theory! The practical pastoral experience that some of us have had would soon convince anyone that there is ample evidence of its truthfulness. We meet with those who have been a little awakened at our Prayer Meetings and revival services. What, do you think, is the first thing we have to concern about them? Why, some of them have never been in the habit of thinking about their souls, before, and the moment they do begin to think, like a lad introduced into a carpenters shop who has never seen tools, before, they cut themselves with every tool they attempt to handle! These poor souls never were introduced to the spiritual world. Self-examination is a novelty to them. If they think of sin, it drives them to despair! Or if they think of mercy, that drives them to presumption! Whatever Truth of God we put before them, they misuse and pervert it. They do not seem to have the sense or the wit to use any Truth in a right way! You may teach the young enquirer with much earnestness, but you will find it difficult to guide him.

For instance, if he seems resolved to despair, you shall try to comfort him and use as many arguments as you can, but he will despair if he has made up his mind to do it! Some of these remind me of certain game that sportsmen try to hunt out of their holes. It seems in vain to send the ferret after them. When I have used arguments to get them out of one hole, they take refuge in another! And when I have stopped up scores of holes and have said to myself, I shall have you nowyou cannot answer that! Suddenly they seem to have found out quite another branch of lies and delusions. They are gone from me and all my work is lost! Ah, then it is that the pastor feels that he must have the power of the Holy Spirit to help him, or else even the awakened and anxious sinner will evade conversion, put away from himself eternal life and perish in his sin! Yes, Brothers and Sisters, experience will often prove more than controversy is prone to allow of the necessity of work of the Holy Spirit! And if in merely dealing with the elementary lessons of religion we find such palpable evidence of human inability, how much more is this the case in the matter of making a lover of sin become a lover of holiness? You may show him the proprieties of morality. You may lay before him the inevitable results of sin. You may charm him with the rewards of virtue, but the adder is too deaf for all your charmingand when you have charmed, and charmed, and charmed againhe still retains his venom and is still an adder!

But how does the Holy Spirit effect this? He operates, it is true, in many ways. He does it often by His quickening power. The Holy Spirit is the Author of all spiritual life. Speak of regeneration, the Holy Spirit is the Regenerator. No man can receive that Divine Life which comes into him at the new birth except by the Spirit of God. We are raised from our death in sin into a new and holy life by the working of the Holy Spirit, and by that alone. Now, if someone here, hitherto incapable of a holy life, or of serving God right because of his natural depravity, should be quickened by the Holy Spirit, what a change would be at once worked upon him! What the spiritually dead man cannot do, the spiritually enlivened man can readily perform. How the Spirit quickens we know not. The wind blows where it will, and you hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell from where it comes, or where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit. The effects are visible enough. You soon perceive that the man who was callous, without feeling, without emotion, becomes tender of conscience, eager in desires and sensitive in his anxieties. He becomes, in fact, a living man, though he was steeped in death before!

The Holy Spirit continues to make a man practically new *by the illumination He bestows*. The man is blindthe Holy Spirit touches his eye with heavenly eye-salve and he begins to see. The sinner, with the Bible in his hand, though anxious to understand it in a measure, makes a sorry muddle of its Doctrines and precepts apart from the instructions of that blessed Commentatorthe Holy Spirit! The Bible is full of the Light of God, but the heart of man is very dark. To what purpose is the Scripture opened to the understanding if the eyes of the understanding are covered with a thick film? It is the Holy Spirit who irradiates the Truth of God which He has revealed broadcast over every object that lies in our path. In reading the Bible to find comfort and direction, take care to lift up your hearts to Him who wrote it! As an author best understands his own books, so will the Spirit, who Inspired the volume, let you at once into the secret meaning of that which the pens of Inspired men have recorded. Wait upon God for instructionHis instruction is sure to lead you to holiness, for He instructs you in the evil of sin! He lets you see its heinousness, its demerit, its ingratitude and infamy. He instructs you in the beauty of holiness and shows you the example of your Master. He teaches you the Law of God and writes it upon the fleshly tablets of your heart. In this way, as an Illuminator as well as a Quickener, He makes us run in the ways of Gods statutes!

Moreover, the Holy Spirit operates as a Comforter. Many men are wretched by reason of their sins, yet unwilling to renounce them. We have known people continue in present transgression because they are utterly hopeless of ever being forgiven their misdeeds in the past. But when the Spirit of God breathes holy comfort into the desponding sinners mind, he then says to himself, I will not fling myself away after all. It is not meet that I, who have a better destiny before me, should live like those who have resolved to follow their own lusts, reckless of consequencesthose who have made a covenant with Hell and a league with death! No, a thousand times no! If God does all this for me, and brings His dear Son to me, and tells me of pardons bought with blood, then away shall go my old sins and henceforth it shall be my joy to serve with all my might the Heavenly Friend who has been so kind to me. The Holy Spirit is always to His people the Comforter. Are any of you sad? Does that sadness make you unbelieving? Does the unbelief act upon you as a temptation to sin? Go to the Comforter to take away the root of the mischief! So shall you run in the way of Gods Commandments because He has enlarged your heart and guided your footsteps!

The Holy Spirit also operates in the hearts of some *as an Intercessor, helping their prayers*. Some of you are downcast and desponding because you cannot pray. Oh, you think, if I could but pray! What strange ideas possess peoples mind as to praying! One who took my hand the other day said to me, I wish I could pray as you do, Sir, but pray I cannot. Poor soul, when I saw his tears and heard his cries to God, very broken as they were, I wished that I could pray as he did, then! What is the use of fit words, fine sentences, fluent speech? These seem to me full often to be such deceitful acquirements that I would gladly dispense with them, if I might stammer out my souls desires and feel myself to be all the more sincere because I lacked expression to clothe my thought! Oh, nothe Lord does not require your long addresses! A groan, a sigh, a sob that seems to swell in your soul and become too big to find a way of escapethat is prayer! When you cannot pray, remember the Spirit also helps our infirmities. It is His office to utter groans for us which we cannot utter. And by enabling the man to pray, He enables the man to be holy, for prayer is a mainstay of holiness. To draw near to God, the Fountain of all perfection, is to be helped against besetting sinand the blessed Helper in prayer also becomes, in this respect, a Help to us in the paths of righteousness.

I do hope that any of you who have been saying, I cannot do this, and, I cannot do that, will understand that it is quite true that you cannotbut it is equally true that the Holy Spirit can help you to do all things! You can do everything through His almighty aid! Wait upon Him with earnest desires and say to Him, Come, Holy Spirit, help a poor feeble worm. Help me to mourn my sin. Help me to look to Jesus with the eyes of faith. Help me to give up my sins. Help me when I am tempted, that I may withstand the subtle arts of Satan. Help me to overcome my bad temper, to get rid of the pride and naughtiness of my heart. Kill my sloth. Take away my disposition to put off and procrastinate. Enable me to decide for Christ right now and to come, all guilty as I am, and wash in the Fountain of His precious blood, that I may be saved. I tell you it is the Holy Spirits office to do this! He is never so happy, if I may use such a phrase concerning the ever-blessed One, as when He is thus, by His quickening, His illuminating, His comforting influences, bringing poor guilty souls to Jesus and, by Him, to the paths of holiness!

Furthermore, one of the Holy Spirits proper offices is *to sanctify the people of God*. Jesus Christ gives us a justifying righteousness which is *imputed* to usthe Holy Spirit gives us a sanctifying righteousness which is *imparted* to us. The blessed Jesus brings to us His own righteousness and clothes us with it. The Holy Spirit works in us a personal conformity to the will of God in our hearts, productive of fruit in our lives as a sequel to that obedience even unto death, wherewith Christ made satisfaction for our offenses and discharged the high obligation of that obedience we owed. This holiness is not the holiness of Christ, as some vainly say, but it is a personal holiness worked in us by the operation of the Holy Spirit. You, dear Hearers, have perhaps said to yourselves, I cannot be saved because I am not holy. The truth is you cannot be holy because you are not savedbeing saved comes first! Holiness is never the rootit is always the fruit! It is not the cause, it is the effect! You must come to Jesus as you are and trust Himand then He will give you the Holy Spirit to work in you the new heart, the new desireand to make you a new creature. You say, I cannot make myself holy. That is true. You ought to do so, but the power is gone and alas, the will likewise! But if God has given you the will, He points you to Him with whom the power is rested, namely, the Holy Spirit, who will dwell in you and sanctify you through the Word of Truth and the application of the precious blood and water which flowed from the side of Christ.

Nor must I omit to notice that one of the Spirits great works is to dwell in His people. The Holy Spirit dwells in every believer in Christ! He has never been absent from him since he became a disciple. We may invoke His Presence as we sing

Come Holy Spirit, heavenly dove,
With all Your quickening powers.

But that is a prayer for His special manifestation. The Holy Spirit is here. He lives in the Church. He has come as a Comforter who shall abide with us forever. He dwells in the bodies of His peopleGod is in His Temple. And, mark you, it is by this indwelling that the holiness of the Believer is kept up. If the Holy Spirit left him, he would return, like a dog to his vomit, but because the Holy Spirit looks out of these eyes and throbs in this hear and moves these hands, when the man is freely obedient to the Divine Power, the man is kept in the paths of integrity and his end is everlasting life! To gather up all these thoughts in one, whatever offices the Holy Spirit sustains to Gods people, the result of all these offices will be to keep the man from going back to his old ways and to cause him to walk in Gods statutes, and to keep Gods judgments and do them! Do you wish, then, to be saved from sin and to be made holy? Look to the wounds of the bleeding Savior and remember that He has promised to give you the Holy Spirit, by whom you shall be made holy and kept in holiness till you stand hereafter without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, before the Eternal Throne! In closing, I want to

III. SAY A FEW GOOD AND COMFORTABLE WORDS TO SOME OF YOU WHO MAY BE ANXIOUS TO POSSESS THIS SPIRIT OF GOD IN YOUR HEARTS.

Ah, complains one, the Holy Spirit would never look on me! Why do you have such a thought? Do you think to honor Him by such reflections? Far rather do you shame yourself. Know you not that He has looked on many such as you are and they are alive to tell of His condescending love? Will you look to Jesus? Will you cast yourself upon the Great Surety who has deigned to become the Scapegoat for sinners? If so, the Holy Spirit has looked on you! The first desire you have towards God comes from Him! These inward strivings which you feel now (tenderly do I wish that you may not stifle or quench them) come from Him! That fear, that anxiety, that longing may be and I trust they are, the initiative of a blessed work of the Holy Spirit within your soul! Judge not of the Holy Spirit as though He were reluctant. Nehemiah spoke of the Spirit of God as *the Good Spirit*. So He is! He is the very essence of goodness, taking goodness in the sense of benevolence. He is good to men, full of generous love towards them. We read of the love of the Spirit. Sweet words! What must it be to appreciate them and to prove their meaning! The love of the Spirit! I marvel that the Spirit of God should come down into the valley of dry bones. I wonder that He should have contact with such corruption as ours and make us live! I am surprised that He has not left us long ago, dullards as we are in His school, yet He patiently teaches us. It is amazing to me that He should dwell in such poor temples as our clay bodies. Still, He does. He condescendingly abides with us. You speak of the love of Jesus in coming down to earth and enduring all its misery and shameyou cannot speak too well of thatbut do not forget that the Holy Spirit has been abiding here these 1,800 years and still the dispensation of His government lastsHe is still waiting and striving, persuading, preciously illuminating, grandly quickening! Thus He will continue to do until the Lord Jesus, Himself, shall descend from Heaven with a shout and the dispensation of the Holy Spirit shall be perfected in the world to come! The Holy Spirit, then, is a good Spirit, and that should encourage you to go to Him with a full confidence in His Person and works.

He is sometimes called, the free Spirit. David says, Uphold me with Your free Spirit. He is not bound by our bondage. He is not retrained, thank God, by the restriction of our desires. He is not withheld, even though our inability and our iniquity entangle us. He waits not for man, neither tarries He for the sons of men. As the dew comes in the morning on the dumb grass that cannot speak for it. As the stiff breeze blows over the silent mountains that cannot ask for it. And as on the sea, which cannot lift up its billows until the wind shall stir them, which comes unsought, unaskedeven so is the Spirits advent! So freely in real truth does He come. Oh, you vilest of sinners, you outcast, you who are turned off by those who once loved youthe Holy Spirit can even come to you! He is a free Spiritnot even your sins can withhold Him! He can conquer your desperate depravity and come to reign and rule in your breast where devils have held a carnival these many years!

I adore the power of God that He exerts over the minds of men, insomuch as that while I stand here to preach to you, willing or not willing as you may be to heed His message, my Lord and Master will have His own way! What though you may be in the most unfit state to attend to the Gospel callthough you may have come to ridicule the preacher, or catch him tripping in his speech, or it may be you have designed to spend a merry hourthe Divine Fiat is mightier than your fitful mood! How often has the Eternal Archer shot His arrows through and through the scorners and left them as though they were dead, and then, having touched them with His life-giving finger, He has said, Live! The change has been worked, though they knew nothing of it at the time! The Lord, according to His good pleasure, has done the work and thus can this blessed free Spirit effect His purpose. Oh, my beloved Brothers and Sisters, pray for the unsaved! Pray for sinners, you who can pray! Full often have I thought what a blessed thing it is that the Spirit of God can obtain admission where we cannot. There is a house that is closed and barred against the Gospel. The squire of the parish, perhaps, says that any of his servants going to the Meeting House, he will discharge. He will take care that he will have none of this Methodism anywhere in his district! Very well, Sir, if you propose to keep it out, you will need to have a great many watchmen, for, you know, if there is a sweet perfume in your house, you must use your diligence to keep it hermetically sealed, or else it will escape and diffuse its odor through every room by degrees! The name of Jesus Christ is like ointment poured forthit has a wonderful diffusiveness about it!

Ere long the squire will discover that one of his servants has caught the sweet infection. Gladly would he turn her away, were she not such a good nurse-girl that he cannot afford to lose her! And I have noticed that there is a Divine contagion in the Grace of God that brings salvation. In families, neighborhoods, townships and great cities it will spread with strange rapidity! One or two conversions, like drops of rain, portend a shower! I knew a man who burned all the Bibles he had in his houseat least he *thought* he had burned them allbut he had two daughters who kept their books secreted under their pillows. When he found it out, he was mad with rage. What he was going to do, I do not know. His wife told him at length that she was of their mind and took their part. Ah, well, he said, it is a nuisance that I cannot live without being pestered with this religion. Yes, and by the Grace of God they shall not live without being pestered. If they will not come and hear the Word from the minister, they shall hear it somehow else! A tract shall find him over whose head a sermon fliesand half a sentence shall break a rock in pieces where appeals from the pulpit might have been of no use! Have good courage, then, you who seek the salvation of others, and you that are afar off from God, yourselvesdo not despair for the Spirit of God is a free SpiritHe can come even to you!

Very powerful, too, is the Spirit of God, as well as good and free. There is no form of human obstinacy which He cannot overcome. Some operations of the Holy Spirit may be resisted and defeated. This I say without feeling that I cast any slur upon His Deity. A man, though he may be ever so strong, need not put out all his strength, and when he puts out only a little of his strength a child may be able to overcome him. He may, perhaps, intend that it should be so. So the Holy Spirit, in His common operations is vexed, and grieved, and quenched by the ungodly. Quite otherwise when He comes to the exceeding greatness of His power to us who believe, or when the Lord makes bare His arm in the eyes of all the peoplethen the Spirit comes as a Spirit of Irresistible Power! Who shall stay His hand, or say unto Him, What are You doing? See how Saul of Tarsus, foaming at the mouth against the Church of God, cries, What must I do to be saved? Who are You, Lord? Soon he rises up to be led by the hand for three days in brokenness of heart to seek for the Light of Gods Countenance! How quickly can God turn the most fierce persecutors into the most earnest preachers of the Gospel! Be of good heart, dear Friends, for Gods cause in the world! We shall see yet greater things if we do but ask for them in faith and faithfully expect them.
If God does not raise up good men in the colleges to preach the Gospel, He will find them in the warehouses and offices of our merchants. Or failing these, He will call them from the dregs of the populationit may be even from the dens and kens of thieves if nowhere else! Who knows but He may provoke us to jealousy by a people of a strange tongue. My Master knew how to find Luther among the monks and to fish out some of the bravest Reformers from among the idolatrous priests! And He can do the same again! The Church may come to a very bad tide, but there never shall be such a bad tide but the Church, like a galley with oars, shall be able to float! She shall not strike on the rocks. Have hope, you soldiers of Christ! While the ministry of the Holy Spirit can be invoked, never whisper of despair! Oh, Sinner, have hope for yourself, willful and wicked as you may have been! If you cannot amend your ways and change your heart, He can do it for you! The iron bands of habit He can snap. The adamantine net of lasciviousness He can break in pieces! From the degrading abominations of drunkenness He can extricate you! All the charms of worldliness He can dissolve! He can set you free, though you are now a captive fast in the inner prison with your feet in the stocks! While the Holy Spirit lives, while Jesus intercedes, while the Father is willing to receive prodigals, let no one despair! Grace makes the most worthless creatures welcome to the most inestimable blessings! What Paul said to saints I venture to say to sinners, Covet earnestly the best gifts. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *JOHN 14:21-31.*

In this sacred farewell talk of our Lords, He gives us many a Revelation of the souls way of communion with Him.
21, 22. *He who has My commandments, and keeps them, he it is who loves Me: and he who loves Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him. Judas said unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself unto us, and not unto the world?* Many a time have we asked that question with great admiration of the special Sovereign Grace of God, that He should manifest Himself to us, and not to the world. It is an unanswerable question. It is, even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.

23. *Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man loves Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him.* Where the Grace of God has created love between us and Christ, there is a window through which Christ can manifest Himself to us. Why He gave us that love, we do not know, but when He has given us that love He will not deny us communion with Himself.

24-26. *He that loves Me not, keeps not My sayings: and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Fathers who sent Me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* The Holy Spirit does not teach us any new Doctrine! Fix that in your minds, for in the present age we have numbers of persons who talk about being inspired with the Holy Spirit, and who come with all kinds of crudities and fooleries. Believe them not! The Holy Spirit says no other and no more than the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, said, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said to you. The canon of Revelation is closed! None can add to it without a curse. Do not accept any testimony that would add to it. Keep to what is here found and pray the Holy Spirit to lead you into the clear understanding of it.

27, 28. *Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world gives, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. You have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If you loved Me, you would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for My Father is greater than I.* Christ had, Himself, less than the Father in His state of humiliation. And now He is returning to the Father to be re-clothed with honor and majesty. Should we not rejoice in that?

29-31. *And now I have told you before it comes to pass, that when it is come to pass, you might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world comes, and has nothing in Me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go.* And He went to His death bravely determined to do the Fathers will, though it meant the drinking up of that bitter cup which made His very soul to tremble within Him! God give us such love to Christ as Christ had to the Father!

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 #2743 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

MISTAKEN NOTIONS ABOUT REPENTANCE
NO. 2743

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1901.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, APRIL 20, 1879.
Then you will remember your evil ways, and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations.
Ezekiel 36:31.

We noticed, in our reading, in what a kingly style the Lord speaks all through this chapter. He does not say if or but, but He says, *you will* and *you shall* and this teaches us that God is Omnipotent even in the regions of free agency. It would be preposterous to say that man is not a free agent! There are some who, in order to glorify the Grace of God, have sought to deny the free agency of manI do not mean that they have done it in so many words, but, practically, the effect of their language has been to deny it. But man is perfectly free and God violates not the human willyet I cannot explain to you how it isHe is as much able to rule perfectly free agents as He is to control the atoms of inert matter. It is Omnipotence which compels yonder starry orbs to obey the laws which God has made and to travel in their appointed courses, but, to my mind, it is even more marvelous Omnipotence which leaves men free agents and controls not their will, but yet sweetly triumphs over them and wins for God the accomplishment of His Divine Purposes!

Will you attempt to exclude God from the realm of mind? Do you dare to think that He has not all power there? Then, your god is not mine, for my God does according to His will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand or say unto Him, What are You doing? The operations of His Grace are attended with such Omnipotent energy that He is able to say to men, A new heart, also, will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments, and do them. Yet, while the Lord speaks thus to them, they are still menas much men as they were before and, indeed, their manhood is more perfect than it was beforeyet God wins His way and does with them according to His own will.

Yet the Lord is pleased, in some cases, to explain to us the processes by which He works. For instance, in the production of the repentance described in this chapter, He tells us that it is the result of His superabundant love. By lavishing His goodness upon undeserving persons who willfully rejected His authority and despised His vengeance, He at last brought them to submission. They smarted for their sin, yet they sinned onand then God dealt with them in another fashionHe blessed them and pardoned them. He gave them back the mercies He had withdrawn from them. He gave them more, and more, and more, and more, until, by the wondrous power of His Grace, He slew their enmity and caused love to take its place! He conquered their love of sin and then a hatred of the sin which had grieved their God sprang up in their minds. This is a very blessed process and in every phase it magnifies the love and goodness of the Lord. So, while we think and speak of it, we bless and praise and magnify the name of the Most High whose love is thus manifested to the unworthy.

That is not, however, quite the subject on which I am going to speak at this time, although it leads up to it. There are many persons who are truly awakened and anxious about their souls and who are really seeking to be reconciled to God, but there is a great difficulty in their way. They say that they cannot repent. I am frequently receiving letters of this kindI want to become a Christian. I am anxious to be reconciled to God. I do, I think, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but my faith is feeble and I am afraid I am not saved because I cannot feel that sorrow for sin which I would like to feel. If I could, I would break my heart and weep for my iniquities, but, alas, I do not find myself to be of an emotional character and I cannot stir my soul to that intense anguish of which I have heard some speak. May I still hope that faith will save me? May I come and trust in Jesus Christ, for I do not feel that I have the repentance I ought to feel? So many are these cases that I thought I would devote the sermon of this evening to them and see if, in some way or other, by Gods gracious guidance, I may not roll away the stone which has long been in the way of true seekers after Christ.

I shall deal, first, with *some mistaken ideas of what repentance is.* Then, with *some mistaken ideas of the place which repentance occupies.* And lastly, with *some mistaken ideas of the way in which repentance is produced in the heart.*

I. Many persons have MISTAKEN IDEAS OF WHAT REPENTANCE IS. Some confuse it with morbid self-accusation. It must have struck you, in reading the autobiographies of certain good men, that in the description of their lives before conversion, they put the coloring on very heavily. I do not think they are always wise in so doing, but it must not be forgotten that very often they write their own biographies in later years when, through having seen much of Gods love, they get a clearer apprehension

of what sin really is. They do not write their life history when its various events occur and I do not suppose that, at the time, they regarded themselves as being such sinners as they afterwards believed themselves to have been.

I advise you, dear Friends, to beware of making yourselves out to be worse than you really are. There are some persons who could not do so if they tried, but there are others who, having been, by Divine Providence, brought up in the ways of godliness, have never gone into open sin as some of their fellows have done. They have been sinful enough, God knows, and as they themselves will know when later years shall have shed more light on their character, but let them not try to mimic the expressions of persons of more advanced years. Do not call yourself, the chief of sinners, if you are not. And do not suppose that repentance means the exaggeration of your evil life into something more evil than it really was. It is enough for you to go and confess the truth and to be sorrowful that you have once forgotten your Godthat your thoughts have been turned away from the true centerthat you have lived for yourself and hence have been an enemy of the Most High. Go and confess that to the Lord, but do not bring against yourself a morbid self-accusation which is not true in Gods sight.

Again, some think that repentance means *the dread of Hell and a sense of wrath.* Men ought to dread Hellit is a thing to be dreaded, indeed, as they know who are enduring its torments. Men ought to fear the wrath of God. It is a very solemn reflection that every unconverted person in the world has the wrath of God abiding upon him and will have it abiding on him until he escapes to the refuge provided in the Atonement of Christ Jesus. But a sense of Gods wrath against sin is not repentance! It generally goes with it, it frequently attends itbut repentance is a change of mind with regard to sinwith regard to everything and it is a consciousness that sin is sinthat you have committed it. It is a sorrow to you that you have committed it and a resolve, in Gods strength, that you will escape from ita holy desire and longing to be rid of sin which has done you so much mischief. In the words of the childs hymn

Repentance is to leave
The sins we loved before,
And show that we in earnest grieve
By doing so no more.

And there is very much of real repentance which is not accompanied by a dread of Hell at all. It is sweetened by a sense of love rather than embittered by a dread of vengeance. Do not, therefore, confuse things that differ.

A very gross mistake is made by some who imagine that *unbelief, despondency and despair* are repentance. These things are wide as the poles asunder! No doubt there are many who ultimately come to Christ who, for a time, think they are too great sinners to be saved. Do I commend them for thinking so? Far from it! They imagine a lie! And how can it be right for us to believe that which is untrue? No doubt many who come to Christ do, for a while, despair of ever being savedbut is it necessary that you and I should do so? By no means, for to despair of being saved is to give the lie to Gods own Truthand that can never be the right thing for anyone to do! God is true and He has declared that whoever will trust His Son shall be saved. If I turn round and say, I cannot be saved and I cannot trust Christ, I do, as far as in me lies, pour indignity upon God! I insult Him, for I doubt His Word and I distrust His Son, who is worthy of all confidence! That sort of thing cannot be repentanceon the contrary, it is something that needs to be repented of! If you have no such doubts and no such despair, be glad you have not, for they are not of Godthey are evil! To come like a little child and say, I know that I have done wrong, and I am very sorry for it and I wish to be set right. I find that Christ can set me right and I trust Him to do itthat is the way to repent of sin and trust the Savior! And he who does so is accepted of the Father.

Neither let anybody mistake S *atanic temptations* for repentance. It is very true that when some persons are coming to Christ, Satan is very eager to keep them away and, therefore, he plays all kinds of tricks in order to turn them aside, or to cast them down lest they should be saved. But do you think that these Satanic temptations are any part of true repentance? Then you make me smileyou might as well say that if a child were coming to his father and a dog were to howl at him and try to frighten him away, that the howling of the dog were a part of the childs coming. By no means they are a hindrance to him and, I pray you, never think that the devils temptations can do you any good! The less of him you have, the better will it be for you. It is better to go seven miles over hedge and ditch to miss the devil, than to have one conflict with him and if you do not have conflicts with Satan in coming to Christ, do not wish for them or think that they are at all necessary to your being truly a believer in Jesus! Come to Him and welcome! And if there is nothing in your way, come all the more readily and cast yourself down at His dear feet and take the mercy which He freely gives to all who trust Him!

Do not let me be misunderstood in another observation that I make, namely, that the repentance which saves the soulthe repentance which is necessary to salvationis not a *full and complete view of the guilt of sin*. You will understand me when I say that no man living has ever had a full and complete view of the guilt of sin, but that we all see the guilt of sin more as we grow in Grace than we do at the first. The value of Divine Grace grows with a man. As experience strengthens his judgment and enlightens his heart, his true estimate of the guilt of sin will daily increase. I suppose that the truest repentance is that of a man who is just entering Heaven. Therefore, the repentance which saves is not absolutely perfect or fully developed. If there is but this germ of itthat you sincerely wish to be delivered from sinif you sincerely hate the sin which you did once loveyou have the repentance that saves you!

And though you will hate sin more, by-and-by, and you will be able to avoid it more, by-and-by, as you are more completely sanctified by the Holy Spirit, yet the necessary thing at the first, by which a soul closes with Christ, is a turning from sin, a loathing of itand if you have that, you have true repentance! But not otherwise. Repentance is also a sense of shame for having lived in it and a longing to avoid it. It is a change of the mind with regard to sina turning of the man right round. That is what it is and it is worked in us by the Grace of God. Let none, therefore, mistake what true repentance is and seek for what they need not wish to have.

II. Now, secondly, we are to consider SOME MISTAKEN IDEAS ABOUT THE PLACE WHICH REPENTANCE OCCUPIES.
I do not suppose I am addressing very many who have fallen into the popular notion that repentance is *the procuring cause of the Grace of God,* yet it is a very common notion. Well, I do my best, says one, and God is just, so I have no doubt I shall have my due reward. But you commit sin, do you not? Yes, he replies, but then I am sorry for it and I try to get right again as soon as I can. According to that notion, repentance is a sort of compensation for sin. If it is really so, the next time I am in that gentlemans debt, I shall not think of paying himI shall simply tell him I am sorry I am in his debt and, of course, he will wipe out the score! He objects to that and says it would be unjustyet that is the style in which he acts towards his God! God forbid that we should ever think that repentance can, of itself, put away any sin!
The same evil, however, comes up under other forms, and there are some who think that repentance *is a preparation for Grace.* They hope they shall receive the Grace of God if they repent. But, my dear Friend, if you repent, that very fact is a proof that you already have one of the results of Grace and that God has looked upon you in love! For you to say, I must first repent, reminds me of the supposed Romish miracle of Saint Denis who, having his head cut off, picked it up in his hands and walked away with it, I forget how many miles. A French wit said, when he heard the legend, Ah, it was easy enough for him to walk so many miles after he had taken the first stepthat was the only one that had any difficulty about it! If he could manage that, he could manage all the rest. In like manner, if repentance is the first step towards God, and the sinner can take that by himself, well, then, he can take all the rest and he need not trouble himself about the Grace of God because it is not needed! The man can do the whole work of Salvation to the very end if he can, by himself, take the first step! Ah, my dear Friend, repentance is not a *preparation* for Grace, it is the first *result* of Grace working within the soul. One of the earliest products of a Divine visitation is the humbling of the heart on account of sinand this is the beginning of true repentance.
There are others who think that repentance is *a qualification for faith in Christ.* Such a person says, If I have repented of sin, I can then believe in Jesus. If I am conscious of my guilt, I may then come and cast myself upon Christ. My dear Friend, I know that you will never cast yourself upon Christ until you are conscious of sin, for men do not usually eat till they feel hungry and they do not clothe themselves till they realize that they are naked. It is well for you to have a sense of your iniquity, but, at the same time it is no qualification for believing in Jesus. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. The only qualification a physician seeks in his patient is that he is sick. The qualification for pardon from Christ is

guilt. The qualification for imparting His fullness is your emptinessthat is all! And if you feel yourself to be so empty that you do not even feel your emptinessif you feel yourself to be so hard that you do not even think you feel your hardnesswell, then, you are just the kind of man that Jesus Christ came to save. If there is no good thing in you whateverno, if there is no *repentance* in youyet it is still true that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And He still sends His servants to you with this plain Gospel command, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.
Still, says one, *repentance must be the ground of our belief.* Do I not believe that I am saved because I repent? Stop! There is a muddle there! What is the ground of my *trusting* Christ? That is what I mean by *believing*. I will tell you. My only ground for trusting Christ is thisthat I am told, by Gods Word, that He can save sinners and I believe He can. And that then I am commanded to trust Him to save me, and I do it. My warrant for believing is Gods Wordnot my sense of sin or anything in me. How then, do I know that I am saved? I know, as I stand before you, that I am a saved man. Why do I know that? Because it is written, He that believes on Him is not condemned, and I do believe, trust, rely on Jesus Christ! Sometimes I feel as if I were not saved, but my feelings must go overboard if they come into conflict with the plain declaration of Gods Word! He that believes on the Son has everlasting life. The ground of a mans belief that he is saved is not that he repents, but that he has trusted Jesus Christ, who is able to save him, and that God has declared that whoever trusts Christ is saved!
Then, says one, there must be repentance *and* believing. Yes, I know that, and repentance goes well, side by side with believing. If I were asked whether a man repented first, or believed first, I should reply, Which spoke in a wheel moves first when the wheel starts? When Divine life is given to a man, these two things are sure to comerepentance and faithbut if anyone should say, He must repent first before he believes, I would contest that point very strongly! And if, on the other hand, a man should say, There is such a thing as a belief which is not attended with repentance which will save the soul, I would contest that point with equal ardor! No, they come together as the first marks of the new birth in the soul. This is the practical point which concerns youno metaphysics of theology need perplex your mind. What you have to do with is Gods command and that command is, as I just reminded you, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. And if you do that, you have repentance in the germand that repentance will grow and increasebut you must take heed not to put your repenting into the place of Christ. I will say thisbold and naked as the saying may seem to beif you put your repenting into the place of Christ, you make an antichrist of them! And if you trust for salvation to your repentance, or even to your faith, you might as well trust to your sins!
Nothing is to be trusted to but the finished work of Jesus Christ upon Calvarys bloody tree! No feelings, no emotion, no believing, no conversion, even, must ever be put into the place of that one eternal Rock of refugethe blood and merit of Jesus Christ! Fly there, poor Soul! Whatever you are, or are not, fly there! Cast your guilty self on Christ and rest there, for there alone can you find salvation! Learn this lessonnot to trust Christ because you repent, but trust Christ to *make* you repent not to come to Christ because you have a broken heart, but to come to Him that He may *give* you a broken heartnot to come to Him because you are fit to come, but to come to Him because you are unfit to come! Your fitness is your unfitness. Your qualification is your *lack* of qualification. You are to be nothing, in fact, and to come to Christ as nothing and when you so come, then will repentance come!
What, then, is the true place of repentance? It is thisI trust Christ, just as I am, to forgive me. I have Gods assurance that I am forgiven, seeing that I am trusting Christ. What, then, do I feel? I am forgiven. My transgression is coveredmy iniquities are all washed away. O my Savior, how I love You! And the next thought is, O my sins, how I hate you! This feeling naturally grows out of a sense of Divine Love. Am I pardoned? Am I fully forgiven? Can I ever be cast into Hell? Am I, indeed, a child of God? Then, how could I ever have lived as I once did? Can I ever play the fool after that fashion again? No, my Lord, Your love shall bind me fast and nail me to the Cross of Christ, my Saviortherefore I am dead to sinI cannot live any longer therein, because You have saved me!
We do not repent in order to be saved, but we repent because we are saved. We do not loathe sin and, therefore, hope to be saved, but, because we are saved, we therefore loathe sin and turn altogether from it. May the Lord bless these words to the correction of some of the mistakes which are so frequently made!
III. Now I come, in the last place, to notice SOME MISTAKEN IDEAS AS TO THE WAY IN WHICH REPENTANCE IS PRODUCED IN THE HEART.
I cannot repent, says one. I want to make myself repent, but I cannot. Of all things in the world, that is one of the most absurd and impossible! Shut yourself up in a room, sit down on a chair, and try to make yourself repent. You could not do it. Did a man ever try to make himself love a woman? No, but he was smitten at the first glimpse of her facehe could not help himself and, before he was aware, the deed was done! And it is just the same with repentanceit comes as a secondary thing. Through meditation and thinking over certain other things, the sacred passion of repentance comes upon us, but it is not a direct operation of the mind that can be performed at will any more than faith is. If you were to find something in the newspaper that you doubted and you were to sit down, and say, I will make myself believe it, you could not do it. You would have to examine the matter, consult the proper authorities and see about the dates and factsand then your believing would come of itself through those considerationsbut you could not, as a distinct and direct act, compel your mind to believe in anything of the kind, much less to believe in Christ! So it is in relation to our regret on account of sinit comes from other considerations.
There are some who have said, Well, if we are to repent of sin, we ought to attend some exciting meetings. When everybody all around us gets warm and begins to cry, perhaps we shall also be melted to tears. I have no doubt that a great many have been melted and have felt a good deal as the result of crowded meetings, but I very greatly question whether the repentance which comes of God is created by excitement. Indeed, I know it is not! It has to come from more substantial causes and influences than ever can be brought to bear by the mere eloquence of man, or the excitement of a multitude of people gathered together. But, suppose, says another friend, I were to sit down and meditate upon the wrath of God, upon the Judgment Day and upon the woes of Hellwould not that produce repentance? Yes, perhaps it wouldsuch meditations might have a very salutary influence upon you and might tend to awaken in your mind serious thoughtfulnessbut I am not certain that they would lead you to repentance. I will try to show you how God brings sinners to repentance, for that will help you who are now seeking it. How, then, does the Lord lead men to repentance?
According to this chapter, the first thing He does is, *to change their nature*I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. This is *regeneration*the change of nature. The heart of unimpressionable stone, naturally hard, is removed and a sensitive, impressionable heart is givena fleshy heart, so that the man can feel. If you really want to repent, this is the message I have to deliver to you, You must be born-again. If I wish to grow olives, I must have an olive tree. Can the fig tree bear olives? Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? The thorn must be turned into a grapevine, and the thistle into a fig tree, if we are to get from them grapes and figs. And, therefore, again I say to you that if you would bring forth repentance, you must be born-again.
Oh, says one, there is not much comfort in such teaching as that, for it drives us away from all hope. That is exactly what I want to do with you! I want to convince you of the simple fact that there is no hope for you in and of yourselves! But that you must come and find all your hope, your regeneration and everything else in Jesus Christ, from whom alone it comes to all who trust Him.
But how does God work repentance in the soul when He has renewed the nature? As we read the chapter, we noticed that *He gave great mercy to the undeserving.* So, then, if you wish to obtain repentance, the way to secure it, by the Grace of God, is through a consideration of the goodness of God to you. Think, dear Friends, of the many years that God has spared you and of the almost miraculous escapes which some of you have had. Think of how all the while you were provoking Him and going on from ill to ill and from one sin to another, yet, in His long-suffering, He bore with you and thus was leading you to repentance! Think of the fact that at this moment you are not in torment, not in Hell, but you are where the Gospel of Gods Grace is freely preached to you and where pardon may be bestowed upon youwhere God is still dressed in the white robes of mercy and has not yet come in the scarlet robes of judgment! Oh, the goodness of God, to have spared a tree that has cumbered the ground so longto have spared a rebel who has provoked Him so grievously! Such thoughts as these have a tendency to lead men to say, I will sin no longer. I will love sin no longer because God has been so merciful to me.

But let me tell you that when God works repentance in the heart, He does more than this. He not only gives the man blessings, *He also gives him forgiveness.* And when the man sees that he is forgiven, he says, What? Forgiven? Then how can I live any longer in sin? I hate my sin. The Lord says to him, You are My child. I will feed you, clothe you, and train you for My house above. Your child? he exclaims, a child of God after all that I have done? And he begins to take vengeance on his sins and to drive them out of his heart, for how can we, who are the children of God, endure the presence of sin?
That forgiven man *begins to pray.* I can distinctly recollect one of the first answers I ever had to prayer. And when I woke to the consciousness that God did really hear and answer my supplication, I tell you that I loathed sin. I could not bear to do anything to grieve a God who really listened to my cry. Then, when I was delivered out of great trouble and was enriched with very great mercy, I felt, How could I ever have been what I have been? How could I have lived as I have lived? And when I found out that God would continue to visit me with His loving kindness as long as I lived, and that I should be His favored child forever and ever, then did I hate sin more than I had ever done beforeand I was grieved and cried out unto the Lord by reason of the bondage I had been underand I longed to be clean rid of every trace of sin! I do not know that I felt, at such times, any dread of Hell. It was quite the reverse, but I hated sin because of Gods love to me. That is the way in which God brings repentance into the hearts of His children. He loves them so much and does so much for them, that they cannot continue any longer in sin.
Now, dear seeking Soul, do you see the tack to go upon? Your business is to believe in Christ Jesus just as you are and to trust Him to save youand then to believe what the Word of God says concerning those who trust in Jesus, namely, that they are saved, forgiven, loved of God and at peace with Him. Do you believe that? As you believe it, you will feel, My heart melts under a sense of this superlative love. Now I can and do repent of sinthe very thing which seemed impossible to me before.
If I had time, I would like to show you that *every blessing of the Covenant of Grace leads us to repentance.* Take the Doctrine of Election. What? says the man, Have I been chosen of God from before the foundation of the world? Then, how could I live in sin? Take the Doctrine of Redemption. What? he says, Am I redeemed from among menbought with the precious blood of Christ. Then how can I go and live as others live? Take the Doctrine of Final Perseverance. What, he says, does the Grace of God give me the guarantee that I shall hold out to the end? Then, God forbid that I should at any time turn aside from the paths of integrity!
You may take the Gospel ordinances, as well as its doctrines, and you will find that they all lead you to repentance. Have you been to the Communion Table, sitting and feasting with Christ, and have you not even there said, Alas, that I should ever have had in my hand the cup of devils, and have been, as once I was, a companion of those who hated the name of Christ? I am sure, Beloved, that, if you have been with the Lord in private prayer and He has lifted you up to His bosom and revealed to you His secret thoughts of love, you have smitten upon your breast and said, Such love as His to such a worm as I am is altogether too great. Such love to one who was so provokingly, so aggravatingly sinfuloh, how could I have done so? O my Lord, I do love You! I could wash Your feet with my tears and I resolve to devote myself to holiness and to that alone. No, Beloved, there is nothing that God gives us that leads us to sin, but the gifts and Grace of God all lead us to repentance! So that is the way by which repentance is fashioned in the soul.
So this is my last word upon the subject. If any of you are still under bondage in this matter and say that you cannot repentif you really wish to have a tender and deep sense of sindo not sit down and study your sin! Do not sit down and study the penalty of it, but begin to think of the supreme love of God in Christ Jesus! Think of the greatness of that mercy which is as high above you as the heavens are above the earth! Believe that He can save you. Do more than thattrust yourself with Christ that He may save youand you are saved the moment you do that! Do not believe it because I say it, but because God declares it over and over again. He that believes in Him is not condemned. He that believes on the Son has everlasting life. By Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses.
Believe in Jesus! Cling to Him and to Him, alone, and repentance must come into your soul! Old Donne, the famous preacher, used to say, Hang on Him that did hang on the tree, and that is what I will say to you, Hang on Him that did hang on the tree. And, then, until He falls, you will never fall! If Christ is first, last, midst and everything to you, He will give you repentance, He will give you the heart of flesh, He will give you a sensitive conscience, He will give you the pure and cleansed life! But you must not think to bring any of these to put them into His place, butagain I say itjust hang on Him that did hang on the tree! The Lord bless you and help you to do so, for Christs sake! Amen.

EXPOSITIONS BY C. H. SPURGEON: ***EZEKIEL 36:16-38.***

Verses 16-19. *Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me saying, Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before Me as the uncleanness of a removed woman. Therefore I poured My fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols with which they had polluted it: and I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them.* When God comes forth to deal with men according to their deserts, there will always be times of dire distress. The land of Israel was made into a wilderness. The habitations of men were burnt by fire, the inhabitants fell by the sword, or they were carried away captiveuntold miseries became the lot of Gods revolting people.

20. *And when they entered unto the heathen, where they went, they profaned My holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of His land.* For the heathen did not remember the sin of Israelthey only saw that they had been cast out of their land by their Godso they blamed Jehovah and not His guilty people. Thus, Gods holy name was doubly profaned.

21. *But I had pity for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, where they went.* If the Lord could see no ground of mercy in them, yet, so full of mercy is He that He would find a reason for exercising pity for His own names sake! If loving kindness cannot come to them by any other means, then it shall come for Gods names sake.

22-24. *Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God, I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for My holy names sake which you have profaned among the heathen, where you went. And I will sanctify My great name which was profaned among the heathen, which you have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, says the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.* He says that He will do this for His holy names sake. If the heathen profaned that name because they saw Israel scattered, they should be made to eat their own words when God gathered Israel again to their own land!

25, 26. *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.* What grand language this is! How different it is from the stern commands of the Law! The Law says, Make your hearts clean; put away the evil of your doings, but the Gospel Covenant of Grace says, A new heart also will I give you, and I will cleanse you from all your iniquities.

27-30. *And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments and do them. And you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and you shall be My people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleanness: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that you shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen.* What splendor of love is this to a people who, mind you, had done nothing whatever to deserve itwho were just as undeserving as in the day when the Lord smote them and scattered them among the heathen! For no reason whatever but His own Free Grace, and for the Glory of His holy name would God do these extraordinary deeds of love. What a wondrous God He is! Rightly do we sing

Who is a pardoning God like Thee?
Or who has Grace so rich and free?

31, 32. *Then you will remember your evil ways, and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations, Not for your sakes do I this, says the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.* There was nothing for them to boast of in all the mercies they received. No merit of their own had brought them back the corn and oilit was all of Gods infinite Sovereign Grace because He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion. How royally He talkslike such a King as He isthe Sovereign Lord of all!

33-35. *Thus says the Lord GOD; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be built up. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the Garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities have become fenced and are inhabited.* As much as they noticed, before, the chastising hand of God, so much shall even the heathen be compelled to perceive the great goodness of God in restoring the land to all its former glory!

36, 37. *Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD built up the ruined places, and planted that that was desolate: I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it. Thus says the Lord God; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.* The blessing shall come, but not without prayer for itnot without a hopeful expectancy of itnot without a faithful belief in it. I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.

37, 38. *I will increase them with men like a flock. As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts.* Like the multitudes of lambs that were brought up to Jerusalem at the time of the Passoversuch should be the number of the chosen people once again.

38. *So shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I am the LORD.* The result of all this wondrous mercy was to be that they were to be ashamed of their former sinsloathe their past iniquitiesand so to know the Lord as to turn from their evil ways and live unto Him.

HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK561, 581, 580.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #3506 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

WHAT SELF DESERVES
NO. 3506

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 1916.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, DECEMBER 18, 1870.
You will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities, and for your abominations.
Ezekiel 36:31.

IT HAS been the supposition of those who know not by experience that if a man is persuaded that he is pardoned and that he is a child of God, he will necessarily become proud of the distinction which God has conferred upon him. Especially if he is a believer in Predestinationwhen he finds that he is one of Gods chosen, it is supposed that the necessary consequence will be that he will be exceedingly puffed up and think very highly of himself. This, however, is but theorythe fact lies quite another wayfor if a man is truly subjected to the work of Grace in the heart, and if he is then brought to trust in Jesus and to see his sin put away by the great Sacrifice, instead of being lifted up, he will be exceedingly cast down in his own sight. And as he goes on to perceive the singular mercy and peculiar privileges which Gods Grace has bestowed upon him, instead of being exalted, he will sink lower and lower in his own esteem, until, when he shall make a full discovery of Divine Love, he will become nothing, and Christ will be All-in-All. Mercy never makes us proud! As mercy is given to the humble, it has a humbling effect. Wherever it comes, it makes a man lie low before the Throne of the heavenly Grace, and leads him to ascribe all honor and glory to the God from whom the mercy comes.

It appears from our text that when Israel shall be forgiven her long years of departure from God, one of the effects of the mercy will be that she will loathe herselfand that same effect has already been produced in some of us to whom Gods abounding mercy has come! In fact, in every man and woman here who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, there has been one uniform experience upon this matterwe have been led to loathe ourselves in our own sight for all the sin we have done before the Lord our God! I shall try to go into this matter, trusting to be rightly guided to say fitting and useful words at this time.

First, my Brothers and Sisters, *what is it that we have come to loathe in ourselves*? Secondly, *why do we loathe it*? And thirdly, *what is the necessary result in us*, or should be, of this self-loathing? First, then

I. WHAT IS IT THAT THE PARDONED SINNER LOATHES? You will perceive that he is a pardoned sinner. The verse is inserted here in a position where it plainly belongs to those whom God has renewed in heart, whose sins are forgiven, who are fully justified and accepted. It is consistent with the full enjoyment of salvation to loathe yourself. This is the strange paradox of the Christian faith. He who justifies himself is condemnedhe who condemns himself is justified. He who magnifies himself, God breaks down and casts in pieceshe who throws himself prostrate before the Throne of Gods Justice, he it is that God lifts up in due time! What is it, then, that we loathe in ourselves today?

Our reply is, first of all, *we loathe every act of our past sin*. Look back, you that have been brought to Jesus! Look back upon the past. Your lives have differed. Some here have, by Gods mercy, been kept from gross outward sin before their conversion. Others have run wantonly into it to great excess. Whichever may have been our pathway before conversion, we do now unashamedly loathe all the sin of it, whether it were the open sin or the sin of the heart. Especially do we loathe, tonight, those sins which we excused at the time (and which we excused afterwards) because we said, Others did so, because we could not see we did any hurt to our fellow men thereby. We loathe them because if they did not relate to man, but only to God, it was the more vicious of us that we should rebel altogether against Him. Against You, You only, have I sinned, is a part of the bitterness of our confession tonight. There were some sins that were sweet to us at the timewe rolled them under our tongue, poisonous though they wereand we called them sweet morsels. We would revolt against them tonight with abhorrence! Be gone, you damnable sins! By your very sweetness to me, I detect you. Fool that I must have been that such a thing as you could have been sweet to me! What eyes must I have had to have seen any beauty in you! How estranged from God to love the things so foul and vile! We would recall tonight those greater sins of our lifesins, perhaps, which entangled others. Sins which we perpetrated in the face of knowledge after many warningsdesperate, atrocious sins! Oh, what mercy that we were not cut down while we were living in them! We turn them over and remember them, not, I trust, as some doI am afraid, when they speak of their past lives, as if they were talking about their battles and they were old soldiersnever mention your sins without tears! Do not write much about them, if at all. It is best to do with them as Noahs sons did with their fathers nakedness, go back and cast a mantle over all. God has forgiven them. Remember them only that you may repent and that you may bless His name, but never mention them without loathing themutterly loathing them as if they were disgusting to your spirit and you could not speak of them without the blush mantling on your cheek!

My Brothers and Sisters, in addition to loathing every act of sin, I think I can hope, if our acts are right, we do, through Gods mercy, *loathe all the sins of omission*. I will put them in this form. The time we wasted before our conversion. Perhaps some of you were not brought to Christ until you were thirty, or forty, or fifty years of age. It is a very, very happy circumstance to be saved while you are youngera case for eternal thankfulness! But let us think of the time we wasted, precious time, in which we might have served Godtime in which we might have been learning more of Him, studying His Word and making ourselves more fit to he used by Him in later years. How much of our time ran to waste! I would especially loathe wasted Sabbaths. Some of us wasted them at home in idleness. Some wasted them abroad in company. Others of us wasted them in Gods House. I would loathe myself for having wasted Sabbaths, under sermons, hearing as though I heard them notjoining in devotions in the posture, but not in the heart! And what is this but to break the Sabbath under the very garb of keeping it?thinking other thoughts and caring for other things while eternal matters were being proclaimed in my hearing! Oh, let us loathe ourselves to think that even 20 years should have gone to waste, much more thirty, or forty, or 50 yearseven sixtyshould have been suffered to glide by, bearing nothing upon their bosom but a freight of sin, carrying nothing to the Throne of God that we would wish to have remembered there! Those of us who have been converted to God would this night loathe every refusal which we gave to Christ in those days of our unregeneracy. Do you remember, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ, those early knockings at the door of your heart by a gentle mothers word, or was it a father? Or was it, perhaps, a Sunday School teacher, or perhaps some dear one now in Glory? Oh, that ever I should have refused the Savior, had He but presented Himself to me but once! Infatuation not to be excused, to close the heart against even one of these! But many times! Some of us were very favorably circumstanced. Our mothers tears fell thick and fast for us when we were children. She would pray with us. When we read the Scriptures with her, she talked to us. Her words were very faithful, very tender, and her child could not help feeling them, but waywardly he pushed aside the tears and still forgot his mothers God!

Then you know with many of us the entreaties of our youth melted into the instructions of our riper years. Do you not remember many sermons under which Christ has knocked with His pierced hand at the door of your heart? You that sit here from time to time, I know the Lord does not leave you without some strivings of heartat least, I hope He does not. I pray the Master to help me to put His words so that they may disturb you and not let you make a nest in your sins! But as yet you have said, No, to Christ, and given Him the go-by, even until now! As for such as are now saved, I am sure they have among their most bitter pangs of regret thisthat they should ever at any time, and that they should so often and so many times have said to the Savior, Depart from me! I will not know You, neither do I desire Your salvation. And if, my Brothers and Sisters, in addition to having refused Christ, we have come into actual collision with Him by setting up our own Pharisaic estimate of ourselves, we surely ought to loathe ourselves tonight! We said in our heart, I am good enough. The filthy rags of our own righteousness have had the impertinence to compare with the fair white linen of Christs Righteousness! We thought we could put away our own sins by some method of our own, and that Cross, which is Heavens wonder and Hells terror, are despised so as to think we could do without it! We might well loathe ourselves for this even if we had never committed any other transgression than this! Oh, foul pride! Oh, base and loathsome pride that can make a sinner think he can do without a Savior, and so presumptuously imagine that Christ was more than was necessary and the Cross was a work of supererogation.

Did any of us go further than this? And did we ever *commit persecuting acts against Christ and His people*? Perhaps some of you did, and now you are His servants. You laughed at that Christian woman. Why, you would go down upon your knees now if you could find her, to beg a thousand pardons, now you know her to be a child of God! You did then act very harshly and severely towards one who was a true lover of the Savior. Perhaps you spoke opprobrious words, or did worse. As Cranmer put his hand into the fire and said, Oh, unworthy right hand, because it had written a recantation of Christ and His Truth years before, I am sure you would say it, now, if you have written one unkind word, or said one ungenerous word concerning a Believer in Christ. And oh, if you have ever openly blasphemed, I know you loathe yourself, standing here tonight, to think those lips once cursed God and, joining in the Prayer Meeting with your prayers, to think that those lips once imprecated curses upon your fellow men! I know your feeling must be one of very deep prostration of spirit. And even if we have not gone so far, we feel, as you do, that we loathe ourselves for our iniquities and for our abominations. Thus might I continue to speak to your hearts, but I trust, my Brothers and Sisters, it will be needless to do so, for you already loathe yourselves for your sins.

Let me close this first part of the subject by just remarking that there are some persons here who, if the Lord should ever convert them, would always have a strong loathing for themselves. I mean, first, hypocrites. There are such in this church, there never was a church without them! They come to the Communion Table and yet have no part nor lot in the matter. We know of some that have been here Sabbath after Sabbath, and they are habitual drunks, undiscovered by uswho intrude themselves into the assemblies of the faithful and yet, at the same time, make much mock and sport of our holy religion. Oh, if you are ever saved, what heart-breakings you will have! How you will hate yourselves! I shall not say one hard word about you, but I do pray Gods Grace will make you feel a great many hard things about yourself. And while you look up into the dear face of the Crucified and find pardon there, may you afterwards cover your face with shame and weep to think of the mercy you have found! So, too, those who once professed Christ and have gone away altogetherthey may be here. I should not wonder but what in this throng there are some that used to be religious peopleput on an appearance and did run well. Now for years they have neglected prayer. That woman, once a church member, married an ungodly husband, and many a bitter day she has had since thenand tonight she has strayed in here. Ah, woman, may God bring you back and you will loathe yourself for having given up Christ for the love of a poor dying man! And others that have gone into the world for Sunday trading, or for some sort of gain, given up Christ, like Judas, who betrayed him for 30 pieces of silver. Oh, if you are ever saved, you will hate yourselves! I am sure this will be your cry within yourself, Savior, You have forgiven me, but I shall never forgive myself! You have blotted out my sins like a cloud, but I shall always remember them and lay very low at Your feet all my praises while I think of what You have done for me. Yes, and you there have a dear one who is a persecutor, a blasphemer, an opposer of the Gospel, an infidelmay you become one of those who shall abundantly loathe yourself when you shall taste of the rich, free mercy of God!

Thus I have set forth what it is that a man loathes. But let me remark it is not merely his actions he loathes, but himself, to think that he could do such things! He loathes the fountain to think that it could yield such a stream! He loathes his own evil nature, the deep corruption and depravity of his heart, to think he should be so ungrateful and treat the Lord of Mercy in so ungenerous a way! But now we must turn to the second part of the subject.

II. HOW IS IT, AND WHY, THAT PARDONED SOULS LOATHE THEMSELVES?
Reply. First, *their nature is changed*. God, in conversion, makes us new men. We are not altered, improved, or mended, but a *new life is given us*we become new creations in Christ Jesus! It is the work of the Holy Spirit to make us to be born-againand as that which is born of the flesh is flesh, so that which is born of the Spirit is spiritand it hates the old corrupt nature, loathes it, and fights against it to the death! And further, the moving cause for loathing ourselves is the receipt of Divine Mercy. Oh, says the soul when it finds itself forgiven, did I rebel against such a God as this? What? Has He struck out all my sins from the roll, cast them all behind His back, and does He declare that He loves me still? Then wretch that I am that I should have revolted and rebelled against such a God as this! It is just as John Bunyan puts it. There is a city besieged and they determine that they will fight it out to the last. They will make every street to run with blood, but they will hold it out against the king who claims the city for himself! But when his troops march up and set their ranks around the city and it is all surrounded, the trumpet sounds for a parley, and the messenger comes forward with the white flag! And they find to their surprise that the conditions offered are so honorable, so generous, so much to their own advantage, that the king appears not to be their enemy at all, but, in fact, to be their best friend! He will enlarge their liberties far above what they were. He will beautify their cityit was ugly before. He will come and dwell in it! He will make it the metropolis of the country! He will give it marketshe will give it all it needs. Why, says John Bunyan, whereas before they were going to fortify the walls and die to a man, they fling open the gates and they are ready to tumble over the walls to him, they are so glad to find that he treats them so generously. And it is even so with us when we find that He blots out our sin, that He is all love and all compassion, we yield to Him at once! And then shame comesto think that it should ever have been necessary for us to yield, that we should ever have taken up arms against Him at all! It is a beautiful incident in English history when one of our kings was carrying on war against his rebellious son and they met in battleand the son was just about to kill the fatherwhen the fathers visor was lifted up and he saw that it was his father whom he was about to kill! So the sinner, fighting against his God, thinks He is his enemy, but all of a sudden he beholds it is his own Father that he has been fighting againstand he drops the weapon of his rebellion, feeling ashamed that he should have rebelled against such mercy and such favor! That is why we are ashamed, and I do pray that some here may be ashamed in the same way, for I think I hear Jehovah bewailing Himself tonight, Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against Me. The ox knows his owner and the ass his masters crib, but Israel does not know, My people do not consider. Your God is goodbe ready to repent and be forgiven rebel no more!
Now after the receipt of Divine Mercy has brought in this feeling, *the feeling is continued and promoted by everything that happens to us*. For instance, every Doctrine a Christian learns after he is converted makes him loathe himself. Suppose he learns the Doctrine of Election. What? He says, was I chosen of God from before the foundation of the world, and did go after filthiness and uncleanness with this body? Was I dishonest and a liar, and yet loved of God before the stars began to shine? That Doctrine makes a man loathe himself! Then he learns the Doctrine of Redemption and he reads, These are they who are redeemed from among mena special and Particular Redemption. Did Jesus then die for me, as He did not die for all? Had He a special eye to me in that Sacrifice of Himself upon the Cross? Oh, then I will smite my breast to think there ever should have been such a hard heart towards a Savior who loved me so! There is no Doctrine but what, when the heart learns it, the spirit bows down with deep shame to think it ever should have rebelled! So it is with every fresh mercy the Christian enjoys. Surely he wakes up every morning with a fresh mercy, but especially at peculiar times when our prayers have been heard, when we have been rescued out of deep distress, we lift up our eyes to Heaven and as we bless God for all His favors to us, we say, And can it be that I was once a rebel in arms against such a God as You? My God, my Father, did I ever blaspheme Your name? Did I ever read Your Book as a common book? Did I ever neglect Your mercy, my Savior? Then shame on me when You have always been so good, so kind to me.
And as the Christian grows in Grace and mounts to more elevated platforms of experience, this self-loathing gets deeper when the Spirit bears witness with him that he is a child of Godwhen he rises as a child to feel that he is an heir, and that being an heir, he claims his heritage to sit with Christ in the heavenly places! The more he sees of Gods marvelous kindness to him, the more he looks back to his past life and to the depravity of the heart within and he says, Shame on your head! Cover your face with confusion! Silence me before You! Oh, Most High, to think that after such mercy as this I should have remained so ungrateful to You. And I suppose that as long as the Christian lives, and the further he goes in the Grace of God, the deeper he goes in a lower estimate of himself. It will always be so until, as he gets to the gates of Heaven, among all his joys and the growing sense of Divine Favor, there will be a still deeper sense of repentance for all the transgressions of his heart! And now I shall need your attention a few moments longer while I dwell upon the third and last point. When a soul is thus made to loathe itself

III. WHAT FOLLOWS?
Well, there follows, first of all, *self-distrust*. A man who remembers what he has been, and has a due sense of what his sin was, will never trust himself again. He thought at one time that he could resist sin. He imagined that it would be possible for him to fight against iniquity and, by daily perseverance, to make something of himself! Now he has fallen so oftenhe has proved his own weakness so thoroughlythat all he can do now is just to look up to God and ask for strength from on high! He cannot by any possibility rest in himself! His own weakness is now thoroughly proved. A man who knows what he used to be is conscious of what his former estate was and will, by no means, rely upon his own strength for a single hour! Lead us not into temptation, will be his constant prayer, and, Deliver us from evil, will follow close upon it. When I see a man going into sinful company, a Christian professor going on to the verge of sin and saying, I shall not fall, I can take care of myself, I feel pretty certain that that mans experience is a very flimsy one, and that it is altogether a very grave question whether he ever was pardoned and has tasted of Divine Grace! If he had, he would have known what it was to loathe himself a great deal moreand to distrust himself.
The next result in a man will be that *he will not serve himself any longer*. Before, he could have lived for his own honor, but now he has such a low estimate of himself that he must have a different objective. Spend my life for my own honor and glory? No, he says, I am not worthy of it! I, who could blaspheme Heaven, or could live so long an enemy to GodI serve such a monster as myself? No! By Gods Grace, I will serve Him who has changed my nature, forgiven my sin, and made me to be a new creature in Christ Jesus! Self-loathing is quite sure to make a man have a better objective than that of seeking to honor himself.
And then a man who has once loathed himself *will never loathe his fellow men*. He will be free from that pride which is found in many which disqualifies them for Christian service because they do not know the hearts of sinners and do not enter into communion with them. I have known some who fancy there ought to be a great distance between themselves and what they call, common people. They talk of sin as though it were a strange thing in which they had no participationthey, themselves, having been highly elevated above ordinary folks! Oh, we know of some who would scorn the harlot and look down upon a man whose character has been once destroyedand think they never ought to be spoken to again! The Christian loathes himself for not having had pity on others. He knows how readily his feet might have gone in the same way how easily, too, he might have fallen, even, to the same extent, if circumstances had been the same with him as with them and, as far as he can, he seeks to uplift them! The man who is once as he should be, thrusts his arm to the elbow in every mire to bring up one of Gods precious jewels! He has put off the kid gloves of self-sufficiency, so he works like a true laborer! He knows what Christ has done for himhow Jesus poured out His very hearts blood for his redemptionand he feels he cannot do too much, if by any means he can pluck a single firebrand from the flame! Brothers and Sisters, it is good to loathe ourselves, for it makes us have sympathy with others!
Yet, once again, this self-loathing, in every case where it comes, *makes Jesus Christ very precious*, and makes sin very hateful. Whoever has loathed himself at all sees how Jesus Christ has been a great Savior and he admires and adores Him. You know you measure the height of the Saviors love by the depth of your own fall. If you dont know anything about your ruin, you wont be likely to prize much the remedy! A man that has got a desperate disease and is dealt with by the physician, if he does not know what the disease is, is not able to feel the measure of gratitude, even if he is healed, that another man would who knew how fatal the disease was in itself! If I think I am not poor, if I am befriended, I shall not have that gratitude which a bankrupt would have had if he had nothing left, to whom someone had generously given a large estate. No, a sense of need helps us to glorify God! Among the saints, and when on earth, the sweetest voices are those that have been made sweet by repentance. Among those who sing in Heaven, and sing with the most sweet and lofty praise to God, are those who bless the Grace that lifted them up from the horrible pit and out of the miry clay, and set their feet on a rock and established their goings! This blessed shamefacedness, which Christ gives us, is not to be avoidedmay we have it more and more, and it shall be a fit preparation for the service of God on earth and the enjoyment of His Presence in Heaven!
And now, dear Friends, it will be a very suitable season for every Christian just to look back and let his shame for many things mantle on his cheeks. Oh, how little progress have we made in the Divine Life through all the years! We call each year a, year of Grace, but we might call it a year of sorrow! The year of our Lord, we call it! Too often we make it the Year of Ourselves. God save us for not living to Him, working more for Him and growing more like He! Let us close every year with repentance, not because the sin abides, for, blessed be God, it is all forgivenwe are saved! Before the sin was perpetrated, Christ carried it into the sepulcher where He was buried. He cast it thereit cannot be laid against us to condemn usyet do we hate it and yet do we loathe ourselves to think we have fallen into it. But would not this also be an admirable opportunity to show how we hate sin by seeking to bring others to Christ? Do watch for other souls! As you prize your own, seek the conversion of others, and God grant that you may bring many to Jesus!
And you that are not saved, oh, suffer not this occasion to pass! Let not the days go by without your seeking for that mercy which God so fully gives through His Only-Begotten Son! Then when you receive it you will be ashamed, and you, too, will magnify the Grace that pardoned even you! God bless you, dear Friends, very richly, for Jesus sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *ROMANS 8:15-31.*

Verse 15. *For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear.* You did receive it once. You needed it. You were in sin and it was well for you when sin became bondage to you. It was grievous, but it was salutary. But you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear.

15. *But you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.* Does your spirit cry in that way tonight? Even if you are in the dark, yet if you cry for your Father, you will soon be in the light! There is no need to be distressed with any form of doubt as long as the Spirit makes this continual breathing, Abba, Father, show Yourself to me. Do what You will to me. Let me taste Your love. Let me at least bow under Your hand.

16. *The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.* We would not have that spirit otherwise. Our spirit feels the Spirit of adoption, and so there is a double witness, the witness of our spirit, and the witness of Gods Spirit, that we are the children of God! In the mouth of these two witnesses the whole shall be established.

17. *And if children, then heirs.* That does not follow in other cases, but it does in the case of the family of God. In a mans family, only one son can be an heir, but in Gods family, of all it is declared, if children, then heirs.

17. *Heirs of God.* Not only heirs *to* God, but heirs *of* God. God Himself is the heritage of His people! He belongs to them, now, as an eternal endowment. Heirs of God.

17. *And joint-heirs with Christ; if, indeed, we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.* We are to take the rough and the smooth, the bitter and the sweet with Christ. And who will make any objection to that? If we are to be heirs with Christ, we do not wish to split the inheritance in pieces. No, we will take the Cross as well as the crownthe reproach as well as the honor!

18. *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* He had just mentioned the sufferings. They are too little. They are mere specks in the sun. They are too small to be weighed in comparison with the exceeding weight of glory which God has prepared for us!

19. *For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.* So great is to be the glory of Gods children that all the world is waiting for it! Every creature stands on tiptoe, looking for the coming of Christ and the manifestation of the redeemed! What must be the greatness of this thing which the whole Creation has learned to expect?

20-21. *For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.* We were in bondage, and we have come out in a measure into the liberty of the children of God. Now the world in which we live is in sympathy with us, and it is in part under bondage because of sin, but it is only temporary bondage. There will come a day when the whole Creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of Goda new Heaven and a new earthwherein dwells righteousness!

22. *For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now.* Deep groans are in the world. Have you not heard of earthquakes? Do you not know how the whole world is in a tremor? There is something coming and all the world is groaning for that coming! God makes the universe to be like an instrument of music played upon by the fingers of mortal menso that when they are sorrowful, the world is sorrowfuland when they go forth with joy and are led forth with peace, then the mountains and the hills shall break forth before them into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. We know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now.

23. *And not only they, but ourselves, also, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we, ourselves, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.* As yet the body is under bondage. The body is dead because of sin. Therefore those headaches this palpitation of the heartthis heaviness of the clay which incases us! But by-and-by, as the material world is to be delivered from its bondage, so shall these bodies also pass away from all the encumbrance of weakness, disease and death, into a better state.

24. *For we are saved by hope*As yet.
24-25. *But hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for? But if we hope for what we see not, then do we, with patience, wait for it.* What a lesson that is, and how seldom do we learn it! Oh, in this present state our main duty is, Then do we with patience wait for it. You want to have your cake and keep it, too, but you cannot eat it and keep it, too! With patience wait for it. There see some fruits of the earth that are not yet ripe. You lay them by in store. And there are many good things that God has laid by in store for His people. And He says to us, With patience wait for it. Oh, but you world gladly have heavenly joy on earthly ground. It would be a sorry misfit if it were so. But God keeps time and season, and there is harmony in His music. You shall have earthly sorrow on earthly ground, and you shall have heavenly bliss on the heavenly shorebut not till then. We do with patience wait for it.
26. *Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities.* Especially our infirmities in prayer. I think that if anywhere our infirmities come out, it is in prayer. Even the strongest are, on their knees, comparatively weak. How few there are among us that prevail with God, as Elijah did! We ought to do so. We need, none of us, stop short of the fullest stature of a man in Christ Jesusand a man of full stature in Christ would surely carry the keys of Heavens treasury at his side! He would have but to ask, and to receiveto seek and to find. May the Spirit help our infirmities!
26. *For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit, Himself, makes intercession for us with groans which cannot be uttered.* See what little worlds we are! Microcosmsto use a harder word for as there are groans and travailing in the whole Creation, so are there such in the little world of our own heart. Only Natures travail is but naturalour travail is supernatural! It is the Spirit, Himself, groaning within chosen hearts with groans that cannot be uttered!
27. *And He who searches the hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.* When we, ourselves, hardly know the mind of the Spirit, He that searches all hearts knows it. When we feel as if we could not pray, yet the Spirit of God makes intercession in us and the great Father reads the purport of the intercessions and blesses usnot according to our knowledge of our own prayerbut according to His knowledge of what the Spirit means by those prayers. Have you never noticed that holy men of old sometimes spoke much greater things than they thought they should, for the Spirit of God in them spoke by them more than they, themselves, understood? I believe that it is also so in prayer. Oh, oftentimes the groaning, wrestling Believer may have no inkling of the full purport of his own prayer, but He that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God!
28. *And we know*Now we are getting upon a dear old passage which reads like music. There is no eloquence in the world that ever touches the eloquence of the Apostle here!
28. *That all things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.* I do not like to hear this text quoted, as I often do, only in partonly half of itAll things work together for good, people say. Oh, yes, somehow or other, good will come of it. It does not say so here! It says, All things work together for good *to them who love God,* to them who are the called according to His purpose. A special purpose and objective of God for a special people! And if you do not belong to this people, things are not working together for your good! No, but you may find that they will work together for your banishment from life and from the Presence of God! Take heed to this! The stars in their courses fight against you if you fight against Godand the very earth groans and complains of bearing up your weight if you are a rebel against the Most High! You must, first of all, be reconciled so as to love God. And the *eternal purpose* must be worked in you by your effectual calling from out of the world, or else you must not dare to intrude into the holy sanctuary of my text! We know that all things work together for good to them who love God. Of course, they do, for God loves them! To them who are the called according to His purpose. Of course they do, for that purpose which called them is not consistent with anything, but a purpose of Infinite Love to them! The great eternal purpose encompasses all things that happen and bends all to the grand objective of the good of the called ones!
29-30. *For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.* He spoke of it as if it were done because it is so sure, so certain to be done! He puts it down as a fact.
31. *What shall we then say to these things?* Ah, indeed, what shall we say? If we had the tongues of men and angels, what could we say? Well, we will say this much at any rate.
31. *If God is for us, who can be against us?* Those afflictions that we read of just nowthese reproaches which we share with Christwhat of them? They are not worth calling anything! If God is for us, who can be against us?

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #233 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

NO. 233

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 9, 1859, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.
Not for your sakes do I this, said the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. Ezekiel 36:32.

THERE are two sins of man that are bred in the bone and that continually come out in the flesh. One is self-dependence and the other is selfexaltation. It is very hard, even for the best of men, to keep themselves from the first error. The holiest of Christians and those who understand best the Gospel of Christ find in themselves a constant inclination to look to the power of the creatureinstead of looking to the power of God and the power of God, alone. Over and over again, Holy Scripture has to remind us of that which we never ought to forgetthat salvation is Gods work from first to lastand is not of man, neither by man. But so it is, this old errorthat we are to save ourselves, or that we are to do *something* in the matter of salvationalways rises up and we find ourselves continually tempted by it to step aside from the simplicity of our faith in the power of the Lord our God.

Why, even Abraham himself was not free from the great error of relying upon his own strength. God had promised to him that He would give him a sonIsaac, the child of promise. Abraham believed it, but at last, weary with waiting, he adopted the carnal expedient of taking to himself Hagar, to wife and he fancied that Ishmael would most certainly be the fulfillment of Gods promise. But instead of Ishmaels helping to fulfill the promise, he brought sorrow unto Abrahams heart, for God would not have it that Ishmael should dwell with Isaac. Cast out, said the Scripture, the bondwoman and her son. For the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman.

Now we, in the matter of salvation, are apt to think that God is tarrying long in the fulfillment of His promise and we set to work ourselves to do something and what do we do? Sink ourselves deeper in the mire and pile up for ourselves a store of future troubles and trials. Do we not read that it grieved Abrahams heart to send Ishmael away? Ah, and many a Christian has been grieved by those works of nature which he accomplished with the design of helping the God of Grace. Oh, Beloved, we shall find ourselves very frequently attempting the foolish task of assisting Omnipotence and teaching the Omniscient One. Instead of looking to grace alone to sanctify us, we find ourselves adopting Philosophic rules and principles which we think will effect the Divine work. We shall but mar it. We shall

bring grief into our own spirits.

But if, instead thereof, we in every work look up to the God of our salvation for help and strength and grace and succor, then our work will proceed to our own joy and comfort and to Gods glory. That error, then, I say, is in our bones and will always dwell with us and hence it is that the words of the text are put as an antidote against that error. It is distinctly stated in our text that salvation is of God. Not for your sakes do I this. He says nothing about what we have done or can do. All the preceding and all the succeeding verses speak of what God does. I will take you from among the heathen. I will sprinkle clean water upon you. I will give you a new heart. I will put my Spirit within you. It is all of God therefore, again recall to our recollection this doctrine and give up all dependence upon our own strength and power.

The other error to which man is very prone is that of relying upon his own merit. Though there is no righteousness in any man, yet in every man there is a proneness to truth in some fancied merit. Strange that it should be so, but the most reprobate characters have yet some virtue as they imagine, upon which they rely. You will find the most abandoned drunkard prides himself that he is not a swearer. You will find the blaspheming drunkard pride himself that at least he is honest. You will find men with no other virtue in the world exalt what they imagine to be a virtuethe fact that they do not profess to have any. They think themselves to be extremely excellent, because they have honesty or rather impudence enough to confess that they are utterly vile.

Somehow the human mind clings to human merit. It always will hold to it and when you take away everything upon which you think it could rely, in less than a moment it fashions some other ground for confidence out of itself. Human nature with regard to its own merit, is like the spiderit bears its support in its own bowels and it seems as if it would keep spinning on to all eternity. You may brush down one web, but it soon forms another. You may take the thread from one place and you will find it clinging to your finger and when you seek to brush it down with one hand you find it clinging to the other. It is hard to get rid of. It is ever ready to spin its web and bind itself to some false ground of trust.

It is against all human merit that I am this morning going to speak and I feel that I shall offend a great many people here. I am about to preach a doctrine that is gall and vinegar to flesh and blood, one that will make righteous moralists gnash their teeth and make others go away and declare that I am an Antinomian and perhaps scarcely fit to live. However, that consequence is one which I shall not greatly deplore, if connected with it there should be in other hearts a yielding to this glorious Truth of God and a giving up to the power and Grace of God, who will never save us, unless we are prepared to let Him have all the glory.

First, I shall endeavor to expound at large the doctrine contained in this text. In the next place I shall endeavor to show its force and truthfulness. Then in the third place I shall seek Gods Holy Spirit to apply the useful, practical lessons which are to be drawn from it.

I. I shall endeavor to EXPOUND THIS TEXT. Not for your sakes do I this, said the Lord God. The motive for the salvation of the human race is to be found in the breast of God and not in the character or condition of man. Two races have revolted against Godthe one angelic, the other human. When a part of this angelic race revolted against the Most High, justice speedily overtook them. They were swept from their starry seats in Heaven and henceforth they have been reserved in darkness unto the great day of the wrath of God. No mercy was ever presented to them, no sacrifice ever offered for them. They were without hope and mercy, forever consigned to the pit of eternal torment. The human race, far inferior in order of intelligence, sinned as atrociouslyat any rate, if the sins of manhood that we have heard of were put together and rightly weighed, I can scarcely understand how even the sins of devils could be much blacker than the sin of mankind.

However, the God who in His infinite justice passed over angels and suffered them forever to expiate their offenses in the fires of Hell, was pleased to look down on man. Here was election on a grand scale. The election of manhood and the reprobation of fallen angelhood. What was the reason for it? The reason was in Gods mind, an inscrutable reason which we do not know and which if we knew probably we could not understand. Had you and I amen put upon the choice of which should have been spared, I do think it probable we should have chosen that fallen angels should have been saved. Are they not the brightest? Have they not the greatest mental strength? If they had been redeemed, would it not have glorified God more, as we judge, than the salvation of worms like ourselves?

Those bright beingsLucifer, son of the morning and those stars that walked in his trainif they had been washed in His redeeming blood, if they had been saved by sovereign mercy, what a song would they have lifted up to the Most High and everlasting God! But God, who does as He wills with His own and gives no account of His matters, He who deals with His creatures as the potter deals with his claytook not upon Him the nature of angels, but took upon Him the seed of Abraham and chose men to be the vessels of His mercy. This fact we know, but where is its reason? Certainly not in man. Not for your sakes do I this. O house of Israel, be ashamed and be confounded for your own ways.

Here, very few men object. We notice that if we talk about the election of men and the non-election of fallen angels, there is not a cavil for a moment. Every man approves of Calvinism till he feels that he is the loser by it. But when it begins to touch his own bone and his own flesh then he kicks against it. Come, then, we must go further. The only reason why one man is saved and not another, lies not, in any sense, in the man saved, but in Gods bosom. The reason why this day the Gospel is preached to you and not the heathen far away is not because, as a race, we are superior to the heathen. It is not because we deserve more at Gods hands. His choice of Britain, in the election of outward privilege, is not caused by the

excellency of the British nation, but entirely because of His own mercy and His own love.

There is not reason in us why we should have the Gospel preached to us more than any other nation. Today, some of us have received the Gospel and have been changed by it and have become the heirs of light and immorality. Whereas others are left still to be the heirs of wrath. But there is no reason in us why we should have been taken and others left

There was nothing in us to merit esteem, Or give the Creator delight.
Twas even so, Father! We ever must sing, Because it seemed good in Your sight.

And now, let us review this doctrine at length. We are taught in Holy Scripture that, long before this world was made, God foreknew and foresaw all the creatures He intended to fashion. And there and then, foreordaining that the human race would fall into sin and deserve His anger, determined, in His own sovereign mind, that an immense portion of the human race should be His children and should be brought to Heaven. As to the rest, He left them to their own desertsto sow the wind and reap the whirlwind, to scatter crime and inherit punishment. Now, in the great decree of election, the only reason why God selected the vessels of mercy must have been because He would do it. There was nothing in any one of them which caused God to choose them. We all were alike, all lost, all ruined by the Fall. All without the slightest claim upon His mercy. All, in fact, deserving His utmost vengeance. His choice of anyone and His choice of all His people, are causeless, so far as anything in *them* was concerned. It was the effect of His sovereign will and of nothing which they did, could do, or even would do. For thus said the textNot for your sakes do I this, O house of Israel!

As for the fruit of our election, in due time Christ came into this world and purchased with His blood all those whom the Father has chosen. Now come you to the Cross of Christ. Bring this doctrine with you and remember that the only reason why Christ gave up His life to be a ransom for His sheep was because He loved His people, but there was nothing in His people that made Him die for them. I was thinking as I came here this morning, if any man should imagine that the love of God to us was caused by anything in us, it would be as if a man should look into a well to find the springs of the ocean, or dig into an anthill to find an Alp. The love of God is so immense, so boundless and so infinite that you cannot conceive for a moment that it could have been caused by anything in us.

The little good that is in usthe *no good* that is in usfor there is none, could not have caused the boundless, bottomless, shoreless, summitless love which God manifests to His people. Stand at the foot of the Cross, you merit-mongers, you that delight in your own worksanswer this questionDo you think that the Lord of life and glory could have been brought down from Heaven, could have been fashioned like a man and have been led to die through any merit of yours? Shall these sacred veins be opened with any lancet less sharp than His own infinite love? Do you conceive that your poor merits, such as they are, could be so efficacious as to nail the Redeemer to the tree and make Him bend His shoulders beneath the enormous load of the worlds guilt? You cannot imagine it.

The consequence is so great, compared with what you suppose to be the case, that your logic fails in a moment. You may conceive that a coral insect rears a rock by its multitude and by its many years of working. But you cannot conceive that all the accumulated merits of manhood, if there were such things, could have brought the Eternal from the throne of His majesty and bowed Him to the death of the Crossthat is a thing as clearly impossible to any thoughtful mind, as impossibility can be. No from the Cross comes the cryNot for your sakes do I this, O house of Israel. After Christs death, there comes, in the next place, the work of the Holy Spirit. Those whom the Father has chosen and whom the Son has redeemed, in due time the Holy Spirit calls out of darkness into marvelous light.

Now, the calling of the Holy Spirit is without any regard to any merit in us. If this day the Holy Spirit shall call out of this congregation a hundred men and bring them out of their estate of sin into a state of righteousness, you might bring these hundred men and let them march in review and if you could read their hearts, you would be compelled to say, I see no reason why the Spirit of God should have operated upon these. I see nothing whatever that could have merited such grace as thisnothing that could have caused the operations and motions of the Spirit to work in these men. For, look hereby nature, men are said to be dead in sin. If the Holy Spirit quickens, it cannot be because of any power in the dead men, or any merit in them, for they are dead, corrupt and rotten in the grave of their sin. If then, the Holy Spirit says, Come forth and live, it is not because of anything in the dry bones, it must be for some reason in His own mind, but not in us.

Therefore, know this, Brothers and Sisters, that we all stand upon level ground. We have none of us anything that can recommend us to God. And if the Spirit shall choose to operate in our hearts unto salvation, He must be moved to do it by His own supreme love, for He cannot be moved to do it by any good will, good desire, or good deed, that dwells in us by nature.

To go a little furtherthis Truth of God, which holds good so far, holds good all the way. Gods people, after they are called by grace, are preserved in Christ Jesus. They are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. They are not suffered to sin away their eternal inheritance, but as temptations arise they have strength given with which to encounter them and as sin blackens them they are washed afresh and again cleansed. But mark, the reason why God keeps His people is the same as that which made them His peopleHis own free Sovereign Grace. If, my Brothers and Sisters, you have been delivered in the hour of temptation, pause and remember that you were not delivered for your own sake. There was nothing in you that deserved the deliverance. If you have been fed and supplied in your hour of need, it is not because you have been a faithful servant of God, nor because you have been a prayerful Christian. It is simply and only because of Gods mercy. He is not moved to anything He does for you by anything that you do for Him. His motive for blessing you lies wholly and entirely in the depths of His own bosom. Blessed be God, His people shall be kept

Nor death, nor Hell shall ever remove
His favorites from His breast;
In the dear bosom of His love
They must forever rest.

But why? Because they are holy? Because they are sanctified? Because they serve God with good works? No, but because He in His Sovereign Grace has loved them, does love them and will love them, even to the end. And to conclude my exposition of this text. This shall hold good in Heaven itself. The day is coming when every blood-bought, blood-washed child of God shall walk the golden streets arrayed in white. Our hands shall soon bear the palm. Our ears shall be delighted with celestial melodies and our eyes filled with the transporting visions of Gods glory. But mark, the only reason why God shall bring us to Heaven shall be His own love and not because we deserved it. We must fight the fight, but we do not win the victory because we fight it. We must labor, but the wage at the days end shall be a wage of grace and not a debt. We must honor God here, looking for the recompense of the reward. But that recompense will not be given on a legal ground, because we merited it, but given to us entirely because God loves us, for no reason that was in us.

When you and I and each of us shall enter Heaven, our song shall be, Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Your name be all the glory. And that shall be true, it shall not be a mere exaggeration of gratitude. It shall be true. We shall be compelled to sing it, because we could not sing anything else. We shall feel that we did nothing and that we *were* nothing, but that God did it allthat we had nothing in us to be the motive of His doing it, but that His motive lay in Himself. Therefore unto Him shall be every particle of the honor forever and ever.

Now, this, I take it, is the meaning of the text. Distasteful it is to the great majority, even of professing Christians in this age. It is a doctrine that requires a great deal of salt, or else few people will receive it. It is very unsavory to them. However, there It stands. Let God be true and every man a liar. His Truth we must preach and this we must proclaim. Salvation is not of men, neither by man. Not of the will of the flesh, nor of blood, nor of birth, but of the sovereign will of God and God alone.

II. And now, in the second place, I have to ILLUSTRATE AND ENFORCE THIS TEXT.
Consider a moment, mans character. It will humble us and it will tend to confirm this Truth of God in our minds. Let me take an illustration. I will consider man as a criminal. He certainly is such in the sight of God and I shall not slander him. Suppose now that some great criminal is at last overtaken in his sin and shut up in Newgate. He has committed high treason, murder, rebellion and every possible iniquity. He has broken all the laws of the realmevery one of them. The public cry is everywhere This man must die. The laws cannot be maintained unless he shall be made an example of their rigor. He who bears not the sword in vain must this time let the sword taste blood. The man must die. He richly deserves it.
You look through his characteryou cannot see one solitary redeeming trait. He is an old offender. He has so long persevered in his iniquity that you are compelled to say, The case is hopeless with this man. His crimes have such aggravation we cannot make an apology for him, even should we try. Not Jesuitical cunning itself could devise any pretense of excuse, or any hope of a plea for this abandoned wretch. Let him die! Now, if Her Majesty the Queen, having in her hands the sovereign power of life and death chooses that this man shall *not* die, but that he shall be spared, do you not see as plain as daylight that the only reason that can move her to spare that man must be her own love, her own compassion? For, as I have supposed already that there is nothing in that mans character that can be a plea for mercy, but that, contrariwise, his whole character cries aloud for vengeance against his sin. Whether we like it or not, this is just the Truth of God concerning ourselves. This is just our character and position before God.
Ah, my Hearer, you may turn upon your heel, disgusted and offended. But there are some here who feel it to be solemnly true in their own experience and they will therefore drink in the doctrine, for it is the only way whereby they can be saved. My Hearer, your conscience perhaps is telling you this morning that you have sinned so heinously that there is not an inlet for a solitary ray of hope in your character. You have added to your sins this great one, that you have rebelled against the Most High wantonly and wickedly. If you have not committed all the sins in the calendar of crime, it has been because Providence has stayed your hand, Your heart has been black enough for it all. You feel that the vileness of your imagination and desires has achieved the consummation of human guilt and further you could not go. Your sins have prevailed against you and have gone over your head. Now, Man, the only ground upon which God can save you is His own love. He cannot save you because you deserve it, for you do not deserve itbecause there is no excuse that might be made for your sin. No, you are without any excuse and you feel it.
Oh, bless His dear name, that He has devised this way, whereby He can save you upon the basis of His own sovereign love and unbounded grace, without anything in you. I want you to go back to Newgate again to this criminal. We suppose now that this criminal is visited by Her Majesty in person. She goes to him and she says to him, Rebel, traitor, murderer, I have in my heart compassion for you. You deserve it not. But I am come this day to you, to tell you that if you repent you shall have mercy at my hands. Suppose this man, springing up, should curse hercurse this angel of mercy to her face, spit upon her and utter blasphemies and imprecate curses upon her head? She retires. She is gone. But so great is her compassion, that the next day she sends a messenger and days and weeks and months and years, she continually sends messengers and these go to him and they say, If you will repent of your transgressions you shall have mercy. Not because you deserve it, but because Her Majesty is compassionate and out of her gracious soul she desires your salvation. Will you repent?
Suppose this man should curse at the messenger, stop his ears against the message, spit upon him, tell him he does not care for him at all. Or to suppose a better casesuppose he turns upon his seat and says, I dont care whether I am hanged or not. Ill take my chance along with other people. I shall take no notice of you. And suppose more than that, rising from his seat, he indulges again in all the crimes for which he has already been condemned and plunges headlong afresh into the very sins which have brought his neck under the rope of the gallows? Now, if Her Majesty would spare such a man as that, on what terms can she do it? You say, Why, she cannot, unless she does it out of love. She cannot because of any merit in him, because such a beast as that ought to die.
And now what are you and I by nature but like this? And my unconverted Hearer, what is this but a picture of you? Has not God Himself visited your conscience? Has He not said to you, Sinner! Come now, let us reason together. Though your sins are as scarlet they shall be as wool. And what have you done? Stopped your ear against the voice of consciencecursed and swore at God, blasphemed His holy name, despised His Word and railed against His ministers. And this day, again, with tears in his eyes, a servant of God is come to you and his message is, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. As I live, said the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but had rather that he should turn unto Me and live. And what will you do? Why, if left to yourselves you will laugh at the messagedespise it. It will glance off from you like an arrow from a man that is girt about with mail and you will go away to despise God again, as you have done before. Do you not see, then, that if God ever shall save you, it cannot be for *your* sakes? But it must be from His own infinite love. It cannot be from any other reason, since you have rejected Christ, despised His Gospel, trod under foot the blood of Jesus and have refused to be saved. If He saves you, it must be free grace and free grace alone.
But now picture a little more about this criminal at Newgate. Not content with having added sin to sin and having rejected mercy for himself, this wretch industriously employs himself in going round to all the cells where others are confined and hardening their hearts also against the mercy of the Queen. He can scarce see a person but he begins to taint him with the blasphemy of his own heart. He utters injurious things against the majesty that spares him and endeavors to make others as vile as himself. Now,

what does justice say? If this man ought not to die on his own account, yet he ought to die for the sake of others. And if he is spared, is it not as plain as a pike-staff that he cannot be spared because of any reason in him? It must be because of the unconquerable compassion of the Sovereign.
And now look hereis not this the case of some here present? Not only do you sin yourselves, but you lead others into sin. I know this was one of my plagues and torments, when first God brought me to Himself, that I have led others into temptation. Are there not men here that have taught others to swear? Are there not fathers here that have helped to destroy their own childrens souls? Are there not some of you that are like the deadly Upas tree? You stretch out your branches and from every leaf there drops poison upon those who come beneath its deadly range. Are there not some here who have seduced the virtuous, that have misled those who were seemingly pious and that are perhaps so hardened that they even glory in it? Not content with being damned yourselves, you are seeking to lead others to the pit also. Thinking it not enough yourselves to be at enmity with God, you want to imitate Satan by dragging others with you.
O my Hearer, is not this your case? Does not your heart confess it? And does not the tear flow down your cheek? Remember, then, this must be trueif God shall save you, it must be because He will do it. It cannot be because there is anything good in you, for you deserve now to die and if He spare you it must be sovereign love and Sovereign Grace. I will just use one other illustration and then I think I shall have made the text clear enough. There is not so much difference between black and a darker shade of black as there is between pure white and black. Every one can see that. Then there is not so much difference between man and the devil as there is between God and man. God is perfection. We are black with sin. The devil is only a darker shade of black. And great as may be the difference between our sin and the sin of Satan, yet it is not so great as the difference between the perfection of God and the *imperfection* of man.
Now, imagine for a minute that somewhere in Africa there should be a tribe of devils livingthat you and I had it in our power to save these devils from some threatened wrath which must overtake them. If you or I should go there and die to save those devils, what could be our motive? From what we know of the character of a devil, the only motive that could make us do that must be love. There could not be any other. It must be simply because we had such big hearts that we could even embrace fiends within them. Well, now, there is not so much difference between man and the devil as between God and man. If, then, the only motive that could make men save a devil must be mans love, does it not follow with irresistible force, that the only motive that could lead God to save men must be Gods own love. At any rate, if that reason be not cogent the fact is indisputableNot for your sakes do I this, O house of Israel. God sees us, abandoned, evil, wicked and deserving His wrath. If He saves us, it is His boundless, fathomless love that leads Him to do itnothing whatever in us.
III. And now, having thus preached this doctrine and enforced it, I come to a very solemn PRACTICAL APPLICATION. And here may God the Holy Spirit help me labor with your hearts!
First, since this doctrine is true, how humble a Christian man ought to be! If you are saved, you have had nothing to do with itGod has done it. If you are saved, you have not deserved it. It is mercy undeserved which you have received. I have sometimes been delighted when I have seen the gratitude of abandoned characters to any who have assisted them. I remember visiting a house of refuge. There was a poor girl there who had fallen into sin long ago and when she found herself kindly addressed and recognized by society and saw a Christian minister longing after her souls good, it broke her heart. What should a man of God care about her? She was so vile. How could it be that a Christian should speak to her? Ah, but how much more should that feeling rise in *our* hearts? My God! I have rebelled against You and yet You have loved me, unworthy me! How can it be? I cannot lift myself up with pride, I must bow down before You in speechless gratitude.
Remember, my dear Brethren, that not only is the mercy which you and I have received undeserved, but it was unasked. It is true you prayed, but not till free grace *made* you pray. You would have been, to this day, hardened in heart, without God and without Christ, had not free grace saved you. Can you be proud then? Proud of mercy which, if I may use the term, has been *forced* upon you?proud of grace which has been given you *against* your will, until your will was changed by Sovereign Grace? And think again. All the mercy you have you once refused. Christ sups with you. Be not proud of His company. Remember, there was a day when He knocked and you refusedwhen He came to the door and said, My head is wet with dew and my locks with the drops of the night. Open to me, My Beloved. And you barred it in His face and would not let Him enter.
Be not proud, then, of what you have, when you remember that you did once reject Him. Does God embrace You in His arms of love? Remember, once you lifted up your hand of rebellion against Him. Is your name written in His book? Ah, there was a time when if it had been in your power, you would have erased the sacred lines that contained your own salvation. Can we, *dare* we, lift up our wicked head with pride, when all these things should make us hang our heads down in the deepest humility? That is one lessonlet us learn another.
This doctrine is true and therefore it should be a subject of the greatest gratitude. When meditating upon this text yesterday, the effect it had upon me was one of transport and joy. Oh, I thought, upon what other condition could I have been saved? And I looked back upon my past estate. I saw myself piously trained and educated, but revolting against all that. I saw a mothers tears shed over me in vain and a fathers admonition lost upon me and yet I found myself saved by grace and I could only say, Lord, I bless You that it is by grace, for if it had been by merit I had never been saved. If You had waited till there was something good in me, You would have waited till I sank into the hopeless perdition of Hell, for good in man there never would have been unless You had first *put* it there. And then I thought immediately, Oh, how I could go and preach that to the poor sinner!
Ah, let me *try* if I cannot. O Sinner! You say you dare not come to Christ because you have nothing to recommend you. He does not want anything to recommend you. He will not save you if you have anything to recommend you, for He says, Not for your sake do I this. Go to Christ with earrings in your ears and jewels upon you. Wash your face and array yourself with gold and silver and go before Him and say, Lord, save me. I have washed myself and clothed myselfsave me! Get you gone! Not for your sakes will I do this. Go to Him again and say, Lord, I have put a rope about my neck and sackcloth about my loinssee how repentant I am, see how I feel my need. Now save me! No, says He, I would not save you on account of your flaunting robes and now I will not save you because of your rags. I will save you for nothing about you. If I do save you, it will be from something in My heart, not from anything you feel. Get you gone!
But if today you go to Christ and say, Lord Jesus, there is no reason in the world why I should be savedthere is one in Heaven. Lord, I cannot urge any plea, I deserve to be lost, I have no excuse to make for all my sins, no apology to offer. Lord, I deserve Hell and there is nothing in me why I should be saved, for if You would save me I should make but a poor Christian, after all. I fear that my future works will be no honor to YouI wish they could be, but Your grace must make them good, else they will still be bad. But, Lord, though I have nothing to bring and nothing to say for myself, I do say thisI have heard that You have come into the world to save sinnersO Lord, save me!

I the chief of sinners am.
I confess I do not feel this as I ought, I do not mourn it as I ought. I have no repentance to recommend me. No, Lord, I have no faith to recommend me either, for I do not believe Your promise as I ought. But oh, I cling to this text. Lord, You have said You will not do it for my sake. I thank You that You have said that. You could not do it for my sake, for I have no reason why you should. Lord, I claim your gracious promise. Be merciful to me, a sinner.
Ah, you good people, this doctrine does not suit some of you. It is too humbling, is it not? You that have kept your Churches regularly and been to meetings so piously, you that never broke the Sabbath, or never swore an oath, or did anything wrongthis does not suit you. You say it will do very well to preach to harlots and drunkards and swearers, but it will not suit such good people as we are. Ah, well, this is your textI have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. You are whole you are. You need not a physician, but they that are sick. Go your way. Christ came not to save such as you are. You think you can save yourselves. Do it and perish in the doing of it. But I feel that the same Gospel that suits a harlot suits me and that free grace which saved Saul of Tarsus must save me, else I am never saved. Come, let us all go together. We are all guiltysome more, some less, but all hopelessly guilty. Let us go together to the footstool of His mercy and though we dare not look up, let us lie there in the dust and sigh out again, Lord have mercy upon us for whom Jesus died.
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, I come.
Sinner, come now. Come now, I beseech you. I entreat you, come now. O Spirit of the living God, draw them now! Let these feeble weak words be the means of drawing souls to Christ. Will you reject my Master again? Will you go out of this house hardened once more? You may never again have such feelings as those which are aroused in your soul. Come, now, receive His mercy. Now bend your willing necks to His yoke. And then I know you shall go away to taste His faithful love and at last to sing in Heaven the song of the redeemedUnto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, unto Him be glory forever. Amen.

O you great eternal Jesus,
High and mighty Prince of Peace,
How Your wonders shine resplendent,
In the wonders of Your grace
Your rich Gospel scorns conditions,
Breathes salvation free as air;
Only breathes triumphant mercy,
Baffling guilt and all despair.
O the grandeur of the Gospel,
How it sounds the cleansing blood;
Shows the heart of a Savior,
Shows the tender heart of God.
Only treats of love eternal,
Swells the all-abounding grace,
Nothing knows but life and pardon,
Full redemption, endless peace.

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PRAYERTHE FORERUNNER OF MERCY
NO. 138

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JUNE 28, 1857, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.
Thus says the Lord God: I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock.
Ezekiel 36:37.

IN reading the Chapter we have seen the great and exceedingly precious promises which God had made to the favored nation of Israel. God in this verse declares that though the promise was made and though He would fulfill it, yet He would not fulfill it until His people asked Him to do so. He would give them a spirit of prayer by which they would cry earnestly for the blessing and then, when they have cried aloud unto the living God, He would be pleased to answer them from Heaven, His dwelling place. The word used here to express the idea of prayer is a suggestive one. I will yet for this be *enquired of* by the house of Israel. Prayer, then, is an enquiry! No man can pray aright unless he views prayer in that light. First, I enquire what the promise is. I turn to my Bible and I seek to find the promise whereby the thing which I desire to seek is certified to me as being a thing which God is willing to give. Having enquired so far as that, I take that promise and on my bended knees I enquire of God whether He will fulfill His own promise. I take to Him His own Word of Covenant and I say to Him, O Lord, will You not fulfill it and will You not fulfill it now? So that there, again, prayer is enquiry. After prayer I look for the answer, I expect to be heard and if I am not answered I pray again and my repeated prayers are but fresh enquiries. I expect the blessing to arrive. I go and enquire whether there are any tidings of its coming. I ask and thus I say, Will You answer me, O Lord? Will You keep Your promise? Or will You shut up Your ears because I misunderstand my own needs and mistake Your promise? Brothers and Sisters, we must use enquiry in prayer and regard prayer as being, first, *an enquiry for the promise,* and then, on the strength of that promise, *an enquiry for the fulfillment*. We expect something to come as a present from a friendwe first have the note, whereby we are informed it is upon the road. We enquire as to what the present is by the reading of the note and then, if it arrives not, we call at the accustomed place where the parcel ought to have been left and we ask or enquire for such-and-such a thing. We have enquired about the promise and then we go and enquire, again, until we get an answer that the promised gift has arrived and is ours. So with prayer. We get the promise by enquiry and we get the fulfillment of it by again enquiring at Gods hands!

Now, this morning I shall try, as God shall help me, first to speak of prayer as *the prelude of blessing*. Next I shall try to show why prayer is thus constituted by God *the forerunner of His mercies.* And then I shall close by an *exhortation*, as earnest as I can make it, exhorting you to pray, if you would obtain blessings.

I. Prayer is the FORERUNNER OF MERCIES. Many despise prayer they despise it because they do not understand it. He who knows how to use that sacred art of prayer will obtain so much thereby that *from its very profitableness* he will be led to speak of it with the highest reverence.

Prayer, we assert, is the prelude of all mercies. We bid you turn back to sacred history and you will find that never did a great mercy come to this world unheralded by prayer. The promise comes alone, with no preventing merit to precede it, but the blessing promised always follows its herald, prayer. You shall note that all the wonders that God did in the old times were first of all sought at His hands by the earnest prayers of His believing people. The other Sabbath we beheld Pharaoh cast into the depths of the Red Sea and all his hosts, still as a stone, in the depths of the waters. Was there a prayer that preceded that magnificent overthrow of the Lords enemies? Turn to the Book of Exodus and you will read, 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 mark youjust before the sea parted and made a highway for the Lords people through its bosomMoses had prayed unto the Lord and cried earnestly unto Him, so that Jehovah said, Why do you cry unto Me? A few Sabbaths ago, when we preached on the subject of the rain which came down from Heaven in the days of Elijah, you will remember how we pictured the land of Judea as an arid wilderness, a mass of dust, destitute of all vegetation. Rain had not fallen for three years! The pastures were dried up. The brooks had ceased to flow. Poverty and distress stared the nation in the face. At an appointed season a sound was heard of abundance of rain and the torrents poured from the skies until the earth was deluged with the happy floods. Do you ask me whether prayer was the prelude to that? I point you to the top of Carmel. Behold a man kneeling before his God, crying, O my God! Send the rain. Lo, the majesty of his faith! He sends his servant, Gehazi, to look seven times for the clouds because he believes that they will come in answer to his prayer. And mark the factthe torrents of rain were the offspring of Elijahs faith and prayer. Wherever in Holy Writ you shall find the blessing, you shall find the prayer that went before it!

Our Lord Jesus Christ was the greatest blessing that men ever had. He was Gods best benefit to a sorrowing world. And did prayer precede Christs advent? Was there any prayer which went before the coming of the Lord, when He appeared in the Temple? Oh yes, the prayers of saints for many ages had followed each other. Abraham saw His day and when he died, Isaac took up the note and when Isaac slept with his fathers, Jacob and the Patriarchs still continued to pray. Yes, and in the very days of Christ, prayer was still made for Him continuallyAnna the Prophetess and the venerable Simeon still looked for the coming of Christ. And day by day they prayed and interceded with God that He would suddenly come to His Temple.

Yes and markas it has been in Sacred Writ, so it shall be with regard to greater things that are yet to happen in the fulfillment of promises. I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will one day come in the clouds of Heaven. It is my firm belief in common with all who read the Sacred Scriptures aright that the day is approaching when the Lord Jesus shall stand a second time upon the earthwhen He shall reign with illimitable sway over all the habitable parts of the globewhen kings shall bow before Him and queens shall be nursing mothers of His Church. But when shall that time come? We shall know its coming by its prelude when prayer shall become more loud and strong, when supplication shall become more universal and more incessant then even as when the tree puts forth her first green leaves. We expect that the spring approaches even so when prayer shall become more hearty and earnestwe may open our eyes for the day of our redemption draws near! Great prayer is the preface of great mercy and in proportion to our prayer is the blessing that we may expect!

It has been so *in the history of the modern Church*. Whenever she has been awakened to pray, it is then that God has awakened to her help. Jerusalem, when you have shaken yourself from the dust, your Lord has taken His sword from the scabbard. When you have suffered your hands to hang down and your knees to become feeble, He has left you to become scattered by your enemies. You have become barren and your children have been cut off, but when you have learned to crywhen you have begun to prayGod has restored unto you the joy of His salvation and He has gladdened your heart and multiplied your children. The history of the Church up to this age has been a series of waves, a succession of ebbs and flows. A strong wave of religious prosperity has washed over the sands of sin. Again it has receded and immorality has reigned. You shall read in English historyit has been the same. Did the righteous prosper in the days of Edward VI? They shall again be tormented under a Bloody Mary! Did Puritanism become omnipotent over the land, did the glorious Cromwell reign and did the saints triumph? Charles the Seconds debaucheries and wickedness became the black receding wave. Again, Whitefield and Wesley poured throughout the nation a mighty wave of religion, which like a torrent drove everything before it. Again it receded and there came the days of Payne and of men full of infidelity and wickedness. Again there came a strong impulse and again God glorified Himself. And up to this date, again, there has been a decline. Religion, though more fashionable than it once was, has lost much of its vitality and power. Much of the zeal and earnestness of the ancient preachers has departed and the wave has receded again.

But, blessed be God, flood tide has again set inonce more God has awakened His Church! We have seen in these days what our fathers never hoped to seewe have seen the great men of a Church, not too noted for its activity, at last coming forthand God is with them in their coming forth! They have come forth to preach unto the people the unsearchable riches of God! I hope we may have another great wave of religion rolling in upon us. Shall I tell you what I conceive to be the moon that influences these waves? My Brothers and Sisters, even as the moon influences the tides of the sea, even so does

prayer, (which is the reflection of the sunlight of Heaven and is Gods moon in the sky), influence the tides of godliness! When our prayers become like the crescent moon and when we stand not in conjunction with the sun, then there is but a shallow tide of godliness. But when the full orb shines upon the earth and when God Almighty makes the prayers of His people full of joy and gladness, it is then that the sea of Grace returns to its strength! In proportion to the prayerfulness of the Church shall be its present success, though its ultimate success is beyond the reach of hazard.

And now again, to come nearer homethis Truth of God is true of each of you, my dearly Beloved in the Lord, *in your own personal experience*. God has given you many an unsolicited favor but still, great prayer has always been the great prelude of great mercy with you. When you first found peace through the blood of the Cross, you had been praying much beforehand and earnestly interceding with God that He would remove your doubts and deliver you from your distresses. Your assurance was the result of prayer! And when at any time you have had high and rapturous joys, you have been obliged to look upon them as answers to your prayers. When you have had great deliverances out of sore troubles and mighty helps in great dangers, you have been able to say, I cried unto the Lord and He heard me and delivered me out of all my fears. Prayer, we say, in your case, as well as in the case of the Church at large, is always the preface to blessing!

And now, some will say to me, In what way do you regard prayer, then, as affecting the blessing? God, the Holy Spirit vouchsafes prayer before the blessing. But in what way is prayer connected with the blessing? I reply, prayer goes before the blessing in several senses.

It goes before the blessing, *as the blessings shadow*. When the sunlight of Gods mercy rises upon our necessities, it casts the shadow of prayer far down upon the plain, or, to use another illustration, when God piles up a hill of mercies, He, Himself, shines behind them and He casts on our spirits the shadow of prayer, so that we may rest certain. If we are in prayer, our prayers are the shadows of mercy. Prayer is the rustling of the wings of the angels that are on their way bringing us the gifts of Heaven. Have you heard prayer in your heart? You shall see the angel in your house! When the chariots that bring us blessings rumble, their wheels sound with prayer. We hear the prayer in our own spirits and that prayer becomes the token of the coming blessings! Even as the cloud foreshadows rain, so prayer foreshadows the blessing. Even as the green blade is the beginning of the harvest, so is prayer the prophecy of the blessing that is about to come!

Againprayer goes before mercy, *as the representative of it*. Often times the king, in his progress through his realms, sends one before him who blows a trumpet. And when the people see him, they know that the king comes because the trumpeter is there. But, perhaps, there is before him a more important personage, who says, I am sent before the king to prepare for his reception and I am this day to receive anything that you have to send the king, for I am his representative. So prayer is the representative of the blessing before the blessing comes. The prayer comes and when I see the prayer, I say, Prayer, you are the vice regent of the blessing. If the blessing is the king, you are the regent. I know and look upon you as being the representative of the blessing I am about to receive.

But I also think that sometimes and generally, prayer goes before the blessing *even as the cause goes before the effect*. Some people say, when they get anything, that they get it because they prayed for it. But if they are people who are not spiritually-minded and who have no faith, let them know that whatever they may get, it is not in answer to prayerfor we know that God hears not sinners and the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord. Well, says one, I asked God for suchand-such a thing the other day. I know I am no Christian but I got it. Dont you consider that I had it through my prayers? No, Sir, no more than I believe the reasoning of the old man who affirmed that the Goodwin Sands had been caused by the building of Tenterden Steeple! The sands had not been there, before, and the sea did not come up till it was built and, therefore, he said, the steeple must have caused the flood! Now, your prayers have no more connection with your blessing than the sea with the steeple. But in the Christians case it is far different! Oftentimes the blessing is actually brought down from Heaven by the prayer. An objector may reply, I believe that prayer may have much influence on yourself, Sir, but I do not believe that it has any effect on the Divine Being. Well, Sir, I shall not try to convince you because it is as useless for me to try to convince you of that, unless you believe the testimonies I bring, as it would be to convince you of any historical fact by simply reasoning about it. I could bring out of this congregation not one, nor twenty, but many hundreds who are rational, intelligent persons and who would, each of them, most positively declare that some hundreds of times in their lives they have been led to seek most earnestly, deliverance out of trouble, or help in adversityand they have received the answers to their prayers in so marvelous a manner that they, themselves, did no more doubt their being answers to their cries than they could doubt the existence of a God! They felt sure that He heard them. They were certain of it.

Oh, the testimonies to the power of prayer are so numerous that the man who rejects them flies in the face of good testimonies! We are not all enthusiasts. Some of us are cool-blooded enoughwe are not all fanatics. We are not all quite wild in our piety. Some of us in other things, we reckon, act in a tolerably common-sense way. But yet we all agree in thisthat our prayers have been heardand we could tell many stories of our prayers, still fresh upon our memories, where we have cried unto God and He has heard us! But the man who says he does not believe God hears prayer, knows He does. I have no respect for his skepticism, any more than I have any respect for a mans doubt about the existence of a God. The man does not doubt it! He has to choke his own conscience before he dares to say he does. It is complimenting him too much to argue with him. Will you argue with a liar? He affirms a lie and knows it is so. Will you condescend to argue with him to prove that he is a liar? The man is incapable of reasoning! He is beyond the pale of those who ought to be treated as respectable persons. If a man rejects the existence of God, he does it desperately against his own conscience and if he is bad enough to stifle his own conscience so much as to believe that, or pretend that he believes it, we think we shall demean ourselves if we argue with so loose a character! He must be solemnly warned, for reason is thrown away upon deliberate liars. But you know, Sir, God hears prayerbecause if you do not, either way you must be a fool! You are a fool for not believing so and a worse fool for praying, yourself, when you do not believe He hears you. But I do not pray, Sir. Do not pray? Did I not hear a whisper from your nurse when you were sick? She said you were a wonderful saint when you had the fever. You do not pray? No, but when things do not go quite well in business, you would to God that they would go better and you do, sometimes, cry out to Him a kind of prayer which He cannot accept but which is still enough to show that there is an instinct in man that teaches him to pray!

I believe that even as birds build their nests without any teaching, so men use prayer in the form of it (I do not mean *spiritual* prayer)I say, men use prayer from the very instinct of nature! There is something in man which makes him a praying animal. He cannot help it. He is obliged to do it. He laughs at himself when he is on the dry land. But he prays when he is on the sea and in a storm! He may not pray when he is well, but when he is sick, he prays as fast as anybody. He would not pray when he is rich, but when he is poor, he then prays strongly enough! He knows God hears prayer and he knows that men should praybut there is no disputing with himif he dares to deny his own conscience, he is incapable of reasoninghe is beyond the pale of morality and, therefore, we dare not try to influence him by reasoning. We may and hope we can use other means with him, but not that which compliments him by allowing him to answer! O saints of God, whatever you can give up, you can never give up this Truth of Godthat He hears prayer! If you did disbelieve it today, you would have to believe it again tomorrow, for you would have such another proof of it through some other trouble that would roll over your head that you would be obliged to feel, if you were not obliged to say, Verily, God hears and answers prayer.

Prayer, then, is the prelude of mercy, for very often it is the cause of the blessing. That is to say, it is a part cause. The mercy of God being the great first cause, prayer is often the secondary agency whereby the blessing is brought down.

II. And now I am going to try to show you, in the second place, WHY IT IS THAT GOD IS PLEASED TO MAKE PRAYER THE TRUMPETER OF MERCY, OR THE FORERUNNER OF IT.

1. I think it is, in the first place, *because God loves that man should have some reason for having a connection with Him*. Says God, My creatures will shun Me, even My own people will too little seek Methey will flee from Me instead of coming to Me. What shall I do? I intend to bless themshall I lay the blessings at their doors so that when they open them in the morning they may find them there, unasked and unsought? Yes, says God, many mercies I will do so with. I will give them much that they need without their seeking for it. But in order that they may not wholly forget Me, there are some mercies that I will not put at their doors. I will make them come to My house after them. I love My children to visit Me, says the Heavenly Father, I love to see them in My courts, I delight to hear their voices and to see their faces. They will not come to see Me if I give them all they need. I will keep them sometimes, without, and then they will come to Me and askand I shall have the pleasure of seeing them and they will have the profit of entering into fellowship with Me. It is as if some father should say to his son who is entirely dependent upon him, I might give you a fortune at once, so that you might never have to come to me again. But, my Son, it delights me, it affords me pleasure to supply your needs. I like to know what it is you require so that I may oftentimes have to give you and so may frequently see your face. Now I shall give you only enough to serve you for such a time and if you need anything, you must come to my house for it. O, my Son, I do this because I desire to see you often! I desire to have many opportunities of showing how much I love you. So does God say to His children, I do not give you all at once. I give all to you in the promise, but if you want to have it in the detail, you must come to Me to ask Me for itso shall you see My face and so shall you have a reason for often coming to My feet.

2. But there is another reason. God would make prayer the preface to mercy *because often prayer, itself, gives the mercy*. You are full of fear and sorrowyou need comfort. God says, pray and you shall get it. And the reason is because prayer is of itself a comforting exercise. We are all aware that when we have any heavy news upon our minds, it often relieves us if we can tell a friend about it. Now there are some troubles we would not tell to others, for perhaps many minds could not sympathize with usGod has therefore provided *prayer* as a channel for the flow of grief! Come, He says, your troubles may find vent here. Come, put them into My earpour out your heart before Me and so will you prevent its bursting. If you must weep, come and weep at My Mercy Seat. If you must cry, come and cry in the closet and I will hear you. And how often have you and I tried that? We have been on our knees, overwhelmed with sorrow, and we have risen up and said, Ah, I can meet it all now!

Now I can say my God is mine
Now I can all my joys resign,
Can tread the world beneath my feet,
And all that earth calls good or great.

Prayer, itself, sometimes gives the mercy.

Take another case. You are in difficulty, you dont know which way to go, nor how to act. God has said that He will *direct* His people. You go forth in prayer and pray to God to direct you. Are you aware that your very prayer will frequently, of itself, furnish you with the answer? While the mind is absorbed in thinking over the matter and in praying concerning the matter, it is just in the likeliest state to suggest to itself the course which is proper. For while, in prayer, I am spreading all the circumstances before God, I am like a warrior surveying the battlefield and when I rise, I know the state of affairs and know how to act. Often, thus, you see, prayer gives the very thing we ask for in itself! Often when I have had a passage of Scripture that I cannot understand, I am in the habit of spreading the Bible before me. And if I have looked at all the commentators and they do not seem to agree, I have spread the Bible on my chair, kneeled down, put my finger upon the passage and sought Gods instruction. I have thought that when I have risen from my knees, I understood it far better than before. I believe that the very exercise of prayer did, of itself, bring the answer, to a great degree, for the mind being occupied upon it and the heart being exercised with it, the whole man was in the most excellent position for truly understanding it! John Bunyan said, The Truths of God that I know best, I have learned on my knees. And he said again, I never know a thing well till it is burned into my heart by prayer. Now that is, in a great measure, through the agency of Gods Holy Spirit, but I think that it may also, in some measure, be accounted for by the fact that prayer exercises the mind upon the thing and then the mind is led by an insensible process to lay hold upon the right result! Prayer, then is a suitable prelude to the blessing because it often carries the blessing in itself.

3. But again, it seems but right and just and appropriate that prayer should go before the blessing *because in prayer there is a sense of need*. I cannot as a man distribute assistance to those who do not represent their case to me as being destitute and sick. I cannot suppose that the physician will trouble himself to leave his own house to go into the house of one that is ill unless the need has been specified to him and unless he has been informed that the case requires his assistance. Nor can we expect of God that He will wait upon His own people unless His own people should first state their need to Himshall feel their need and come before Him crying for a blessing! A sense of need is a Divine giftprayer fosters it and is, therefore, highly beneficial.

4. And yet again, prayer before the blessing *serves to show us the value of it*. If we had the blessings without asking for them, we would think them common things. But prayer makes the common pebbles of Gods temporal bounties more precious than diamonds! And in *spiritual* prayer, the cut diamond glistens more. The thing was precious, but I did not know its preciousness till I had sought for it and sought it long. After a long chase, the hunter prizes the animal because he has set his heart upon it and is determined to have it. And yet more truly, after a long hunger, he that eats finds more relish in his food. So prayer does sweeten the mercy. Prayer teaches us its preciousness. It is the reading over of the will, the schedule, the accountbefore the estate and the properties are themselves transferred. We know the value of the purchase by reading over the will of it in prayer and when we have groaned out our own expression of its peerless price, then it is that God bestows the benediction upon us! Prayer, therefore, goes before the blessing because it shows us the value of it.

But doubtless, even reason, itself, suggests that it is but natural that God, the All-Good, should give His favors to those who ask. It seems but right that He should expect of us that we should first ask at His hands and then He will bestow. It is goodness great enough that His hand is ready to opensurely it is but little that He should say to His people, For this thing will I be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.

III. Let me close BY STIRRING YOU UP TO USE THE HOLY ART OF PRAYER AS A MEANS OF OBTAINING THE BLESSING. Do you demand of me, and for what shall we pray? The answer is upon my tongue. Pray for *yourselves*, pray for your families, pray for the *Churches*, pray for *the one great Kingdom of our Lord on earth*.

Pray *for yourselves*. Surely you will never lack some subject for intercession! So broad are your needs, so deep are your necessities that until you are in Heaven you will always find room for prayer! Do you need nothing? Then I fear you do not know yourself. Have you no mercy to ask of God? Then I fear you have never had mercies of Him and are yet in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. If you are a child of God, your needs will be as numerous as your moments and you will need to have as many prayers as there are hours! Pray that you may be holy, humble, zealous and patient. Pray that you may have communion with Christ and enter into the banqueting house of His love. Pray for yourselfthat you may be an example unto othersthat you may honor God, here, and inherit His Kingdom hereafter.

In the next place, pray for your *families*. For your children. If they are pious, you can still pray for them that their piety may be real, that they may be upheld in their profession. And if they are ungodly, you have a whole fountain of arguments for prayer. So long as you have a child unpardoned, pray for him! So long as you have a child alive that is saved, pray for him, that he may be kept. You have enough reason to pray for those who have proceeded from your own loins, but if you have no cause to do that, pray for your servants. Will you not stoop to that? Then surely you have not stooped to be saved, for he that is saved knows how to pray for all. Pray for your servantsthat they may serve Godthat their life in your house may be of use to them. That is an ill house where the servants are not prayed for. I should not like to be waited upon by one for whom I could not pray! Perhaps the day when this world shall perish will be the day unbrightened by a prayer. And perhaps the day when a great misdeed was done by some man was the day when his friends left off praying for him. Pray for your households!

And then pray for the *Church*. Let the minister have a place in your heart. Mention his name at your family altar and in your closet. You expect him to come before you, day after day, to teach you the things of the Kingdom. You expect him to exhort and stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance. If he is a true minister, there will be work to be done in this matter. He cannot write his sermon and read it to you. He does not believe Christ said, Go and *read the Gospel* to every creature. Do you know the cares of a minister? Do you know the trouble he has with his own Churchhow the erring ones grieve him, how even the right ones vex his spirit by their infirmitieshow, when the Church is large, there will always be some great trouble in the hearts of some of his people? And he is the reservoir of allthey come to him with all their grief! He is to weep with them who weep. And in the pulpit what is his work? God is my witness, I scarcely ever prepare for my pulpit with pleasurestudy for the pulpit is, to me, the most irksome work in the world! I have never come into this house, that I know of, with a smile upon my heart. I may have sometimes gone out with one, but never have I had one when I entered. Preach, preach, twice a day I can and will do. But still there is a travailing in preparation for it and even the utterance is not always accompanied with joy and gladness. God knows that if it were not for the good that we trust is to be accomplished by the preaching of the Word, it is no happiness to a mans life to be well known. It robs him of all comfort to be from morning to night sought for labor, to have no rest for the sole of his feet or for his brainto be a great religious hackto bear every burdento have people asking, as they do in the country, when they need to get into a cart, Will it hold it?never thinking whether the horse can drag it. To have them asking, Will you preach at such a place? You are preaching twice, couldnt you manage to get to such a place and preach again? Everyone else has a constitutionthe minister has noneuntil he kills himself and is condemned as imprudent! If you are determined to do your duty in that place to which God has called you, you need the prayers of your people that you may be able to do the work and you will need their abundant prayers that you may be sustained in it! I bless God that I have a valiant corps of men and women who day without night besiege Gods Throne on my behalf! I would speak to you again, my Brothers and Sisters, and beseech you, by our loving days that are past, by all the hard fighting that we have had side by side with each other, not to cease to pray now! The time was when in hours of trouble you and I have bent our knees together in Gods House and we have prayed to God that He would give us a blessing. You remember how great and sore troubles did roll over our headhow men did ride over us. We went through fire and through water and now God has brought us into a large place and so multiplied uslet us not cease to pray! Let us still cry out unto the living God that He may give us a blessing! Oh, may God help me, if you cease to pray for me! Let me know the day and I will cease to preach. Let me know when you intend to cease your prayers and I shall cry, O my God, give me this day my tomb and let me slumber in the dust.

And lastly, let me bid you pray for *the Church at large*. This is a happy time we live in. A certain race of croaking souls, who are never pleased with anything, are always crying out about the badness of the times. They cry, Oh, for the good old times! Why, these *are* the good old times! Time never was so old as it is now! These are the best times! I think that many an old Puritan would jump out of his grave if he knew what was going on now. If they could have been told of the great movement at Exeter Hallthere is many a man among them who once fought against the Church of Englandwho would lift his hand to Heaven and cry, My God, I bless You that I see such a day as this! In these times there is a breaking down of many of the barriers. The bigots are afraid. They are crying out most desperately because they think Gods people will soon love each other too well. They are afraid that the trade of persecution will soon be done with, if we begin to be more and more united. So they are making an outcry and saying, These are not good times. But true lovers of God will say they have not lived in better days than these! And they all hopefully look for still greater things. Unless you professors of religion are eminently in earnest prayer, you will disgrace yourselves by neglecting the finest opportunity that men ever had! I think that your fathers who lived in days when great men were upon earth, who preached with much powerI think if they had not prayed, they would have been as unfaithful as you will befor now the good ship floats upon a flood tide sleep now and you will not cross the bar at the harbors mouth! Never did the sun of prosperity seem to you much more fully on the Church during the last 100 years than now. Now is your timeneglect not to sow your seed in this good time of seed-sowing! Neglect not to reap your harvest in these good days when it is ripe! For darker days may come and those of peril, when God shall say, Because they would not cry to Me, when I stretched out My hands to bless them, therefore will I put away My hands and will no more bless them, until again they shall seek Me. And now to close. I have a young man here who has been lately converted. His parents cannot stand him. They entertain the strongest opposition to him and they threaten him that if he does not leave off praying, they will turn him out of doors. Young man, I have a little story to tell you! There was once a young man in your positionhe had begun to pray and his father knew it. He said to him, John, you know I am an enemy to religion and prayer is a thing that shall never be offered in my house. Still the young man continued in earnest supplication. Well, said the father, one day, in a hot passion, you must give up either God or me! I solemnly swear that you shall never darken the threshold of my door again unless you decide that you will give up praying. I give you till tomorrow morning to choose. The night was spent in prayer by the young disciple. He rose in the morning, sad to be cast away by his father, but resolute in spirit, that come what might, he would serve his God. The father abruptly accosted himWell, what is the answer? Father, he said, I cannot violate my conscience, I cannot forsake my God. Leave immediately, said his father. And the mother stood there. The fathers hard spirit had made hers hard, too, and though she might have wept, she concealed her tears. Leave immediately he said. Stepping outside the threshold, the young man said, I wish you would grant me one request before I go. And if you grant me that, I will never trouble you again. Well, said the father, you shall have anything you like, but mark me, you go after you have had that. You shall never have anything again. It is, said the son, that you and my mother would kneel down and let me pray for you before I go. Well, they could hardly object to it. The young man was on his knees in a moment and began to pray with such unction and power, with such evident love to their souls, with such true and Divine earnestness that they both fell flat on the ground and when the son rose there they were. And the father said, You need not go, John. Come and stay. Come and stay. And it was not long before not only he, but the whole of them began to pray and they were united to a Christian Church.

So, do not give up! Persevere kindly but firmly. It may be that God shall enable you not only to have your own souls saved but to be the means of bringing your persecuting parents to the foot of the Cross. That such may be the case is our earnest prayer. Amen.

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 #1304 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

ENQUIRE OF THE LORD
NO. 1304

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, JULY 9, 1876, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Thus says the Lord God, I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock. As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be
filled with flocks of men: and they
shall know that I am the Lord.
Ezekiel 36:37, 38.

MULTIPLICATION is a very ancient form of blessing. The first benediction pronounced upon man was of this sort, for we read in the first chapter of Genesis, And God blessed them, and God said unto them: Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. That same blessing was pronounced, again, when God accepted His servant Noah, and entered into covenant with him. We read in Genesis 9:1 that God blessed Noah and his sons and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. This also constituted a main part of the blessing promised to faithful Abraham. In Genesis 22:17, and many other places, we read to this effect, In blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of Heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore, and your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.

This was the blessing of Gods chosen people, a blessing which all the malice of Pharaoh could not turn aside, for the more the Israelites were oppressed, the more they multiplied. David, in the 107th Psalm uses the expression, He blesses them, also, so that they are multiplied greatly (v. 38), so that, clearly, increase of numbers in families and nations was anciently regarded as a token of Divine favor. In a spiritual sense this is the blessing of the Church of God. When the Church is visited by the power of the Holy Spirit, she is increased on every side. When a Church, in the midst of a vast population, remains stationary in numbers, or even becomes smaller, no man can see in such a condition the marks of Gods blessing. Certainly it would be a novel sort of benediction, for the first blessing, the blessing of Pentecost, resulted in 3,000 being added to the Church in one day! And we find afterwards that, The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.

We read in the Acts of the Apostles that the Churches, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, were multiplied. Ever since those early days, when the Lord has been with His people, they have increased in numbers. Their children have sprung up as among the grass and as willows by the water courses. When they have been diminished and brought low, it has been because they have departed from the Truth of God or lost their first love. The result is the clearness of Gospel testimony has been dimmed, spirituality has been at a low ebb, the Holy

Spirit has been despised and He has suspended His operationsand the Church has dwindled down till she has had little more than a name to live. But as soon as the Lord has returned to her, she has become a fruitful mother and her children have cried out, the place is too strait for us, give place to us that we may dwell.

When the Lord has sent forth His power with the preaching of the Gospel, converts have been as innumerable as the drops of the dew and as the sands upon the seashore! It is plain that one of the blessings which we, as a Church, should seek with all our hearts is that of continual increase. The entire Church of God should look for the daily multiplication of the spiritual seed. We have the promise of it in the text, but there is appended to it this condition, I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them: I will increase them with men like a flock. Every true Christian desires to see the Church increase. At any rate, I should pity the man who thinks himself a Christian and yet has no such wish.

Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory, is the natural aspiration of every child of God! And if any man has persuaded himself that he *is* a child of God and yet does not desire to see the Glory of the Lord made manifest by the conversion of multitudes, I pity the condition of his heart and of his understanding. I trust we all feel the missionary spirit. I trust we all long to see the kingdom of the Lord come and to see the converts in Zion multiplied. But God has appended to the granting of our desire that we should *pray* for itwe must plead and enquireor else the increase will be withheld. Why has the Lord thus made prayer the necessary prelude to blessing?

He has done so in great *mercy* to our souls. The Lord knows how beneficial it is to us to be much in prayer and, therefore, He makes it easy for us to draw near to Him. He affords us a multitude of reasons for approaching the Mercy Seat and gives us errands which may be used as arguments for frequent petitioning. When one knocks at a mans door it is a good thing to have some business to do, for then one knocks boldly. If the porter opens and enquires, Why did you come here? we can reply, Good Sir, I came on an important errand, and so we are bold to remain at the door.

Now, as the Lord loves to commune with His people, He takes care to give them errands upon which they must come to Him. We need never be afraid that we shall be interrogated at the gate of Mercy and this stern question put, What are you doing here? for we have always some reason for praying! Indeed, every promise is turned into a reason for prayer, because the promise is not to be granted to us till we have pleaded it at the Mercy Seat! Moreover, if I may say so, God has, in mercy,

compelled us to prayer by making the pleading necessary for the blessing. We must pray! We are unblessed unless we pray and, therefore, our necessities drive us to the Mercy Seat. Though we may be so low in Grace and so unspiritual that we may feel little positive enjoyment, for the moment, in prayer, yet pray we must. A sacred compulsion lies upon us arising from our vast necessities. We thank God, then, that He gives us reasons for coming, yes, lays a stress upon us so that we are compelled to draw near unto Him.

Now, let the desire that the Church should be increased, which, as I have already said, dwells in the bosom of every child of God, act as a mighty impulse to drive us to earnest, prevailing prayer! For if we are driven to this, the Church shall be multiplied exceedingly. This is the object of the discourse of this morning. O Spirit of Grace and supplications, be now upon us that we may be saturated with the spirit of prayer! I shall thus speak upon the text*Why should we awaken ourselves to the enquiry of which the text speaks*? For this will I be enquired of. Next, *how should such a duty as this be performed*? The text will afford us a guide. And, thirdly, *on what ground can any Christian be excused from the duty* of uniting with his Brothers and Sisters in enquiring at the hand of the Lord for a blessing?

I. WHY SHOULD WE AWAKEN OURSELVES TO THIS ENQUIRY AT THE HANDS OF THE LORD? I do not put this question to you because I think that many of you need instruction as to the necessity for prayer, but because it is good to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance upon this point. The first reason I shall give is this, because *it is a great privilege to be allowed to enquire at the hands of the Lord*. You will see this very vividly if you turn to the 20th chapter of this prophecy and read the third verse, Son of man, speak unto the elders of Israel, and say unto them, Thus says the Lord God, Are you come to enquire of Me? As I live, says the Lord God, I will not be enquired of by you.

Look, again, at the 31st verse of the same chapter, For when you offer your gifts, when you make your sons to pass through the fire, you pollute yourselves with all your idols, even unto this day: and shall I be enquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, says the Lord God, I will not be enquired of by you. What a solemn curse, to be denied an audience with God! How terrible a punishment it is when God shuts the gates of prayer and declares, I will not be enquired of by you: when you spread forth your hands I will hide My face from you; yes, when you make many prayers I will not hear. A people may get into such a condition of sin, such a willful state of alienation from God and disobedience to His commands, that He may say, I will not be enquired of by you.

Now, suppose for a moment that it were my painful duty to stand here and say, Brothers and Sisters, it is of no use our praying. The Mercy Seat has been abolished! God, in His anger, has bid the Mediator lay aside His office and supplication is no longer to be heard. What wringing of hands, what weeping of hearts as well as eyes if it were, indeed, true that prayer was denied to the people of God! It was a fair token for good when Ezekiel was bid to say that God had now taken away the curse from His people. And though He had said earlier, I will not be enquired of by you, yet now, under the Covenant of Grace, having forgiven their sins, He mercifully proclaimed, Thus says the Lord, For this will I be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.

As you would be struck with horror if you were forbidden to pray, so I beseech you use the privilege of prayer while you may. If only some half dozen men had permission to speak into the ear of God, how you would

venerate them! How you would wish to be one of their number! If a small chosen band were set apart who, alone, might ask in faithand to whom, alone, the promise would be fulfilled, Ask what you will and it shall be done unto youhow would you envy them their high privilege! Since, then, at this time you are *all*, if you are the people of God, made to be a royal priesthood and the Mercy Seat is open to every Believer, take care that you do not despise your birthright. To each one of you the promise is given, He that seeks finds, and to him that knocks it shall be opened. Is not this sufficient reason why we should awake ourselves to use the privilege which the Lord accords us?

Secondly, *prayer is also to be looked upon as a precious gift of the Spirit of God as well as a great privilege*. Wherever the spirit of prayer exists, it is worked in the heart by the Holy Spirit Himself. And when the text says, For this will I be enquired of, it is a promise that men *shall* enquire! It is by virtue of Covenant promises and Covenant Grace that men are made to pray, for the Lord has said, I will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of Grace and of supplications.

Every child of God who understands anything knows that real prayer is the breath of God in man returning from where it came. It first comes *from* God, and then it goes back to God. The Spirit knows what the mind of God is and He writes the mind of God upon our mind. And thus the desire of the Believer is the transcript of the decree of God and, therefore, the success of prayer. Well, now, Brothers and Sisters, if united, earnest, hearty enquiry of the Lord is a Covenant *gift* and a work of the Spirit, we dare not despise it, but we should earnestly seek after it! When we obtain a measure of prayerfulness, we ought to cultivate it and seek to make it grow abundantly. Covenant gifts are always to be earnestly coveted, for they are the best gifts.

Remember what blood it was which sealed that Covenant and made it sure to all the elect! You cannot look upon one item of the inheritance which the Covenant entails upon the saints without feeling that it cost the Redeemer His hearts blood. Forsake not, then, the assembling of yourselves together in prayer as the manner of some is! Neither neglect the Mercy Seat in private, nor fail to enquire at the Lords hand, for supplication is a Covenant gift and must not be despised by any heir of Heaven. These are two forcible arguments, but here is another.

In the third place we must pray because *it is a necessary work in order to obtain the blessing*. The Church of God is to be multiplied, but, Thus says the Lord God, I will yet for this be enquired of. Remember that this is virtually written at the bottom of every promise. God said, I will do this or that, but it is understood that *for* this He will be *enquired of*. Doubtless we receive many unasked for favors, but the rule of the kingdom is, He that asks, receives. This rule applies even to the King of the kingdom, HimselfAsk of Me, said God to His own Son, and I will give You the heathen for Your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Your possession. I must, then, Brothers and Sisters, exhort you to be much in enquiring at the Lords hands, because countless are suspended upon the exercise of prayer.

Imagine, for a moment, that these blessings should not come. Suppose that month after month the particular blessing of the text should be withheld. Into what a state of mind would every earnest Christian be brought! No increasewe come to the Communion Table but report no additions. No need to hold Church meetings, for there are no confessions of faith to be heard and no converts are coming forward to tell of the power of Divine Love! Suppose that such a state of stagnation should continue month after month with us!

And why shouldnt it ? It has done so with many others. Then as one after another of the ripe children of God went to Heaven, there would be gaps in the Church roll and none to replace them. There would be none to be baptized for the deadnone to stand in those places in the ranks from which the pious dead have been removed. May these eyes never look on such a calamity! May this tongue be spending its strength among the choirs above long before such a night shall settle down! You may well write, Ichabod, across the forefront of this House of Prayer whenever that shall be, for the glory will have departed!

Up to this moment we have never had to sigh and cry because the Lord has left us without an increase. But only suppose that the benediction should be withdrawn. *You* can *cause* it to be withdrawn, if you will, by ceasing prayer. Only let the cry which goes up to God continually from thousands of earnest hearts cease for a while and it will be a token that the *blessing* has also ceased! Only as long as there shall be this enquiring at the hand of the Lord can we expect that He will do as He has done, namely, multiply us with men as with a flock. Enquire, therefore, eagerly, because the blessing is suspended on it.

Next, we ought to have much of this enquiry because *it is a business which is, above all others, remunerative*. Look at the textI will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock. That is a beautiful idea of a multitude. You have, perhaps, seen an immense flock, a teeming concourse of congregated life. Such shall the increase of the Church be! But then it is added, to enhance the blessing, As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts. This, to the Jewish mind, conveyed a great idea of numbers!

At the three great feasts of Pentecost, the Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles, the Israelites were accustomed to offer sacrifices in vast numbers and, therefore, lambs and sheep were brought into Jerusalem in such enormous numbers that without a book before me, I should not like to mention the figures which have been put down by Josephus and others. We read of Solomons offering, an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. And of 17,000 sheep offered in a single day in Hezekiahs time! We may, therefore, imagine what the need was in our Saviors day that there should be a sheep market by the Pool of Bethesda, for there would be need of immense pens for such numerous flocks.

Then might the city be described in the language of Isaiah when he said, All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto you, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister onto you; they shall come up with acceptance upon My altar. Now, said the Lord, I will not only multiply you as the sheep are multiplied upon Sharon and Carmel, but as the flocks in Jerusalem when they come together from every quarter on solemn feast days, by hundreds and by thousands! You shall ask, Who are these that fly as a cloud and as the doves to their windows? The Lord will multiply the people beyond all count!

There is this additional beauty about the promise, that the sheep which were brought to Jerusalem on the solemn feasts were not only numerous, but they were the best sheep in the land because no animal could be offered to God which had any blemish. The priests were peculiarly careful to select the lambs for the Passover and the sheep for the sacrifice. And they were always the pick of the flock, the choice sheep of all the flocks of Palestine. What a mercy when the Lord multiplies the Church with a holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem on her solemn feast days! Then, not only were they the choice of the flock, but they were all consecrated to God, for they were brought to Jerusalem, on purpose, to be sacrificed. O happy Church which receives a host of self-sacrificing members who do not come to the Church in name, only, but to present their bodies a living sacrifice unto Godto place body, soul and spirit at the feet of Jesus, and say, Yours are we, Son of David, and all that we have.

See, then, what can be had by enquiring for it! For *this* will I be enquired of. And what is the, this, which is spoken of? Why that God will give us a numerous people, a choice people, His own elect and they shall all be consecrated unto Himself! They shall give themselves, first, to the Lord, and afterwards to us by the Word of God. This is to be had by praying for it! Ah, my Lord, how foolish are we not to pray more! Your Church has her societies, her agencies and so on, and she has, perhaps, looked to these more than to You. But You are our battle-ax and weapons of war! You can multiply the people and increase the joy! You can fill the quiver of the Church with spiritual children and thus make her blessed! To You, only, can we look for this favor! My Soul, wait only upon God, for my expectation is from Him. The Lord is a Man of war, the Lord is His name! His right hand and His holy arm have gotten Him the victory. Therefore, O house of Israel, enquire at the hands of the Lord and a boundless blessing shall come!

I dont think I need to say that it is necessary for us to pray, because *the results of prayer, as I have already described them, are such as greatly glorify God*. Kindly read the last sentence of the text. It is importantAnd they shall know that I am the Lord. When a Church is largely increased with choice persons thoroughly consecrated, then the Church knows, anew, that there is a God in Israel! The world, also, opens its eyes with wonder and admits that there is something in prayer, after all! When the kingdom of God is largely increased in answer to prayer, there is a wonderful power abroad to answer the arguments of skeptics and to silence the ribaldry of ungodly tongues. This is the finger of God, they say. How bitterly they ridiculed Whitefield and Wesley when first they begun to preach the blessed Gospel. They were fanatics and enthusiasts, disturbing the peace of the land! They were Jesuits, Jacobites and I do not know what they were *not*but everything conceivable that is bad! But when the Lord put power into these men and multiplied their adherents by tens of thousands, then presently the world changed its tune and dreaded and feared those whom they had formerly despised. So it is now! If we do not pray, if we grow cold in heart and the blessing is withdrawn, then the worldly wise begin to say, It is an old, effete doctrine, proclaimed by the last of the Puritansit is dying out.

But as soon as ever they see God blessing us, the multitudes coming together and the Church growing to be a power in the land, they like it none the better, but they are obliged to respect it! Oh, that the Lord would stir you up as a Church to pray and do the same with all the Churches of the land! This would smite His enemies upon the cheekbone and silence His adversaries! This would baffle both the scorner, infidel, the harlot, ritualism and make both skepticism and superstition acknowledge that in the grand old Gospel of Jesus there still resides the Omnipotence of the Lord God.

II. Secondly, let us answer the questionHOW SHOULD THIS DUTY BE PERFORMED? First, it should be *by the entire body of the Church*. Let us turn to our Bibles and read the text againFor this will I be enquired of byBy the ministers? By the elders? By the little number of good people who always come together to pray? Look! Look carefully! By the house of Israel. That is by the *whole company* of the Lords people! To obtain a great increase there must be *unanimous* prayerprayer from the whole house of Israel! Everyone must join without exception.

Where two or three are met together there will be an answer of peace. The prayer of one prevails. But if ever the house of Israel, the whole company of the faithful, shall get together in prayer, ah, then we shall see the multiplication of saints as the flock of Jerusalem on her solemn feasts! But it will not be till then. When Israel was defeated at Ai, one of the reasons of their failure was that there was an abominable thing in the tent of Achan. But another cause of defeat was this, that they said, Let not all the people labor there. A part of the people were to go and take Ai and the rest were to lie at ease. The Church of God will always have ill times so long as a few people are left to do what should be done by all the redeemed. The whole house of Israel must besiege Ai, if Ai is to be taken! The whole army of the living God must bend the knees together and plead with God if any great victory is to be achieved.

Next, the successful way to enquire of the Lord is for the Church to *take personal interest in the matter*. Thus said the Lord God; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it *for them*. When the people feel that the conversion of souls is their own personal affair. When the Sunday school teachers feel that the multiplication of the Church should be something done by them. And when each Christian laborer feels that he has a personal interest in the saving of souls, then will the Lords work be done on a great scale! Brothers and Sisters, when the case of poor sinners becomes *our* case and our heart cries, I will break unless

those souls are saved, then we are sure to succeed! If the sinner will not repent, let us break *our* hearts about him. Let us go and tell the Lord his sins and mourn over them as if they were our own!

If men will not believe, let us, by faith, bring them before God and plead His promise for *them*. If we cannot get them to pray, let us pray *for* them and intercede on their behalfand in answer to *our* repentance they shall be made to repent! In answer to *our* faith they shall be led to believe! And in reply to *our* prayers they shall be moved to pray! The Lord says He will do it, but He will have us seek it as a *personal* favor, that thus our souls may be made earnest in His cause. The blessing will come, in the third place, to *the prayer of a dependent Church*. See how it is putI will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them. That is to say, they will not dream of being able to do it for themselves, but will apply to God for it.

Christian men should never speak of getting up a revival. Where are you going to get it up from? I do not know any place from which you can get it up except a place which it is better to have no connection with. We must bring a revival *down* if it is to be worth having! We must enquire of the Lord to do it for us. Too often the temptation is to enquire for an eminent revivalist, or ask whether a great preacher could not be induced to come. Now, I do not object to inviting soul-winning preachers, or to any other plans of usefulness. But our main business is to enquire of the Lord, for, after all, He, alone, can give the increase!

Suppose we collect a crowd of people, what of that? It is a fine thing to put in the papers, but what is the good of it, if it ends there? Suppose we have large services and fierce excitementand the whole thing ends in a pack of moonshinewhere is the glory to God? On the contrary, His name is dishonored and His Church is discouraged from making special attempts. But when the holy work *begins in prayer*, *continues* in prayer and *everything* is confessedly dependent upon the *power of God*, then the blessing is, indeed, worth having! Enquire of the Lord to multiply you and you will be multiplied! We must wait upon God, conscious that we can do nothing of ourselvesand we must look to the Holy Spirit as the only power for the conversion of souls. If we pray in this dependent way we shall obtain an overflowing answer.

Again, the way to obtain the promised blessing is that the prayer must be offered *by an anxious, observant, enterprising Church*. The expression used, I will be enquired of, implies that the people must think and ask questions, must argue and plead with God. It is well to ask Him why He has not given the blessing and to urge strong reasons why He should now do so. We should quote His promises to Him, tell Him of our great need and then come back, again, to asking, enquiring and pleading our cause. Such a pleading Church will win a blessing beyond all doubt! It must be a Church which remembers the waste places. The text puts it in the promise and it must not be forgotten in the prayerThe waste cities shall be filled with flocks of men.

A Church which anxiously remembers the departments of service which are not succeeding. A Church which casts a friendly eye over other Churches which may be failing and takes careful notice of those places where the Spirit of God does not seem to be at workand mentions all those in prayeris the Church to which the promise is made. I pray the Lord to give you, dear Brothers and Sisters, heartbreak over sinners whose hearts do not break. I pray He will give you painful anxiety for those who are not anxious. In fact, may God make all the members of this Church into anxious enquirers. When the saved ones are anxious enquirers, themselves, there will be plenty of anxious enquirers brought from the world! The way to have enquiring sinners is for us to become enquiring saints! When the saints enquire of the Lord, the sinners will ask their way to Zion with their faces turned there! Every Prayer Meeting ought, as a matter of fact, to be an enquirers meeting, where true hearts behold the beauty of the Lord and enquire in His temple.

If we are to obtain the blessing in answer to prayer, *that prayer must be offered by a believing Church*. Oh that we did believe Gods promise! The Lord says, I will be enquired of, to do it for them. But unbelieving enquiries are only a mockery of God! How few really believe in prayer! I was reading, the other day, that the Chinese converts of the Inland Mission have shown a feature of piety which is not very common. When they learned that God would hear prayer, they wanted to be always praying, because, they said, If it is so, that the great God hears prayer, let us ask for a great deal.

We do not wonder, therefore, that they have received answers so remarkable to their believing prayers that the missionary scarcely cares to narrate them, lest to unbelievers they should seem to be as idle tales! Indeed, his fears are not at all unreasonable, for in other cases the written lives of praying men have been wretchedly mistrusted. Huntingdons Bank of Faith has been called a bank of nonsense, yet I believe him to have been a thoroughly honest recorder of facts and quite incapable of a lie. When they read the story of Sammy Hick and his turning the wind by prayer, most persons are dubious, but why?

Bread was needed for a religious meeting and no flour could be found, for the mill could not go without wind. Hick took his bag of corn to the miller and bade him grind it. But there is no wind, Sammy, said the miller. Never mind, there will be if you only put the corn into the hopper. It was put in, the wind ground the wheat and then it ceased. Ah, people say, that is a Methodist story. Yes, it is, and there are many others of the same kind! And some of us have had them happen to ourselves. Answers to prayer do not, now, appear to us to be contrary to the laws of Natureit seems to us to be the greatest of all the laws of Nature that the Lord must keep His promises and hear His peoples prayers! Gravitation and other laws may be suspended, but this cannot be!

Oh, says one, I cannot believe that. No, and so your prayers are not heard! You must have faith, for if faith is absent, you lack the very backbone and soul of prayer. Oh, for mighty faith! If we once behold a Church filled with real active faith, exercised in believing prayer to the living God, the God of Israel, we shall see the Churches multiplied with men as with

a flock!

III. We are now to seek comfort for you who do not come to Prayer Meetings, or otherwise wrestle in prayer. ON WHAT GROUND CAN ANYBODY BE EXCUSED FROM THE DUTY OF PRAYER? AnswerOn no ground whatever! You cannot be excused on the ground of *common humanity* for if it is so that God will save sinners in answer to prayer, and I do not pray, what am I? Souls dying, perishing, sinking to Hell while the ordained machinery for salvation is prayer and the preaching of the Wordand if I dont pray, what am I? Surely the milk of human kindness has been drained from my breast and I have ceased to be human! And if so, it is idle to talk of communion with the Divine. He who has no pity on a wounded man and would not seek to relieve the hunger of one expiring of need is a monster! He who has no pity on souls who are sinking into everlasting fire, what is he? Let him answer for himself.

Next, can any excuse be found in *Christianity* for neglect of prayer? I answer, there is none to be found in Christianity anymore than in humanity, for if Christ has saved us, He has given us His SpiritIf any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And who has the Spirit of Christ? Is it he who looked upon Jerusalem and said, I believe that the city is given up, predestinated to be destroyed, and then coolly went on his way? No, not he! He believed in predestination, but that Truth of God never chilled his heart. He wept over Jerusalem, and said, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not. ***Did Christ over sinners weep,***
And shall our cheeks be dry?

Shall there be no prayer in our hearts when God has appointed prayer to be the channel of blessing to sinners as well as to ourselves? Then how can we say that we are Christians? In Gods name, how can we make a profession of Christianity if our hearts do not ascend in mighty prayer to God for a blessing on the sons of men? But perhaps an excuse is found in the fact that the Christian does not feel that his prayer is of very much consequence, for his *heart is in a barren state*. Ah, well, this is no excuse, but an aggravation of the sin! My dear Brothers and Sisters, if you feel you cannot pray, you ought to pray twice as much as anybody else! Whenever your mind falls into a condition in which it is indisposed for prayer, that condition should serve as a danger signalsomething is very much amiss!

At such a time there should be a double calling upon God that the Spirit of prayer may be vouchsafed. I do charge you, professing Christians, not to restrain prayer to God for a blessing, for, if you do, you hurt all the rest of the Brethren! Get a bit of dead bone into your body and it harms, first, the member in which it is placed and subsequently the whole body. From head to foot the whole system is worse off because of the fragment of dead matter which is present in the body. So if there is a prayerless professor among us, he is an injury to the entire company!

Some of you are the baggage of the army and hinder its marches and its fighting! We have a great army here and if you were all able-bodied men and would march on to the fight, we would see great victories! But we have to carry our diseased ones in ambulances and half the time of the pastor and Church officers has to be taken up in looking after the inefficient soldiers who are fit only for the hospital Who do you mean? asks one. You, my Friendvery likely you! Your own conscience shall decide to whom it refers!

Now, surely we ought to be much in prayer, because, after all, we owe a great deal to prayer. Those who were in Christ before me, prayed for me. Should I not pray for others? By a mothers prayers, some of you, when you were girls, were brought to Christ. Will you not pay back the debt to your mother by praying for your own children? By a fathers prayers, young man, you were brought to the Saviors feetnow pray for those who are younger than yourselfthat they may be brought to Jesus, too. The treasury of the Churchs prayers has been expended upon us in bringing us to Christs feet. Let us now contribute to the common stock, casting in our prayers for the conversion of others! Common gratitude demands that we attend to this.

I am afraid I shall also have to plead that I must suspect your soundness in the faith, Brothers and Sisters, if you do not join in prayer. I know some, who, if they are anything at all, they are sound in the faith. This is their beginning and their ending. I used to know, years ago, a few people who were sound all over and never cared whether souls were saved or not because they were so sound! That kind of soundness is empty, from which may the Lord deliver us! Correct opinions are a poor apology for heartlessness towards our fellow men. If we are orthodox, we believe that regeneration is the work of the Spirit of God. Then, dear Friends, the natural inference is that those of us who are regenerated should pray the Holy Spirit to regenerate others! If it is entirely His work and we cannot depend upon the preacher at all, we must invoke the Divine power! If you do not thus call in Divine energy, where is your soundness?

I am sure that you desire to see souls saved, but if it is the Spirits work and you do not pray the Spirit to do that work, surely you do not believe your own doctrine! By your soundness in the faith, therefore, I would plead with you that you increase your earnestness in prayer. You may say, Well, I think I may be excused, but I must reply you cannot! *I am very* sick, says one. Ah, then you can lie in bed and pray! None of us can fully estimate the blessings which have come down on this Tabernacle in answer to the pleas of our friends who are constant invalids. I believe the Lord sets apart a certain section of the Church to keep up prayer through the night watchesand when you and I who are healthy are sound asleep, the watchers do not slumber, or keep silentbut either in praise or prayer they make the hours holy with their devout exercises. I consider that I sustain great losses when dear Christian men and women, who have for years sustained me by their prayers are taken home to Glory. Who will fill the gaps?

I am so poor, says one. Well, you are not called upon to pay a shilling every time you pray to God! It does not matter how poor you areyour prayers are just as acceptable! Only remember, if you are so poor, you ought to pray all the more, because you cannot give your offering in the shape of gold. I should like you to say with the Apostle, Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, I give you. My Master, I will be much in prayer. Ah, says another, but *I have no talent*. That is another reason why you should pray *more* and not why you should be prayerless, because if you cannot contribute to the Churchs public service from lack of talent, you should the more zealously contribute to her strength by the private exercise of prayer and intercessionand thus make those strong who are better fit to go to the front.

Ah, says one, but *I am just converted*. I have hardly obtained peace, myself, how can I pray? If you need an answer to *that* question, read the 51st Psalm. David begins, Have mercy upon me, O God, according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, and so on. And he does not continue long before he cries, Do good in Your good pleasure unto Zion; build the walls of Jerusalem! He has hardly been washed, himself, from sin, before he begins to pray to be usefulThen will I teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted unto You. You new converts are the very people to pray with power!

So from my inmost soul, as if I were pleading for my life (and it lies nearer my health and continued life than some may imagine) I beg you to enquire of the Lord! In thus doing I am pleading for this Churchs long prosperity! I am pleading for the good of London! I am pleading for the benefit of the whole world! If you love the Lord Jesus, Brothers and Sisters, do enquire at the hands of the Lord concerning this great promise of an increase in the Church! Prove Him, now, and see if He does not pour out a blessing for you, yes, if He does not increase you with men as with a flock, as the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem on her solemn feast days! God grant His blessing for Christs sake. Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON Ezekiel 36:1-14; 24-38.
HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK145 (PART I), 985, 968.

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THE RESTORATION AND CONVERSION OF THE JEWS
NO. 582

PREACHED ON THURSDAY EVENING, JUNE 16, 1864, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, In aid of the Funds of the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Among the Jews.

The hand of the Lord was upon me and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones and caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley.
And, lo, they were very dry. And He
said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, You know. Again
He said unto me, Prophesy upon these Bones
and say unto them, O you dry bones, hear
the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God
unto these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you and you shall live: and I will lay sinews upon you and will bring up flesh upon you
and cover you with skin and put breath
in you and you shall live. And you shall know
that I am the Lord. So I prophesied as I was
commanded: and as I prophesied, there was
a noise and behold a shaking and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them
and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. Then said He unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, Son of man and say to the wind, Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O Breath and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as He commanded me and the breath came into them and they lived and stood up
upon their feet, an exceeding great army.
Ezekiel 37:1-10.

THIS vision has been used, from the time of Jerome onwards, as a description of the resurrection and certainly it may be so accommodated with much effect. What a vision of the great day the words picture before the minds eye! The great army of the quick, who once were dead, seem to start up as we read. Here, too, we have a very fit and appropriate question to be asked in a tombSon of man, can these bones live? Looking down into the dark grave, or watching the sexton as he throws up the moldering relics, once infused with life, well may unbelief suggest the enquiryCan these bones live?

Faith cannot at all times give a more satisfactory answer than thisO Lord God, You know. But while this interpretation of the vision may be very proper as an accommodation, it must be quite evident to any thinking person that this is not the meaning of the passage. There is no allusion made by Ezekiel to the resurrection and such a topic would have been quite apart from the design of the Prophets speech. I believe he was no more thinking of the resurrection of the dead than of the building of St. Peters at Rome, or the emigration of the Pilgrim Fathers! That topic is altogether foreign to the subject at hand and could not by any possibility have crept into the Prophets mind.

He was talking about the people of Israel and prophesying concerning them. And evidently the vision, according to Gods own interpretation of it, was concerning them and them alone, for, these bones are the whole house of Israel. It was not a vision concerning all men, nor, indeed, concerning any men as to the resurrection of the deadit had a direct and special bearing upon the Jewish people. This passage, again, has been very frequently and I dare say very properly, used to describe the revival of a decayed Church. This vision may be looked upon as descriptive of a state of lukewarmness and spiritual lethargy in a Church when the question may be sorrowfully askedCan these bones live?

Can that dull minister wake up to living power? Can these cold deacons glow with holy heat? Can those unspiritual members rise to something like holy, earnest self-sacrifice? Is it possible that the drowsy formal Church could start up to real earnestness? Such suggestions might well have occurred to many minds at the time of the Reformation. It did seem impossible, when Popery was in its power, that spiritual life should ever again return to the Church. Piety seemed to be dead and buried and the cloister, the clergy, superstition and deceit, like great graves, had swallowed up everything that was good.

But the Lord appeared for His people and brought up the buried Truth of God out of its grave, and once more in every part of the known world the name of Jesus Christ was lifted up and sound doctrine was preached! So was it in our own country. When both the Establishment and Dissent had fallen into spiritual death we might well have saidCan these bones live? But Whitfield and Wesley were raised up by God and they prophesied to the dry bones, and up they stoodfilled with the Spirit of God an exceeding great army. Let the crowds of Kingsdown and the multitudes on Kennington Common tell of the quickening power of Jesus name! Decayed Churches can most certainly be revived by the preaching of the Word accompanied by the coming of the heavenly breath from the four winds.

O Lord, send us such revivals now, for many of your Churches need themthey are almost as dead as the corpses which sleep around them in the graveyard. But while we admit this to be a very fitting accommodation of our text, yet we are quite convinced that it is not to this that the passage refers. It would be altogether alien to the Prophets strain of thought to be thinking about the restoration of fallen zeal and the rekindling of expiring love. He was not considering the Reformation either of Luther or of Whitfield, or about the revival of one Church or of another. No, he was talking of his own people, of his own race and of his own tribe. He surely ought to have known his own mind, and led by the Holy Spirit, he gives us as an explanation of the vision. NotThus says the Lord, My dying Church shall be restored, butI will bring My *people* out of their graves and bring them into the land of Israel.

With very great propriety, too, this passage has been used for the comforting of Believers in their dark and cloudy days. When they have lost their comforts, when their spiritual joys have drooped like withering flowers, when they have been no longer able to

Read their titles clear

To mansions in the skies,
they have been reminded that God could return to them in Grace and mercy, that the dry bones could live and should live! Then they remember that the Spirit of God could again come upon His peoplethat even at the time when they were ready to give up all hope and lie down in despair, He could come and so quicken them, that the poor trembling cowards should be turned into soldiers of God and should stand upon their feet an exceeding great army!

No grave of grief can hold the immortal joy of a Believeron the third day it shall rise again, for, like the Lord who gave it, it shall never see corruption! Bone to his bone shall your comforts come together and an army of joys shall live in your soul. The passage certainly may be so used without violent wresting and might thus yield much comfort to the people of God. But still we take the liberty of saying that this is not the drift of the Prophet and that we do not believe he was thinking of anything of the kind. We think that he was speaking only of his own people, his own kinsmen according to the flesh.

Once more. There is no doubt that we have in this passage a most striking picture of the restoration of dead souls to spiritual life. Men by nature are just like these dry bones exposed in the open valley. The whole spiritual frame is dislocated. The sap and marrow of spiritual life has been dried out of manhood. Human nature is not only dead, but, like the bleaching bones which have long whitened in the sun, it has lost all trace of the Divine life. Will and power have both departed. Spiritual death reigns undisturbed. Yet the dry bones can live! Under the preaching of the Word the vilest sinners can be reclaimed, the most stubborn wills can be subdued, the most unholy lives can be sanctified! When the holy breath comes from the four winds, when the Divine Spirit descends to own the Word, then multitudes of sinners as on Pentecosts hallowed day, stand up upon their feetan exceeding great armyto praise the Lord their God.

But, mark you, this is not the first and proper interpretation of the text. It is, indeed, nothing more than a very striking parallel case to the one before us. It is not the case itself. It is only a similar one for the way in which God restores a *nation* is, practically, the way in which He restores an *individual*. The way in which Israel shall be saved is the same by which any one individual sinner shall be saved. It is not, however, the one case which the Prophet is aiming at. He is looking at the vast mass of cases the multitudes of instances to be found among the Jewish people of gracious quickening and holy resurrection.

His first and primary intention was to speak of them and though it is right and lawful to take a passage in its widest possible meaning since, no Scripture is of private interpretation, yet I hold it to be treason to Gods Word to neglect its

primary meaning and constantly to saySuchand-such is the primary meaning, but it is of no consequence and I shall use the words for another subject. The preacher of Gods Truth should not give up the Holy Spirits meaning! He should take care that he does not even put it in the background. The *first* meaning of a text, the Spirits meaning, is that which should be brought out first and though the rest may fairly spring out of it, yet the first sense should have the chief place.

Let it have the uppermost place in the synagogue. Let it be looked upon as at least not inferior, either in interest or importance, to any other meaning which may come out of the text. The meaning of our text as opened up by the context is most evidently, if words mean anything, first, that there shall be a *political* restoration of the Jews to their own land and to their own nationality. And then, secondly, there is in the text and in the context a most plain declaration that there shall be a *spiritual* restoration in fact a *conversion*of the tribes of Israel.

I. First, THERE IS TO BE A POLITICAL RESTORATION OF THE JEWS. Israel is now blotted out from the map of nations. Her sons are scattered far and wide. Her daughters mourn beside all the rivers of the earth. Her sacred song is hushedno king reigns in Jerusalem! She brings forth no governors among her tribes. But she is to be restored! She is to be restored as from the dead. When her own sons have given up all hope of her, then is God to appear for her. She is to be reorganizedher scattered bones are to be brought together. There will be a native government again. There will again be the form of a political body.

A State shall be incorporated and a king shall reign. Israel has now become alienated from her own land. Her sons, though they can never forget the sacred dust of Palestine, yet die at a hopeless distance from her consecrated shores. But it shall not be so forever, for her sons shall again rejoice in herher land shall be called Beulahfor as a young man marries a virgin so shall her sons marry her. I will place you in your own land, is Gods promise to them. They shall again walk upon her mountains, shall once more sit under her vines and rejoice under her fig trees!

And they are also to be reunited. There shall not be two, nor ten, nor twelve, but oneone Israel praising one Godserving one king and that one King the Son of David, the descended Messiah! They are to have a national prosperity which shall make them famous. No, so glorious shall they be that Egypt and Tyre and Greece and Rome shall all forget their glory in the greater splendor of the throne of David! The day shall yet come when all the high hills shall leap with envy because this is the hill which God has chosen! The time shall come when Zions shrine shall again be visited by the constant feet of the pilgrimwhen her valleys shall echo with songs and her hilltops shall drop with wine and oil.

If there is meaning in words this must be the meaning of this chapter! I wish never to learn the art of tearing Gods meaning out of His own Words. If there is anything clear and plain, the literal sense and meaning of this passagea meaning not to be spirited or spiritualized awayit must be evident that both the two and the ten tribes of Israel are to be restored to their own land and that a king is to rule over them. Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen where they are gone and will gather them on every side and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel. And one king shall be king to them all. And they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.

I am not now going into millennial theories, or into any speculation as to dates. I do not know anything at all about such things and I am not sure that I am called to spend my time in such research. I am called to minister the Gospel rather than to open prophecy. Those who are wise in such things doubtless prize their wisdom, but I have not the time to acquire it, nor any inclination to leave soul-winning pursuits for less arousing themes. I believe it is a great deal better to leave many of these promises and many of these gracious outlooks of Believers to exercise their full force upon our minds without depriving them of their simple glory by aiming to discover dates and figures.

Let this be settled, however, that if there is meaning in words, Israel is yet to be restored

Yet not in vainover Israels land
The glory yet will shine.
And He, your once rejected King,
Messiah, shall be yours.

His chosen Bride, ordained with Him
To reign over all the earth,
Shall first be framed, and you shall know Your Saviors matchless worth.
Then you, beneath the peaceful reign
Of Jesus and His Bride,
Shall sound His Grace and Glory forth,
To all the earth beside.
The nations to your glorious light,
O Zion, yet shall throng,
And all the listening islands wait
To catch the joyful song.

But there is a second meaning here. ISRAEL IS TO HAVE A SPIRITUAL RESTORATION OR A CONVERSION. Both the text and the context teach this. The promise is that they shall renounce their idols and, behold, they have already done so! Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols. Whatever faults the Jew may have, he certainly has not idolatry. The Lord your God is one God, is a Truth far better conceived by the Jew than by any other man on earth except the Christian. Weaned forever from the worship of all images of any sort, the Jewish nation has now become infatuated with traditions or duped by philosophy.

She is to have, however, instead of these delusions, a spiritual religionshe is to love her God. They shall be My people and I will be their God. The unseen but Omnipotent Jehovah is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth by His ancient people. They are to come before Him in His own appointed way, accepting the Mediator whom their sires rejected. They will come into Covenant relation with God, for so our text tells usI will make a Covenant of peace with them, and Jesus is our peace therefore we gather that Jehovah shall enter into the Covenant of Grace with themthat Covenant of which Christ is the federal Head, the Substance and the Surety.

They are to walk in Gods ordinances and statutes and so exhibit the practical effects of being united to Christ who has given them peace. All these promises certainly imply that the people of Israel are to be converted to God and that this conversion is to be permanent. The tabernacle of God is to be with them! The Most High is, in a special manner, to have His sanctuary in the midst of them forever more so that whatever nations may apostatize and turn from the Lord in these latter days, the nation of Israel never can, for she shall be effectually and permanently converted. The hearts of the fathers shall be turned with the hearts of the children unto the Lord their God and they shall be the people of God, world without end.

We look forward, then, for these two things. I am not going to theorize upon which of them will come firstwhether they shall be restored first, and converted afterwardsor converted first and then restored. They are to be restored and they are to be converted, too. Let the Lord send these blessings in His own order and we shall be well content whichever way they shall come. We take this for our joy and our comfort that this thing shall be and that both in the spiritual and in the temporal throne, the King Messiah shall sit and reign among His people gloriously.

II. Now I come to the practical part of my sermon this eveningTHE MEANS OF THAT RESTORATION. Looking at this matter we are very apt to say, How can these things be? How can the Jews be converted to Christ? How can they be made into a nation? Truly the case is quite as hopeless as that of the bones in the valley! How shall they cease from worldliness or renounce their constant pursuit of riches? How shall they he weaned from their bigoted attachment to their Talmudic traditions? How shall they be lifted up out of that hardness of heart which makes them hate the Messiah of Nazareth, their Lord and King? How can these things be?

The Prophet does not say it cannot be. His unbelief is not so great as that, but at the same time he scarcely ventures to think that it can ever be possible. He very wisely, however, puts back the question upon his GodO Lord God, You know. Now some of you are very expectant about this tonight and you are expecting to see the Jews converted very soon, perhaps in a month or two. I wish you may see it as soon as your desires would date it. Others of us are not as optimistic and take a more gloomy view of a long future of woes.

Well, let us both together come before God tonight and say, O Lord God, You know. And if You know it, Lord, we will be content to leave the secret with You! Only tell us what You would have us do. We ask not food for speculation, but we do ask for work. We ask for something by which we may practically show that we really do love the Jew and that we would bring him to Christ.

In answer to this, the Lord says to His servants, Prophesy upon these bones, so that our duty tonight, as Christians, is to prophesy upon these bones and we shall then see Gods purpose fulfilledwhen we obey Gods precept. I want you to observe that there are two kinds of prophesying spoken of here. First, the Prophet prophesies to the boneshere is preaching. And next, he prophesies to the four windshere is praying. The preaching has its share in the work, but it is the *praying* which achieves the resultfor after he had prophesied to the four winds and *not before*the bones began to live.

All that the preaching did was to make a stir and to bring the bones together, but it was the praying which did the work, for then God the Holy Spirit came to give them life! Preaching and praying, then, are the two heads of this part of my sermon tonight and we will speak upon each briefly.

1. It is the duty and the privilege of the Christian Church to preach the Gospel to the Jew and to every creature. And in so doing she may safely take the vision before us as her guide. She may take it as her guide, first, as to matter. What are we to preach? The text says we are to prophesy and assuredly every missionary to the Jews should especially keep Gods prophecies very prominently before the public eye. It seems to me that one way in which the Jewish mind might be laid hold of would be to remind the Jews right often of that splendid future which both the Old and the New Testaments predict for Israel.

Every man has a tender side and a warm heart towards his own nation and if you tell him that in your standard book there is a revelation made that that nation is to act a grand part in human history and is, indeed, to take the very highest place in the parliament of nationsthen the mans prejudice is on your side and he listens to you with the greater attention. I would not commend, as some do, the everlasting preaching of prophesy in every congregation. But a greater prominence should be given to prophecies in teaching the Jews than among any other people.

But still, the main thing which we have to preach about is Christ. Depend upon it dear Brethren, the best sermons which we ever preach are those which are fullest of Christ Jesus, the Son of David and the Son of God! Jesus the suffering Savior by whose stripes we are healed! Jesus able to save unto the uttermosthere is the most suitable subject for Gentiles. God has fashioned all hearts alike and therefore this is also the noblest theme for Jews. Paul loved his countrymen! He was no simpletonhe knew what was the best weapon with which to assail and overcome their prejudices and yet he could say, I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Lift up the Messiah, then, both before Jew and Gentile. Tell of Marys Son, the eternal Son of God, the Man of Nazareth who is none other than the Incarnate Word, God made flesh and dwelling among us! Preach His hallowed lifethe righteousness of His people. Declare His painful death the putting away of all their sins. Vindicate His glorious Resurrection! The justification of His people. Tell of His ascent on high. His triumph over the world and sin! Declare His second advent, His glorious coming to make His people glorious in the Glory which He has won for them! And Christ Jesus, as He is thus preached, shall surely be the means of making these bones live!

Let this preaching resound with Sovereign mercy! Let it always have in it the clear and distinct ring of Free Grace. I was thinking as I read this chapter just now, that of all the sermons which were ever preached, this sermon to the dry bones is the most Calvinistic, the most full of Free

Grace of any which were ever delivered. If you will notice it you will find that there is not an if, or a but, or a condition in it!

And as for free will, there is not even a mention of it. It is all in this fashionThus says the Lord God unto these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you and you shall live: and I will lay sinews upon you and will bring up flesh upon you and cover you with skin and put breath in you and you shall live. And you shall know that I am the Lord. You see it is all shalls, and wills, and Covenant purposes. It is all Gods decrees declared and declared, too, as if there were no possibility of mans resisting them.

He does not say, You dry bones, you shall live if you like. You shall if you are willing. He does not say to them, You shall stand upright and be an exceeding great army if it pleases you to consent to My power. No, but it is, I will, and, you shall. As for will, it is altogether put out of the question, for how shall the dead have a will in the matter? And so, dear Friends, I would have the Gospel preached both to the Jew and the Gentile with a very clear and distinct note of free, Sovereign, almighty Grace.

Man has a will and God never ignores that willbut by His almighty Grace He blessedly leads it in silken fetters. He never stops to ask that wills consent when He comes forth upon His errands of effectual Grace. He wins that consent by the sweet persuasions of His own Omnipotent love. He comes arrayed in the robes of His Omnipotent Grace and the most hardened of rebels see at once such an attractive force in the love of God in Christ that with full consent against their ancient wills they yield themselves captives to the Grace of God! I do not believe that the Jews, or anybody else, will ever be converted as a usual thing by keeping back any of the Doctrines of Grace.

We must have Gods Truth and the whole of it. And more distinct utterances concerning evangelical doctrines and the Grace of God are required both for Jews and for Gentiles. Preach, preach, preach, thenbut let it be the preaching of Christ and the proclamation of Free Grace. The Church, I say, has a model here as to the matter of preaching. And I am certain that she has also a model here as to her *manner* of preaching. How shall we preach the Gospel? Was Ezekiel to do what some of my hyper-Calvinistic Brethren say preachers ought to doto warn the sinner, but never to invite him?

Was Ezekiel to go and talk to these bones, but never say a word to them by way of command? Was he to explain the way of salvation but never bid them walk in it? No! After he had declared Covenant purposes, he was then to say, Thus says the Lord, you dry bones live. And so the message of the Gospel minister, when he has declared the purposes of Divine Grace, is to say to sinners, Thus says the Lord, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ! Trust Christ and you are saved! Whoever you may be, Jew or Gentile. Whether your speech is that of the land of Canaan or of a Gentile tongue. Whether you spring of Shem, Ham, or Japhethtrust Christ and you are saved! Trust Him, then, you dry bones, and live! Withered arm be outstretched! Lame men, leap! Blind eyes, see! You dead, dry bones, live!

The manner of our preaching is to be by way of command as well as by way of teaching. Repent and be converted, every one of you. Lay hold on eternal life. Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened unto you. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved! We have a model here, moreover, as to our audience. We are not to select our congregation, but we are to go where God sends us. And if He should send us into the open valley where the bones are very dry, we are to preach there. I trust that my Brethren of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Among the Jews will never confine their labors to the good Jew, the respectable Jew, the enlightened Jewlet them seek after him among the restbut I hope they will also seek after the ignorant, the degraded, the poor and the fallen.

The Churchs best harvests have generally been reaped among the poor. For every grain of wheat which has fructified upon the hillsides of wealth, thousands have sprung up to bring forth much fruit in the valleys of poverty and obscurity. The poor have the Gospel preached to them this is the Gospels pride! The poor receive the Gospelthis is its success! Preach to the dry bones, then. Do not say, Such-and-such a man is too bigoted. The case rests not with *him*, nor with his *bigotry*, but with God! These bones were very dry, but yet they lived.

There is very little to choose, after all, between one man and another when all are dead! A little difference in the dryness does not come to much account when all are dead in sin. That some men are drunk and some are sober, that some men are debauched and some are chaste makes a very great difference in the moral and civil world. But very little difference, indeed, in the spiritual world, for there the same things happen to them both. If they believe not they shall alike be lost. And if they trust Jesus Christ they shall alike be saved! Let not, therefore, the greater viciousness of a people, or their greater hardness of heart, ever stand in our waybut let us say to them, dry as they areYou dry bones, live.

And here, again, we have another lesson as to the preachers *authority*. If you will observe you will see the Prophet says, Hear the Word of the Lord. We are to go neither to Jew nor to Gentile upon our own errand, or bearing our own words. I have no right to command a man to believe this or that unless I am an ambassador of God. And then, with Gods authority to direct and empower me, I speak no longer as a man following his own wit but as the mouth of God.

So let every one of us go, when we are trying to save souls, feeling the hand of God upon us, with a soul big with anxious thoughts and heaving high with earnest desires. Let us speak

As though we never might speak again,

As dying men to dying men,

taking hold upon Gods arm and beseeching Him to work *by* us and *through* us for the good of men. Remember, Christian, however humble you may bewhen you speak Gods Wordthat Word has an authority about it which will leave a man without excuse if he rejects it. Always put to your fellow man the Truth of God which you hold dearnot as a thing which he may play with or may do what he likes withor which is at his option to choose or to neglect as he sees fit. But put it to him as it is in truththe Word of God. And be not satisfied unless you warn him that it is at his own peril that he rejects the invitation and that on his own head

must be his blood if he turns aside from the good Word of the command of God.

Thus, we have, I think, all the directions which are necessary for us to preach. And what this Society and every other Society which aims at the conversion of sinners has to do is to go and preach, preach, preachnot spending too much upon printing, nor upon schools, nor ecclesiastical buildingsbut preaching the Word of God! For after all, this is the battering-ram which is to shake the gates of Hell and break its iron bars. God has chosen the foolishness of preaching that He might, by it, save those who believe! Preaching is the blast of the rams horn ordained to level Jericho and the sound of the silver trumpet appointed to usher in the jubilee. It is Gods chariot of fire for bearing souls to Heaven and His twoedged sword to strike the hosts of Hell. His ordained servants are at once warriors and builders, and the Word serves them both for spear and trowel. Preach, then, from morning till nightat every time and on all occasions, the unsearchable riches of Christ, and Israel shall yet live!

I cannot leave this point without noticing how the Prophet describes the effect of his preachingthere was a voice and there was a noise. Was this the noise of Gods voice going with mans voice? Or was this the noise of the bones themselves creeping over one another? Does this represent opposition on the part of those preached to? Truly opposition is always a good sign! When you can get a man to oppose you, you may have some hope of him. If he has enough religious thought to try and refute what you bring before him, you may be thankful. Is this stir, then, the stir of opposition, or is it the stir of enquiry?

Does not the creeping of the bones together represent the people coming together to hear, to talk with one another, to reason about Divine things? When the various muscles and the flesh come upon the bones, does this represent the appearance of certain converts, destined to be the leaders of others? Are these sinews and muscles the representatives of men who are to move the rest of the corporate body by-and-by? It may be so and we may expect to see, as Christ is preached among Jews or Gentiles, more and more stir and excitementthe people coming together in greater numbers and the whole mass fermenting by the force of the leaven. Anything is better than stagnationof a persecutor I have quite as much hope as of a quiet despiser.

2. But now we come to speak of that in which you can all take a part. Perhaps you cannot take a part in preaching the Word, though I wish that you all could. And I covet for you all the best gifts. But in the second form of prophesying you can all take your share. After the Prophet had prophesied to the bones, he was to prophesy to the winds. He was to say to the blessed Spirit, the Life-Giver, the God of all Grace, Come from the four winds, O Breath and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

Preaching alone does little. It may make a stir. It may bring the people together. There is an attractiveness about the Gospel which will draw the people to hear it. And there is, moreover, a force about it which will excite them, for it is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. But there is no life-giving power in the Gospel of itself apart from the Holy Spirit! The Breath must first blow and then these bones shall live! Let us betake ourselves much to this form of prophesying.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, you who care for Israel, go before the Lord now and from now on in earnest, importunate prayer! Strive to be more than ever conscious of the utter indispensability of this matter. Feel that without Christ you can do nothing! In vain your society, your machinery, your committees, your secretaries, your collectors, your contributors, your missionaries without the Holy Spirit! Blow your trumpet and proclaim loudly what you have doneyou have sown muchbut you shall reap little unless you are trusting in the Spirit of God! There is always this danger to which we are exposed, though some, I know, think that it is a danger which does not existI mean the peril of looking to the strength or the weakness of the instrumentality and being either puffed up by the one or dejected by the other.

You are enough for your work if God is with you! And if you are but a handful you are too many for your work if God is *not* with you. God never objects to human weaknesswhen He comes to work He prefers itfor it makes a platform for Divine power. What did He say to GideonThe people are too many for Me. He did not say that they were too few. You never find a case in Scripture of Gods saying that the people were too fewit was, The people are too many for Me. Mans strength is more in Gods way than mans weakness. No, human weakness, inasmuch as it makes elbow room for Gods strength, is Gods chosen instrument! Therefore will I glory in infirmities, said the Apostle, that the power of God may rest upon me. Rest then, upon the Holy Spirit as indispensable and go to God with this for your cry, Come from the four winds, O Breath and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

Observe, Beloved, that this second prophesying of Ezekiel is just as bold and as full of faith as the first. He seems to have no doubt, but speaks as though he could command the wind. Come, says he and the wind comes. We need more faith in God. When we are engaged in any spiritual work we shall always find our success proportioned to our faith. Little faith, slender harvests! Much faith, plenteous sheaves! Little fishes come in slender numbers to Little-Faiths net. But Strong-Confidence can hardly hold all the great fishes which load her boat. I will not ask for your society, or for you any further gift than greater faith, for, getting greater faith you have Divine strength and sure success.

The Spirit always works with faithful men. My dear Friends, the Spirit of God is poured out! He abides in His Church as the ever-present Comforter. We are not to look upon His influences as a gift which we cannot reach for He is here waiting to give us all we need. He dwells in the midst of His people and we have but to cry unto Him and He will manifest His mighty power and we shall have souls saved, both Jews and Gentiles! Let your prayer, then, be with a sense of how much you need it, but yet with a firm conviction that the Holy Spirit will most surely come in answer to your petitions.

And then let it be *earnest* prayer. That, Come from the four winds, O breath, reads to me like the cry, not of one in despair, but of one who is full of a vehement desire gratified with what he sees, since the bones have come together and have been mysteriously clothed with flesh! And he is now crying passionately for the immediate completion of the miracle Come from the four winds, O Breath and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. There is continual vehemence and force herehere is just that which makes a prayer prevalent. O, let us cry mightily unto God! We cannot expect to see great things unless we cry to Himbut we are only limited by our prayers. We are not straitened in Him! We are only straitened in ourselves.

We might see greater things if we could but believe. All things are possible to him that believes, but as of old, the Lord Jesus cannot do many mighty things nowadays because of our unbelief. We hamper the arm of Grace! We do, as it were, restrain the Almighty energy. O for greater faith to believe that nations may be born in a day! That multitudes may be turned unto God at onceand we shall yet see itsee what our fathers never saw and what our imaginations have never dreamed! We shall leap from victory to victory, marching on from one triumph to another until we meet the all-glorious Savior! Charging enemy after enemy and routing army after army, we shall go on, conquering and to conquer until we salute Him who comes upon the white horse of triumph followed by all the armies of Heaven! Brethren, be of good courage in your work of faith and labor of love for it is not and shall not be in vain in the Lord.

I address some tonight, I know, who have no interest in what I have been saying for they are not subjects of Messiah, themselves. Remember, faith is a sign of your allegiance to Him. Trust Christ and you are saved! Trust Jesus Christ and you are delivered from Divine wrath and from the power of your natural passions. The Lord grant you a resurrection tonight, O you who are dead in sin, and His name shall have all the praise!

Our friends here have for some little time been in a small way assisting this Society by their contributions. They, therefore, are well acquainted with it. I have not time this evening to enter into details about it, but I may just say that this Society has for a long time done a good work among the Jewish people. And I ask you to contribute to this among other good works as you feel moved to do whenever opportunity occurs.

Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2246 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

COME FROM THE FOUR WINDS, O BREATH!
NO. 2246

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, MARCH 6, 1892. *DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 15, 1890.
He said to me, Prophesy unto the wind, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus says the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. Ezekiel 37:9.

ACCORDING to some commentators, this vision in the valley of dry bones may refer to three forms of resurrection. Holy Scripture is so marvelously full of meaning that one interpretation seldom exhausts its message to us. The chapter before us is an excellent example of this fact and supplies an illustration of several Scriptural Truths of God.

Some think they see, here, a parable of the resurrection of the dead. Assuredly, Ezekiels vision pictures what will happen in the day when the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised. No matter how dry the bones may be, the bodies of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall rise again. That which was sown shall spring up from the grave and, in the case of the children of God, it shall wear a new glory. At the Word of Christ it shall come to passFor the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.

Others see here the resurrection of the almost destroyed host of Israel which had been divided into two companies and carried away captive into Babylon. Plague and pestilence and the sword of the Chaldean had gone far to cut off the chosen nation, but God promised to restore His people, thus mingling mercy with judgment, and again setting in the cloud the bow of His Everlasting Covenant. A partial fulfillment of this promise was given when, for a while, the Lord set up, again, the tribes of Israel at Jerusalem and they had a happy rest before the coming of Christ. But Israels full restoration is yet to be accomplished. The people shall be gathered out of the graves in which, as a nation, they have so long lain buried, and shall be placed in their own landand then will come to pass the Word of JehovahThen shall you know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, says the Lord.

There are others, who, looking beyond the literal for the *spiritual* teaching, see, and I think, *rightly* see, that here is a picture of the recovery of ungodly men from their *spiritual* death and corruptiona parable of the way in which sinners are brought up from their hopeless, spiritually dead condition and made to live by the power of the Holy Spirit. I shall, at any rate, use the text in this sense, for I am not now aiming at the interpretation of prophesy, nor concerned greatly with what is to happen in the future. Neither do I wish to conduct you into the deep things of God, but I am just now thinking of practical uses to which I can put this incident in order to stir up Gods people to deal with the Holy Spirit as He should be dealt with, and to urge the unconverted to seek the Lord in the hope that some of them, as dead and dry as the bones in the Valley of Vision, may be made to live by His Divine Power.

Nothing gave me greater comfort, this week, than when I received a note from one saying that, last Thursday night, while I was preaching from the text, Let your soul delight itself in fatness, she was enabled to lay hold on Christ. I had rather have such tidings than to hear the most glad news of a worldly kind that could be brought to me! Oh, that now, also, some poor heart may find rest in Christ while we are talking of that Divine Spirit who becomes a Comforter to all those to whom He has been first a Quickener! May He come and cause men to live and then, afterwards, make them full of gladness! It is His blessed office first, to bestow life, and then to give light. Living unto God is the earliest experience of the redeemedafterwards comes joy in God by the Holy Spirit.

I. Now, first, in using this text, as I have said, for practical purposes, I am going to make this remark upon itWE ARE NOTHING WITHOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT. I now speak, my Brothers, to you who love the souls of men. I know that there are some among you who preach and teach with all earnestness, with broken-hearted love and, for the glory of Christ, you try to bring men to believe in Jesus. In thus endeavoring to save the souls of the lost and ruined men, you are engaged in a noble work. But I dare say that you have often felt what I, also, fully realize, that you have not gone far in your holy service before you are brought face to face with the fact that, in itself, the work you propose to do is an utter impossibility!

We begin our labor according to the Word of the Lord and we prophesy. God helping us, we can do that and, though the burden of the Lord is heavy, yet if we are told to prophesy again, we can, by His Grace, do that, also. We can prophesy to dry bones, or prophesy to the wind according to Gods commandment. We are not afraid of seeming to be foolish since we know that when the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. But when we preach the Word and, as the result of our preaching expect men to be savedand so saved that we may know itwe come, all of a sudden, upon an iron-bound coast and can get no further. We find that men are deadwhat is needed is that they should be *quickened*and we cannot quicken them! There are a great many things we can doand God forbid that we should leave one of them undone! But when we come to the *creation of life*, we have reached a mysterious region into which we cannot penetratewe have entered the realm of miracles where Jehovah reigns supreme!

The prerogative to give life or to take it away must remain with the Most High. The wit and wisdom of man are altogether powerless to bestow life upon even the tiniest insect! We know for sure,, *doctrinally*, and we know it with equal certainty by *experience*, that we can do nothing towards the quickening of men apart from the Spirit of God. If He does not come and give life, we may preach till we have not another breath left, but we shall not raise from the tomb of sin even the soul of a little child, or bring a single sinner to the feet of Christ!

How, then, should this fact affect us? Because of our powerlessness, shall we sit still, doing nothing and caring nothing? Shall we say, The Spirit of God must do the work, therefore I may fold my arms and take things easy? Beloved, we cannot do that! Our hearts desire and prayer for our fellow men is that they might be saved and we have sometimes felt that for their sakes, we could almost be willing to be accursed, if we might bring eternal life to them! We cannot sit still! We do not believe that it was Gods intent that any Truth of God should ever lead us into slothat any rate, it has not so led us, by His Graceit has carried us in quite the opposite direction!

Let us try to be as practical in *this* matter as we are in *material* things. We cannot rule the winds, nor create them. A whole parliament of philosophers could not cause a capful of wind to blow. The sailor knows that he can neither stop the tempest nor raise it. What then? Does he sit still? By no means! He has all kinds of sails of different cuts and forms to enable him to use every ounce of wind that comesand he knows how to reef or furl them in case the tempest becomes too strong for his boat. Though he cannot control the movement of the wind, he can use what it pleases God to send. The miller cannot divert that great stream of water out of its channel, but he knows how to utilize ithe makes it turn his mill-wheel. Though he cannot resist the law of gravitation, for there seems to be an almost omnipotent force in it, yet he uses that law and yokes it to his chariot! Thus, though we cannot command that mighty influence which streams from the Omnipotent Spirit of God; though we cannot turn it which way we will, for, the wind blows where it wishes, yet we can make use of it and, in our inability to save men, we turn to God and lay hold of His power.

What, then, are we to do? Face to face with spiritual death. Conscious of the fact that we cannot remove it. And fully aware that only the Holy Spirit can quicken dead souls, what shall we do? There are certain ways and means by which we can act properly towards this Divine Person certain attitudes of heart which it would be well for us to take upand certain results which will follow from a clear apprehension of the true state of the case.

First, by this fact, *we must feel deeply humbled, emptied and cut adrift from self*. Look, Sir, you may study your sermon. You may examine the original of your text. You may critically follow it out in all its bearings. You may go and preach it with great correctness of expression, but you *cannot* quicken a soul by that sermon! You may go up into your pulpit. You may illustrate, explain and enforce the Truth of God with mighty rhetoric. You may charm your hearersyou may hold them spellboundbut no eloquence of yours can raise the dead! Demosthenes might stand for a century between the jaws of death, but the monster would not be moved by anything he or all human orators might say!

Another voice than ours must be heard! Another power than that of thought or persuasion must be brought into the work or it will not be done! You may organize your societies; you may have excellent methods; you may diligently pursue this course and that, but when you have done it all, nothing comes of it if the effort stands by itself! Only as the Spirit of God shall bless men by you, shall they receive a blessing through you! Whatever your ability or experience, it is the Spirit of God who must bless your labor. Therefore, never go to a service with a boast upon your lips of what *you* can do, or with the slightest trace of self-confidenceor else you will go in a spirit which will prevent the Holy Spirit from working with or through you.

O Brothers and Sisters, think nothing of us who preach to you! If ever you do, our power will be gone. If you begin to suppose that such and such a minister, having been blessed of God to so many thousands will necessarily be the means of the conversion of your friend, you are imputing to a son of man what belongs only to the Son of God! And you will assuredly do that pastor or that minister a serious mischief by tolerating in your heart so idolatrous a thought! *We are nothing*! *You* are nothing. Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts, is a message that should make us lie in the dust and utterly despair of doing *anything* in and of *ourselves*, seeing that all the power is of God, alone! It will do us good to be very empty, to be very weak, to be very distrustful of *self*and so to go about out Masters work.

Next, because of our absolute need of the Holy Spirit, *we must give ourselves to prayer before our work and after our work*. A man who believes that, *do what he may*, no soul will be quickened apart from the work of the Spirit of Goda man who has a longing desire that he may save souls will not venture to his pulpit without *prayer*! He will not deliver his message without a thousand groans and cries to God for help in every sentence that he utters. And when the sermon is done, his *work* will *not* be doneit will have scarcely begunhis sermons will be but a text for *longcontinued prayer*! He will be crying to God continually to anoint him with the heavenly oil. His prayer will be, Let the Spirit of God be upon me, that I may preach deliverance to the captives; otherwise men will still remain in the prison house in spite of all my toil.

And you, Beloved, as you believe that doctrine, will not allow the preacher to go to his work without *your* prayers! You will bear him up in your supplications, feeling that your attendances at the House of God will all be vanity, and the coming together of the people will be as nothing unless God, the Holy Spirit, is pleased to bless the Word! This thought will drive you to besiege the Throne of Grace with strong crying and tears that God would quicken the dead sons of men. If any of you are working without prayer, I will not advise you to cease your work, but I will urge you to begin to pray, not merely as a matter of form, but as the very life of your labors! Let the habit of prayer be constant with you, so that you neither begin any service for God, nor carry it on, nor conclude it without crying to the Lord for His Holy Spirit to make the work effectual by His almighty power!

We have already gathered much instruction from this Truth of God if we have learned to lie low before the Lord and before the Mercy Seat. But we must go a little further. Since everything depends upon the Spirit of God, *we must be very careful to be such men as the Spirit of God can use*. We may not judge others, but have you not met with men whom you could not think the Spirit of God would be likely to bless? If a man is selfsufficient, can the Spirit of God, to any large degree, bless him? If a man is inconsistent in his daily life; if there is no earnestness about him; if you cannot tell when he is in character or creed; if he contradicts one day what he said the day before; if he is vain-glorious and boastful, is it likely that the Spirit of God will bless him?

If any of us should become lazy, indolent, or self-indulgent, we cannot expect the Spirit, whose one aim is to glorify Christ, to work with us! If we should become proud, domineering, hectoring, how could the gentle Dove abide with us? If we should become despondent, having little or no faith in what we preach and not expecting the power of the Holy Spirit to be with us, is it likely that God will bless us? Believe me, dear Friends, that a vessel fit for the Masters use must be very clean. It need not be of silver or of goldit may be but a common earthen vessel, but it must be very clean for our God is a jealous God. He can spy a fingerprint where our eyes could not see it, even with a microscopeand He will not drink out of a vessel which a moment before was at the lips of Satan! He will not use us if we have been used by *self*, or if we have allowed ourselves to be used by the *world*. Oh, how clean should we be in our private life as well as in our ordinary walk and conversation! This is no small thing. See to it, my Brothers and Sisters, for much of the promised blessing may depend upon your carefulness.

Next, since we depend wholly upon the Spirit, *we must be most anxious to use the Word of God and to keep close to the Truth of God* in all our work for Christ among men. The Word of God is the Holy Spirits swordhe will not wield our wooden weapons. He will only use this true Jerusalem blade of Gods own fashioning. Let us, then, set high value on the Inspired Word. We shall defeat our adversaries by that sword-thrust, It is written. So spoke the Christ; and so He conquered Satan. So also the Holy Spirit speaks. Be wise, therefore, and let your reliance be not on your own wisdom, but on the Word to which you can add, Thus says the Lord. If our preaching is of that kind, the Holy Spirit will always set His seal to it. But if you have thought it out and it is your own production, go, good Sir, to Her Majestys offices, and get patent letters for your inventionthe Holy Spirit will have nothing to do with it! He cares nothing about your original mind. Our Lord Jesus laid aside all originality and spoke only the Words of His Fatherthe Words which the Holy Spirit brought to Him!

He said to His disciples, in that memorable discourse, before He went out to Gethsemane, The Word which you hear is not Mine, but the Fathers which sent Me. Let us try to imitate Him, being willing not to think our own thoughts, or to speak our own words, but those which God shall give us! I would rather speak five words out of this Book than 50,000 words of the philosophers! I had rather be a fool with God than be a wise man with the most sage scientist, for, the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. You cannot work for Christ except by the Spirit of Christ, and you cannot teach for Christ except you teach Christ! Your work will have no blessing upon it, unless it is Gods Word spoken through your lips to the sons of men! If we want revivals, we must revive our reverence for the Word of God. If we want conversions, we must put more of Gods Word into our sermons even if we paraphrase it into our own words, it must still be *His Word* upon which we place our reliancefor the only power which will bless men lies in that. It is Gods Word that saves souls, not our comment upon it, however correct that comment may be! Let us, then, be scrupulously careful to honor the Holy Spirit by taking the weapon which He has prepared for us, believing in the full Inspiration of the sacred Scriptures and expecting that God will prove their Inspiration by their effect upon the minds and hearts of men.

Again, since we are nothing without the Holy Spirit, *we must avoid in our work anything that us not of Him*. We want these dead people raised, but *we* cannot raise themonly the Spirit of God can do that. Now, in our part of the work, for which God condescendingly uses us, let us take care that there is nothing which would grieve the Spirit, or cause Him to go away from us. I believe that in places where the work of conversion goes on in great numbers, God is much more jealous than He is anywhere else. He watches His Church and if He sees, in the officers of the Church, or in the workers, something unholy. If He beholds practices tolerated that are not according to His pure mind and if, when they are noticed, these evils are winked at and still further indulged, He will withdraw His blessing until we cease to have a controversy with Him! Possibly He might give His blessing to a Church which was worse than this in many respects, while He might withdraw it from this Church, which has already been so highly favored, if it countenanced anything contrary to His Word.

An ordinary subject of Her Majesty might say certain things about her for which he would never be brought to book. But a favorite at court must mind how he behaves. So must we be very sensitive in this Divine employment in which we come nearest to Christwe must be careful to cooperate with Him in our work of seeking to pluck brands from the burning. We must mind how we do it, for we may, perhaps, be led to adopt ways and methods which may grieve Him. And if we persevere in those ways and methods, after we have learned that they are *not* according to His will, the Spirit of God will leave us, lest He should seem to be setting His seal upon that of which He does not approve! A headlong zeal, even for Christ, may leap into a ditch! What we think to be very wise may be very *unwise*and where we deem that even a little policy may come in, that little policy may taint the whole and make a nauseous stench which God will not endure! You *must* have the Spirit of God! You can do nothing without Him! Therefore do nothing that would cause Him to depart from you.

Moreover, *we must be always ready to obey the Holy Spirits gentlest monitions* by which I mean the monitions which are in Gods Word and, alsobut putting this in the second placesuch inward whispers as He accords to those who dwell near to Him. I believe that the Holy Spirit does still speak to His chosen in a very remarkable way. Men of the world might ridicule this Truth of God and, therefore, we speak little of it, but the child of God knows that there are, at times, distinct movements of the Holy Spirit upon his mind leading him in such and such ways. Be very tender of these touches of God! Some people do not feel these movements, but perhaps if they, with a more perfect heart, feared the Lord, His secret might be revealed to them. That great ship at sea will not be moved by a rippleeven an ordinary wave will not stir itit is big and heavy. But that cork, out yonder, goes up and down with every ripple of the water! Should a great wave come, it will be raised to the crest of it and carried wherever the current compels. Let your spirit be little before God and easily movedso that you may recognize every impulse of the Spiritand obey it at once, whatever it may be.

When the Holy Spirit moves you to give up such and such a thing, yield to it instantly, lest you lose His Presence! When He impels you to fulfill such and such a duty, be not disobedient to the heavenly vision. Or if He suggests to you to praise God for such and such a favor, give yourself to thanksgiving. Yield yourself wholly to His guidance. You who are workers, ask for the wisdom of the Spirit carefully and believingly. I do not understand a man going into the pulpit and praying the Spirit of God to guide him in what he shall sayand then pulling it out of his pocket in manuscript. It looks to me as if he shut the Spirit of God out of any special operation! At least all the help he can expect to have from the Spirit at that particular time must be in the manner of his *reading*, though, of course, he may have been guided in what he has written. Still, there is but scant room for the Spirit to manifest His power!

In the same way, if you make up your mind how you will deal with people and what you will say, it may often happen that, in the process, if you forget all you meant to say, it would be the best thing that could happen to you! And if you said exactly what you did *not* think it would be prudent to say, the unaccustomed method might be the thing the Spirit of God would bless. Keep yourself, therefore, before that valley of dry bones, free to do just what the Spirit of God would have you do, that He, *through* you, may raise the dead!

Once moresince, apart from the Spirit, we are powerless, *we must value greatly every movement of His Power*. Notice, in this account of the vision in the valley, how the Prophet draws attention to the fact of the shaking and the noises, and the coming of the sinews and the flesh even before there was any sign of life! I think that, if we want the Spirit of God to bless us, we must be on the watch to notice *everything* He does. Look out for the first desire, the first fear! Be glad of *anything* happening to your people that looks as if it were the work of the Holy Spirit and, if you value Him in His earlier works, He is likely to go on and to do more and more, till, at last, He will give the breathand the slain host shall arise and become an army for God! You cannot expect the Spirit of God to come and work by you if you are half asleep. You cannot expect the Spirit of God to put forth His power if you are in such a condition that if He saved half your congregation, you would not know itand if He saved nobody, you would not fret about it! God will not bless you when you are not awake! The Spirit of God does not work by sleepy men! He loves to have us alive, ourselves, and then He will make others alive by us. See to this, dear Brothers. If we had more time at our disposal, I would speak longer on this part of the subject, but I have said enough, now, if God the Holy Spirit blesses it, upon this first great Truth that we are nothing without the Holy Spirit.

II. Now, secondly, we may learn, from the action of Ezekiel on this occasion, that WE MAY SO ACT AS TO HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT. When he first saw the dry bones, there was no wind nor Breath, yet, obeying the voice of the Lord in the vision, the Breath came and life followed. How, then, shall we act? I will only give you in brief a few of the conditions to be observed by us.

If we want the Holy Spirit to be surely with us, to give us a blessing, *we must, in the power of the Spirit, realize the scene in which we are to labor*. In this case, the Holy Spirit took the Prophet, carried him out and set him down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones. This is just a type of what will happen to every man whom the Spirit means to use! Do you want to save people in the slums? Then, you must go to the slums! Do you want to save sinners broken down under a sense of sin? You must be broken down! At least you must get near to them in their brokenness of heart and be able to sympathize with them. I believe that no man will command power over a people whom he does not understand. If you have never been to a certain place, you do not know the roadbut if you have been there, yourself, and you come upon a person who has lost his way you are the man to direct him.

When you have been through the same perplexities that trouble others, you can say to them, I have been there myself. I know all about it. By Gods blessing, I can conduct you out of this maze. Dear Friend, we must have greater sympathy with sinners! You cannot pluck the brand out of the burning if you are afraid of being singed! You must be willing to dirty your fingers on the bars of the grate if you would do it. If there is a diamond dropped into a ditch, you must thrust your arm up to your elbow in the mud, or else you cannot expect to pick the jewel out of the mire. The Holy Spirit, when He blesses a man, sets him down in the midst of the valley full of bones and causes him to pass by them round about until he fully comprehends the greatness and the difficulty of the work to be accomplished, even as the Prophet said, Behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.

Next, if the Holy Spirit is to be with us, *we must speak in the power of faith*. If Ezekiel had not had faith, he certainly would not have *preached* to dry bonesthey make a wretched congregation! And he certainly would not have preached to the wind, for it must have been a fickle listener! Who but a fool would behave in this manner unless *faith* entered into action? If *preaching* is not a *supernatural* exercise, it is a useless procedure! God the Holy Spirit must be with us, or else we might as well go and stand on the tops of the hills of Scotland and shout to the east wind! There is nothing in all our eloquence unless we believe in the Holy Spirit making use of the Truth of God which we preach for the quickening of the souls of men. Our preaching must be an act of faith! We must preach by faith as much as Noah built the ark by faith and, just as the walls of Jericho were brought down by faithmens hearts are to be broken by faithful preaching, that is, preaching full of faith!

In addition to this, if we desire to have the Spirit of God with us, *we must prophesy according to Gods command*. By prophesying, I do not mean foretelling future events, but simply uttering the message which we have received from the Lord, proclaiming it aloud so that all may hear. You will notice how it is twice said, in almost the same words, So I prophesied as He commanded me. God will bless the prophesying that He commands, but not any other. So we must keep clear of that which is contrary to His Word and speak the Truth that He gives us to declare. As Jonah, the second time he was told to go to Nineveh, was told by the Lord to preach unto it the preaching that I bid you, so must we do if we would have our word believed even as his was. Our message is received when it is the Word of God through us! When the Lord describes the blessing that comes upon the earth by the rain and snow from Heaven, he says, So shall My Word be that goes forth out of My mouth. Let us see to it that before a word goes forth out of our mouth, we have received it from the mouth of God. Then we may hope and expect that the people will also receive it from us. The Spirit of God, that is, the Breath of God, goes with the Word of God, and with that alone.

Notice, next, that if we would have the Spirit of God with us, *we must break out in vehemence of desire*. The Prophet is to prophesy to the bones, but he does not begin in a formal manner by saying, Only the winds coming can bring Breath to these slain persons. No, he breaks out with an interjection and with his whole soul heaving with a ground-swell of great desire, he cries, Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live! He has the people before him in his eyes and in his heartand he appeals, with mighty desire, to the Spirit of God, that *He* would come and make them live! You will generally find, in our service today, that the men who yearn over the souls of their fellow men are those whom the Spirit of God uses. A man of no desire gets what he longs forand that is nothing at all.

Then, if we would have more of the power of the Spirit of God with us, *we must see only the Divine purpose, the Divine Power and the Divine working*. God will have His Spirit go forth with those who see His hand. When I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall you know that I, the Lord, have spoken it, and performed it, says the Lord. It is not *my* plan that God is going to work outit is His own! It is not *my* purpose that the Holy Spirit is going to carry outit is the purpose of the eternal Jehovah! It is not *my* power, or *my* experience, or *my* mode of thought which will bring men from death to lifeit is the Holy Spirit who will do itand He only! We must apprehend this fact and get to work in this attitudeand then God the Holy Spirit will be with us.

III. Bear with me, if I fill up all my time, or if I should even stray beyond it. I now want to address unconverted persons or those who are afraid that they are still unsavedand with the text before us WE WOULD SPEAK DIFFERENTLY TO OUR HEARERS.

You who are not yet quickened by the Divine Life, or are afraid you are not, *we would exhort you to hear the Word of the Lord*. Though you feel that you are as dead as these dry bones, yet if you want to be saved, be frequent in hearing the Word of God. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. If you wish to find the Divine Life, thank God that you have that wishand frequent those houses where Christ is much spoken ofand where the way of eternal life is very plainly set forth. When you mingle with the worshippers, listen with both your earstry to remember what you hear and pray all the while that God will bless it to you. O you dry bones, hear the Word of the Lord!

Next, *we could remind you of your absolute need of life from the Spirit of God*. Put it in what shape you like, you cannot be saved unless you are born again! And the new birth is not a matter within your own power. You must be born againfrom above, as the margin reads, in the third chapter of Johns Gospel. All the religion of which you are capable will not save you, do what you will! Strive as you may with outward ceremonies, or religious observances, there is no hope for you but in the Holy Spirit! There is something to be done for you which you cannot do for yourself. We will not water down that Truth of God, but give it to you just as it stands in the Scriptureswe want you to feel its power.

But *we would have you note what the Holy Spirit has done for others*. There are some of your friends who have been born again. They were as hopeless as you are, but they are now saved! You know they are, for you have seen their lives. Take note of them, for what the Holy Spirit can work in one, He can work in another! Let the Grace of God in others comfort you concerning yourself, especially when you hear of great drunks, or great swearers, or very vicious persons who have been transformed into saints. Say to yourself, If the Holy Spirit could make a saint out of such a sinner as that, surely He can make a saint out of me. As you see the flesh and sinews on others who were once as dry as bare bones, be encouraged to hope that it may be even so with you before long!

May I go a little further and say that *we would have you observe carefully what is done in yourself*? I think I am speaking to some here who have already undergone a remarkable change. You cannot say that you have spiritual lifeyou are afraid that you have not. Still, you are not what you used to be. You have put away many things from you that were once a pleasure to youand now you take delight in many things which you once despised. There is some hope in that, though it may be nothing more than the sinews coming on the bones and the flesh upon the sinews. Yet I notice that, where the Holy Spirit begins, He does not leave off till He has finished His work. God takes such a delight in His work, that, having begun it, He completes it! Well did Job say, You will have a desire to the work of Your hands. Now, what He has already done for you, encourages *me*and should encourage *you* to hope that He will yet do much more, continuing His gracious work until life eternal is bestowed upon you!

Furthermore, *we would remind you that faith in Jesus is a sign of life*. If in your heart you can trust yourself to Christ and believe in Him that He can save you, you *already* have eternal life! He that believes on the Son has everlasting life. If you can now, though it is for the first time, trust yourself on Christ, alonefaith is the surest evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit! You have passed from death unto life already! You cannot see the Spirit any more than you can see the wind, but, if you have faith, that is a blessed vane that turns in the way the Spirit of God blows. Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God. If

you believe, this is true of *you*and if you cast yourself wholly upon Christ remember that it is written, He that believes on Him is not condemned. Therefore be of good cheer!

We beg you not to be led aside to the discussion of difficulties . There are a great many difficulties. To tell dry bones to live is a very unreasonable sort of thing when tried by rules of logic. And for me to tell you, a dead sinner, to believe in Christ, may seem perfectly unjustifiable by the same rule. But I do not need to justify it. If I find it in Gods Word, that is quite enough for me! And if the preacher does not feel any difficulty in the matter, why should you? There *is* a difficulty, but you have nothing to do with it! There are difficulties everywhere. There is a difficulty in explaining how it is that bread sustains your bodyand how that bread, sustaining your body, can be the means of prolonging your life! We cannot understand how the *material* can impinge upon the *spiritual*. And there are difficulties in almost everything connected with life. If a man will not do anything till he has solved every difficulty, we had better dig his grave. And you will be in Hell if you will not go to Heaven without having every difficulty solved for you! Forget the difficultiesthere will be time enough to settle them when we get to Heaven. Meanwhile, if life comes through Jesus Christ, let us have it and have done with nursing our doubts!

Further, *we would have you long for the visitation of God, the Holy Spirit*. Join with us in the prayer, Come Holy Spirit, come with all Your Power! Come from the four winds, O Breath! One wind will not do itit must come from all quarters. Your heart, filled with all sorts of evil, needs breakingit needs throwing down like the house of Jobs son when Jobs children were in itand there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell. Oh, for a wind from the four quarters of Heaven to smite the four corners of the house of your sin and lay it low! Come from the four winds, O Breath! As the poet sings

Lifeless in the valley,
Come, O Breath, and breathe! New-create and rally!
Come, O Breath, and breathe! Blowing where you wish, You the word assist,
You deaths power resist,
Come, O Breath, and breathe!

Be willing to have the Holy Spirit as He wills to come. Let Him come as a north wind, cold and cutting, or as a south wind, sweet and melting. Say, Come, from any of the four winds, O Breath! Only come! He can come unexpectedly upon you in the pew during these five minutes that remain. You are, perhaps, thinking about whether you can catch an early train and get home. May the Holy Spirit lay hold of you before you leave the building and get you home in real earnest to your God and to your Father! He can come very mightily. There is a great deal about you that would shut Him outbut it is hard to keep the wind out when it blows in the fullness of its strengthyou may fill up the crevices of the door as you please, but still the wind gets in. Thus, too, is it with the Spirit of GodHe comes in might, but He can also come very sweetly. Be not afraid of the Holy Spirit! He can charm you to Christ, as well as drive you to Christ. May He enter your heart even now!

We yearn to see all of you thus made to live . I am praying in my very soul that He would come to every one of you. I do not read that Ezekiel saw *part* of the valley of dry bones live and the rest remain dry bones, but that they *all* lived and stood upon their feetan exceedingly great army! I long to see you all blessed at this service. Why should it not be so? Oh, that the Spirit of God would come and touch every one of us! Many of you are alive, already, blessed be His name! Well, you can have *more* life, for Christ has come not only that you might have life, but that you might have it more abundantly. I beseech you, let the blessed Spirit enter into greater fullness. But pray mightily that every soul here that is dead may now feel the sacred Breath and begin to live! Then I shall not only hear of one, as last Thursday, but news shall be brought of many upon whom the Divine Spirit has sweetly come and led them to Jesus, to be saved now, and to be saved forever! God grant it! Amen.

Portion of Scripture Read before SermonEzekiel 37. **HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK464, 461, 451.**

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DESPAIR DENOUNCED AND GRACE GLORIFIED
NO. 1676

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 27, 1882, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Then He said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are
cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy
and say unto them, Thus says the Lord
God, Behold, O My people, I will open
your graves, and cause you to come
up out of your graves, and bring
you into the land of Israel. And
you shall know that I am the
Lord, when I have opened
your graves, O My people,
and brought you up
out of your graves.
Ezekiel 37:11, 12, 13.

I HAVE read to you the vision of the resurrection of the dry bones. Keep it in your minds, that you may understand the text. The figure is a very apt, instructive and impressive one. It is not, however, a mere figureit is a parable based upon a remarkable representation of the resurrection of the dead. Although the children of Israel, at that time, knew little enough concerning the resurrection, yet the Lord, the Holy Spirit, knew all about it and He used it as a striking picture of the salvation of Israel from that national death which had come upon them. We may, with equal accuracy, see in it, a vivid representation of the work of Grace upon the hearts of all those who are quickened into spiritual life by the power of Divine Grace. Men, by nature, are dead in sin till they hear the voice of God and feel the quickening breath of the Spiritand are made to live according to that Word of GodHe that believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.

Such a metaphor as this before us, drops with teaching as a honeycomb with honey, and it will be our own fault if we are not taught by it! The salvation of men by the Grace and power of God is as great a wonder as the general resurrection. The putting of spiritual life into a natural man is a marvel of marvels and should excite as much wonder as the raising of Lazarus, or of Jairus daughter, or of the young man at the gates of Nain. Even the rising up of the dead at the last trumpet is not a greater prodigy than the bringing of dead hearts unto the life of God! I shall not, however, detain you by fuller observations upon spiritual resurrection, for I have work to do of another kind upon which we will spend the bulk of our time and the whole of our energies.

If you thoughtfully consider the text, you will see that it divides itself thusfirst, there is a true wordBehold, they say, our bones are dried. Secondly, there is, in it, an evil word which goes beyond the Truth of GodOur hope is lost. God is the sinners hope and He is *not* lost, so that the word of despair is not warranted. Thirdly, there is a gracious word, a word of mighty loveThus says the Lord God, Behold, O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up out of your graves.

I. Let us begin with that solemn confession which I have styled A TRUE WORDThey say, our bones are dried. It matters not how badly men speak of themselves, for what they say of themselves is *never* worse than the truth. I have never heard of any sinner who, too much, depreciated his own righteousness! It is not possible to repent too much, nor to have too lowly an estimate of ones deserving or of ones spiritual power. It is a grievous fault when mourners depreciate the power and fullness of Gods Grace and when despondency casts a doubt upon the possibility of their salvation. But while the depreciation is confined to themselves, it is not possible to push it too far, or to exaggerate the evils of an unregenerate condition.

The sinners natural estate is as deplorable as words can describe. He is, in fact, much worse than he thinks he is, even when he is most bowed down under a sense of his guilt and danger. I believe that Luther was quite right when he said that if a man could see his own sin as it really is, he would lose his reason. The condition into which we have fallen by our transgressions is terrible to the last degree. Observe, first, that they describe themselves as dead, as dried and as divided. They speak of themselves as deada man does not imagine his bones to be scattered about on the plain while he thinks himself to be alive! These people spoke of their *bones* and, therefore, were conceived they were dead. And so the sinner may, without exaggeration, conceive of himself as devoid of spiritual life. He knows not the life of God, for he is dead in trespasses and sins.

The Apostle speaks of the unregenerate as alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart. And again we read, They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that does good. When men are corrupt, they have gone a stage beyond death and are receiving the full harvest of sin. As it is written, He that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. Alas, Sinner, you are as one that is dead, only your condition is far worse, for your responsibility and your guilt remain and your death to righteousness is blameworthy and will bring punishment upon you!

They were divided, too. These Israelites were scattered abroad in every place and, perhaps you, dear Friend, feel that, as Hosea says, your heart is divided and you are found wanting. You cannot get your thoughts together; you cannot concentrate your affections; you are as when one cuts and cleaves wood upon the eartha broken, shivered thing! You cannot rally your mind to confidence in God. Your mind is dead to that which is good and your heart is divided by a thousand delusive devices.

Perhaps you go further with the figure and seem to be dried, sapless, useless, hopeless. A bone is dried when every particle of marrow is gone out of it; when it looks as if it never could have been covered with flesh, or have been part of a living body. Are you lamenting because you seem to be devoid of spiritual hunger, desire, or regret? Do you mourn that you cannot feel, cannot will, cannot repent, cannot love, cannot even fear? Do you groan because you cannot find in yourself anything which is good or looks that way? Do you ever groan out that mournful song

Your saints are comforted, I know,
And love Your house of prayer!
I sometimes go where others go,
But find no comfort there.
I hear, but seem to hear in vain,
Insensible as steel!
If anything is felt, tis only pain
To find I cannot feel.
My best desires are faint and few,
I gladly would strive for more!
But, when I cry, My strength renew,
Seem weaker than before.

Truly, you are as a dried bone that has long been bleaching in the sun out of which all trace of life and feeling and power has departed!

This is a very sad description of a mans soul and yet, how many of us have had to subscribe to it for ourselves? It is just what we felt ourselves to be while we were without God and without hope! And yet, the Spirit of God was convicting us of our guilt. Further, these bones could, by no means, raise *themselves.* We never heard of such a thing as a dead man restoring himself to life, though he is but newly buried, if he is, indeed, deadhe cannot lift a hand towards his own reviving. These bones were without trace of life. The flesh was gone, devoured by kites and jackals, or rotted and scattered in impalpable powder to the four winds of Heaven. How could these carcasses raise themselves? There was no trace of moisture left upon them! They could not give themselves life or motionit were a fools hope to look for such a thing!

Is that the dreary fact which forces itself upon you? Do not try to forget it. You are discovering the truth! You are already in a lost condition if you have not believed in Jesus Christ. You are not, as some vainly say, in a state of probationyour probation is over and you are already *condemned* because you have not believed on the Son of God! In you there is no spiritual power to stir towards God until His Spirit moves towards you. You will remain cast out in the open valley unless Gods Grace shall come to you and unless His Spirit shall put breath into you. For you to be saved will be as much out of the common course of Nature as any other miracleand in it you will have no finger so as to be able to boastfor the Lord, alone, must save you, or you are lost forever! It is a terrible word for a man to say, but it is the truth, and nothing more than the truth, that he is ruined by sin and without strength to repair the damage.

There seemed to be, before these bones, no prospect but the fire. When they that cleansed the valley came along and found these bones, they would gather them up as offensive objects and cast them into the fire of Tophet to be consumed. This is the only lot that remains unto dry bones and the same awaits those who are spiritually like they are. Has the Holy Spirit been dealing with any of you till you feel as if there were nothing for you but a certain judgment and fiery indignation? Do you begin to feel, in your own conscience, the first burning of the fire which never shall be quenched? Ah, whatever may be your gloomy apprehensions, they are none too gloomy!

It is a fearful thing to have sinned! It is an awful thing to be called to judgment! And it is a more terrible thing, still, to be under that judgment, now, and only to be waiting until that sentence shall be carried out, Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire. Oh, if you cannot sleep at night and if all enjoyment of earthly comforts seems to be taken away from you. If you begin to sting yourself and make your own life wretched, I shall not wonder at it! It is amazing that a man can live and be quiet, and yet be under the wrath of God! It is a strange thing that he can walk this earth with a smile upon his face while yet his sin is unforgiven and the sword of the Lord is furbished to work his destruction! Oh, that the sinner knew the jeopardy under which he lives and the frail barrier that divides him from eternal misery! Does he not know that if his breathing should cease, he is gone to the place where hope is a stranger? I say, if a man mourns and sighs over his terrible future so that a dreadful sound is in his ears, he only frets reasonably and his fears are based on solemn truth!

Moreover, these people felt that they were cut off from healing agencies. They say, We are cut off for our parts. That is, each bone is cut off from its fellow and the whole thing is cut off as to its parts from every hope and comfort. These banished Israelites were cut off from the land of Canaan; cut off from the Temple; cut off from the priesthood; cut off from the sacrificescut off from all hope of approaching God. Many poor souls have been made to feel as if they, too, were cut off. Their Sabbaths are no rest to them; the House of Prayer brings no delight; the preaching of the Gospel yields no consolation. They turn to their Bibles and every page seems to flash a threat, while no gentle shower of mercy drops from above! They fall on their knees, but even prayer seems to be a hollow mockery! They cannot pray as they would. They associate with godly friends, but they gain nothing by their fellowship. Go where they may, they think themselves like a dry bone which meets its fellow dry bone and is none the nearer to eternal life for such dreary communion. The man is a nuisance to himself and his very existence is a weariness.

Ah, you think, perhaps, I am describing an extreme case, but I know that I am picturing some whose eyes are looking upon me at this moment! Happy they who have been delivered from this wretched state! I had almost said, happy they who are *experiencing* it, for those who *feel* their sinfulness are on the road to better things! Brothers and Sisters, I hope your extremity will be Gods opportunity. When your bones are dried, then will God come in as the Resurrection and the Life and make these dry bones live! When you appear to be beyond the possibility of mercy, then God, with whom all things are possible, will deal with you in a way of extraordinary Grace and cause you to rejoice in His salvation!

It seemed to these poor people as if they were quite given over, for when bones are cast out in the field and left to be bleached by the wind and the sun; when nobody gives them burial, but there they lie, the refuse of the charnel house, then they are, according to all likelihood, left for destruction. I have heard of persons who have felt in their spirit as if they were forever banished from the Light of God. They have cried, Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies? Is the Throne of Grace closed against the mourner? Will nothing avail? Will not cries and tears bring an answer?

By such downcast ones a whisper has been heard inwardly saying, There is no mercy for youyou are cast out as reprobate silver. It is the whisper of Satan in the spirit and it comes with piercing power! The devil often uses the conscience to be the hack on which he rides in his errands of torment. Yet there is a measure of truth in the insinuation. Apart from Christ, we are cast off! Apart from Christ, God cannot look upon us except in anger! Apart from the atoning blood, our sins protest against the entrance of mercy and there we lieself-condemned and helpless abandoned in our own judgment to swift and sure condemnation! Here, then, is language full of misery and yet sadly true. We are sold under sin by nature and led captive by the devildriven by our iniquities to endless misery from which ignorance and wickedness will not permit us to escape.

II. I now turn to that point upon which I desire to struggle with some of you this morning, that you may be fetched up by the Spirits power from the depths of despondency. Here is AN EVIL WORD in the textOur hope is lost. It is a good thing if our *false* hopes are lost, but *true* hope is still to be had. Hope is not denied to any manif he will believe in Jesus, he may yet be saved. They said of old in the Latin, Dum spiro spero, while I breathe, I hope. And I turn the proverb over and say, Dum spero spiro while I hope, I breathe! To render the sentences rather freely will suit me wellWhile I live, I hope, and while I hope, I live.

Sinner, your life lies in hope and while you have hope, you have life! To despair is an unwarrantable thinga thing full of sin and fraught with mischiefbesides being false and unreasonable. Despair, which is the minds declaration that there is no hope, is not so much a sickness of the understanding as a sin of the soul. It is a crime against the Truth of God; a high offense against the Lord of Love. God is, the God of Hope, and those who are without hope are also without God! No mortal has a just pretense to perish in despair and if he does so, despair is a form of suicide, a form of willful self-destruction. No man has a right to despair! No man can be right while he is despairing.

Let me just speak about this and keep to the point. Despair is a high insult to God. It casts dishonor upon His chief attributes. In the first place, it is most derogatory to the Truth of God. If a man says, I cannot be saved, he contradicts the Divine command, Look unto Me, and be you saved. God has sent the Gospel to men and it is no other than good news to them, but despair virtually says it is no Gospel, it is no good news! God has set up a Throne of Grace and promises to meet there with the sinner, but this man claims that there is no Throne of Grace, for he denies that there can be any Grace for him. He refuses to come to the loving Father because he feels sure that He will show no mercy, though He has declared that He will do so!

God has given a thousand precious promises, such as thisThough your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. The despairing sinner says he does not believe thishis sin is too scarlet to be made whitethe crimson of his guilt is too ingrained ever to be washed away. Thus he calls Gods promises, lies, and this is a daring thing to do. He that believes not God has made Him a liar because he believes not the record that God gave of His Son. It would be an exceedingly heinous offense for me to stand up and say to the Great Physician, You say, I can heal you, but it is an empty boast*my* wound is incurable! Great God, you say, I can forgive you, but it is liemy sins are such as You can never pass by.

Mark, Brothers and Sisters, the Lord our God is very jealous of His truthfulness. His name is, God That Cannot Lie, and he that dares to say that He will break His promise has done Him sore despite. I need not, surely, show the infamy of this crime! Let your own hearts condemn the treasonable thought! He that despairs, insults Gods power. He does, in effect, tell the Lord that He pretends to a power which He does not possess. God says, He that believes and is baptized shall be savedthe man says he will not trust in Christ, for he does not believe that God can save him! He declares that he has gone beyond the bounds of mercy and so he tells the ever Gracious One that He has no power to save him. The Lord loves not that His Omnipotence should be thus denied. He is grieved with those who thus limit the Holy One of Israel. They that would restrain His power shut out one of the brightest beams of His Glory.

And despair abundantly casts dishonor upon Gods mercy. Know you not that His mercy endures forever? The Lord God merciful and gracious is one of the ways of His manifestation. Has He not told us that He delights in mercy? Yet, if *you* say, He will not have mercy upon *me*, I have out-sinned His Grace. I have gone beyond all possibility of forgiveness, you do, as much as lies in your power, spit in the face of the God of Love! Have you ever thought of this? Grieve to think that you have ever grieved Him in this fashion! This is the cruelest of sinsit aims its dagger at the heart of the Lordit pierces the Redeemers hands and feet! The Lord glories in His power to save and He has plainly declared that He *will* save all those who confess their sins and put their trust in Himand do we doubt Him? Dare we so derogate from the Glory of the Most High as to say that there remains no hope of Grace for us? Shame on such insulting falsehood!

Mark you, while it does this, which is bad enough, despair brings out the devil and crowns *him* in Christs stead! Despair says to Satan, You are victorious over the mercy of God! You have conquered Christ Himself. Christ says that He is revealed that He may destroy the works of the devil and you stand up and say, Here are certain of the devils works which Jesus *cannot* destroy, namely, *my* sin and *my* sinful inclinations. You wave the flag of the devil in the face of an insulted Savior and, whereas He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, you, in fact, tell Him that He has not half the power to save that Satan has to destroythat Satan can be more successful in destruction than Christ can be effectual in saving!

What? Have you, again, chosen Barabbas and given up Jesus? And is Barabbas, in this case, the fiend of Hell? Will you believe *him* and not believe God? Can you assert that he, the father of lies, is more worthy of belief than the Christ who died that men might live? Yet despair says as much as this and says it in the most offensive manner! It prefers Beelzebub to Jesus, for it believes the lie of Hell and rejects the Word of God from Heaven! I go a little further and I say, with a deep feeling of solemnity, that this heinous sin of despair tramples on the blood of Christ. Christ has died and shed His bloodand we know that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. We have Gods Word for it, yet here is a man who says, It cannot cleanse *me* from *my* sin.

If we look deep into the essence of actions, we shall see that despair despises the Atonement and denies its efficacy. We tell the man that there is forgiveness, but he mutters, It is not for me. We tell him that Jesus Christ has emptied His veins to fill a sin-cleansing fountain and he answers, It may be true. He may be able to save all others, but not *me*. Now, what you have a right to say, other people may also say. And if all united with you, it would be tantamount to declaring that the Crucifixion is an empty show; that the Redeemers Atonement is a mere pretense and that Christ is powerless to save! You reduce the Savior to an impotent pretenderand can this be done with impunity? We preach in vain if this is so! We preach a Savior who cannot save, an Atonement which cannot cleanse! Will not God deal with you for this, if you persist in this provocation?

Perhaps you think it is very humble of you to talk so, but it is notit is the height of arrogant impudence! Despair is highly insulting to the dear Redeemer, the Glory of whose Person is involved in His power to forgive. Remember, Judas who despaired was damned, while the men who crucified Christ were led by Peters sermon to believe and live. Great sinners who believe shall find mercy, but far less offenders who despair shall find misery. God save you, then, from the Judas sin of despairing and enable you to believe in Jesus Christ at once! I must go a step further. Despair has something in it of sinning against the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit brings you rich cordials in the promises of God which will raise your spirits and will restore you from death.

And what do you do with them? You take them and dash them against the wall, as if this almighty medicine, devised by Infinite Wisdom, were the deceitful nostrum of a quack and you could not receive it! It seems to me a great and horrible offense to deny the testimony of the Spirit of God, even of Him who gives to the Holy Scriptures inspiration and certainty and this you do when you refuse to believe for eternal life! Jesus has put it before you, Himself, Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out. How can you think that He will cast you out? The Prophet cries, Ho, everyone that thirsts, come you to the waters, and he that has no money, come buy wine and milk without money and without price. But Despair answers, There is no wine and no milk for *me*, and it denies that Grace is to be had without price.

In the teeth of Scripture, it declares that there is no pardon, no mercy, no salvationthus it denies the witness of the Spirit of God! Oh, take heed, despairing one, lest it be said to you, You have not given the lie unto men, but unto God. It is a master sin, this sin of despair! God save you from it if you are in danger of falling into it, or if you are already its prisoner! When a man gives way to despair, there comes upon him, usually, a habit of wrangling against God and His Truth. Oh, see him at it! He is very low and he comes to see the minister. And the ministers compassionate soul would comfort him in a moment if it were possible and, therefore, he begins to talk to him about the Gospel.

But, says the other, and he introduces a tough question which throws the Gospel out of sight. Oh, says the minister, but God hears prayer. No, no, says the man, and he begins quarrelling about prayer and its disagreement with Divine decrees and so forth. The man snarls like a dog, not to keep his bone, but as if he begged to have good food taken away from him. He does not want it. His soul abhors all manner of meat. The minister sets before him a precious promise which he thinks will certainly meet his case, but the perverse mind strives against it and fights with the promise as if it were his worst enemy! It is not a promise that suits his case at allthere is a word in it which he does not understandand off he goes on a tangent, beclouding the Word of God and eclipsing its light so that he may, if possible, keep himself from being comforted!

If Gods people come and try to cheer him with their experience, he fights against their experience tooth and nail! It may be theirs, but it never can be histhere is something particular and peculiar about themwhy they should have mercy. And there is something equally particular and special about him as to why *he* should *not* have mercy. He has the key of the door of hope, locks it on the inside and then murmurs, I am shut up and cannot come forth. Whereas he fastens the door, himself! Sometimes the despairing one gets into such a nasty, ugly temper against everything that comes to him from the Bible and from the ministers of God, that you begin to think that he must be half mad. So, perhaps, he is, but it is not a madness that saves him from responsibilityit is a madness which will be laid to his charge in the great day of account because it is self-inflicted and willfully persisted in! Oh, what a wrangling, contentious spirit will despair breed, so contrary to receiving the kingdom of Heaven as a little child!

Worse than this, despair makes a man ready for any sin, for there are many that say, I can never go to Heaven, therefore I will take a good swing, here, and get what pleasure I can while it is within reach. Have I not heard them say, if not in words, yet in their actionsThere is no mercy for *me* and I may as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb. I will go the whole hog, now I am at it! I will, at least, know the heights and depths of sin, as there is no chance of mercy for me? Ah, and when Satan takes a man in another temper, he tells him that God will never forgive himand the poor creature sits down in sullen rebellion, murmurs, thinks hard things of God, wishes he had never been bornand curses the day in which it was said that a man child had seen the light! Then he will be filled with blasphemous thoughts and it may even come to pass that he rushes into self-destruction and takes a leap into sure perdition! How many have been driven by despair to the knife and to the halter, or to a watery grave, I cannot tell! But this I know, that if Satan can once fill a mans mind with that, and make him say that God is not true, that the Gospel is not true, or at least not true to

him, then the enemy glories and cries, I have him, body and soul! I can do anything with him, now.

It was said of the Russian soldiers that they would not go to battle till they were drunk with raki and, certainly, some men are champions for the devil when they are drugged by despair of pardon. Captain Past-Hope is a fierce leader of bandits and will do and dare the blackest crimes. With all my might I cry to youabove all things shun despair, never say your hope is lost! There is salvation for you yet! God has not cast you away! Oh, do not cast away yourself! What are you doing? The Lord has not given you over to the tormentors, but you are writing your own sentence! You sit down and seem to think that you cannot be happy till you are thoroughly *unhappy* and cannot be at rest till you are driven from all peace!

I must still plead with you over this matter. Let me say, further, despair degrades a man, degrades him below the brute beast, for brutes do not despair. See how an insect will struggle, even when it is cut in halve! Look at a poor birdwhat hope it has, even in its worst state, of yet escaping the fowlers netstill it flutters and does its best to get away. Will you despair where ants and wasps and birds still hope? Have you never seen a dog that had done something wrong and has been beaten by its master? He tries to lick the hand that has beaten him and he cannot be happy till he is forgiven! Poor creature, how it looks up for a smile! You have been chastened, you are smarting under it now, but you do not turn to God, nor seek His favor! You think worse of God than your dog thinks of you! Instead of crouching to His feet, as your poor dog does to you, to try and get a gracious word, you growl at the great LordIt is of no use for me to be humble: there is no hope. You slander the Almighty! You malign the name of Jesus Christ! You deny the power of the Spirit of God and so you degrade yourself below the beast that perishes!

Oh this despairavoid it, I pray you, as you would avoid death, itself, for it will render all means of Grace useless to you! If you will not believe, neither shall you be established. If you fall into despair, the songs of Zion will be dolorous ditties in your ears and the preaching of the Gospel might as well be the preaching of the Law. See how a despairing man shuts his ears, like the deaf adder that will not hear, charm you ever so wisely! It matters not what the theme may beif it is infinite mercy, free forgiveness, or everlasting loveyet as long as the soul is despairing, you do but make it the more wretched. The hopeless hearer rejects all consolation, his soul refuses to be comforted and his despair embitters every morsel he eats and every drop he drinks.

Despair, too, is certainly vain and wicked because it has no Scripture, whatever, to support it. Oh, you say, but there are many dark Scriptures. I know there are, but I have not time, this morning, to take them up, one by one, and show that they need not lead any man to despair. But there is one text in the Bible which covers all texts, be they black as they may. I do not mind what the passages of Scripture are, nor what they testifyI am sure they speak the Truth of God and, therefore, I know they cannot speak contrary to other parts of Divine Revelation. Here is the famous textHim that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out. If you come to Christ, you cannot be cast out! Oh, but there is a text! I do not care about your textyou misunderstand your text! But there is no misunderstanding this oneHim that comes to Me, I will in no wise east out.

Oh, but He will cast me out because__. Stop now! Are you going to contradict my Lord Jesus Christ? I cannot have patience with you. You will greatly provoke the Father. I will in no wise cast outthat means for no sort of reason, under no circumstances, under no possible conditions will Christ ever cast out a man that comes to Him! Oh, but do listen to me. No, I shall not listen to you and I wish you would not listen to yourself! You must listen to me as I repeat the Lords wordsHim that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out. You are not to be listened to when you want to make out God to be false. Oh intolerable sin! Jesus says He will not cast you out. Again He criesCome unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Does Christ mean that, or not? Look the Crucified One in the facelook at His woundsand after having looked at them, say, I do not believe Him. Christ lies to me!

Will you dare say it? Can you thus defame Him? I tell you, there is nothing within the covers of this Book that ought to lead a man to have any doubt about the infinite mercy of God to him, provided he will just come and trust himself with Christ. There is no God at all if a soul that trusts in Jesus can be cast away, for the essential of Godhead is Truth. I am an atheist if the God in whom I have believed casts away those that trust in His Son, Jesus! He must be true, if every man is proven a liar! What do you say, then, to that blessed Word of God, Him that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out? Now, listen, you desponding one on the border of desperation! Have you never heard of the freeness of Gods mercy? Do you not know that everything that He bestows on sinners is given freely and graciously? The ground of Gods love is Gods love and nothing in *us*.

When He made His eternal choice, there was a remnant according to the election of Grace. It is Free Grace that chooses for its love and then loves for its choice. When Christ redeemed us, He did it freelyHe freely delivered Himself up for us all. When He pardons sins, He is exalted on high to give repentance, and there is nothing freer than a gift to give repentance and remission of sins. I tell you, the very spirit of the Gospel is this, that there is no worthiness nor desert needed in you in order to your immediate forgiveness and acceptance with God! All you have to do is to admit to the truth that you have sinned and deprived yourself of all claim upon Godand then believe what God declares to youthat He is in Christ Jesus reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. Do but accept this word of reconciliation and you are a saved man as sure as you live! The moment you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the moment you trust your soul wholly and entirely in those dear hands that were pierced for you, you are a saved man!

What right have you to doubt that God can save you when everything is prepared and given of free Grace? I tell you the Lord Jesus has saved many others like you. Are you a harlot? Did He not save the harlot, Rahab? Are you exceedingly wicked? You are not worse than Manasseh, who is said to have cut Isaiah in halves with a saw and filled the streets of Jerusalem with bloodand yet the Lord saved him! I know that even though you are the worst that has ever lived, still, you cannot outrun my Masters wing-footed Grace! Paul said he was the chief of sinners, but he obtained mercy to be a pattern to you. Why talk, then, of sullenly lying down in despair? You sighah, if you mind not what you are doing, what you say in your despair will come true through your own making it so! If a man says, I shall die, I shall die of starvation, and there is a dish before him, but he will not eat, I am afraid that the probabilities are that he *will* die of starvationand it will serve him right.

If another person cries, I shall die of thirst, and there is a cup of drink before him and he will not put it to his mouth, I fear that he will die of thirstand, (I come to where I was before)he will die a suicide. He that refuses to eat and, therefore, dies, is as much a suicide as if he stabbed himself in the heart. And he that will not believe Gods mercy and will not accept it in Christ, is a soul-suicide as surely as if he plunged into debauchery and gave himself up to every lust. Oh that God the Holy Spirit would overcome some of you, this morning, who have yielded to this great and grievous sin!

III. We shall now close by meditating upon the Lords promise which we have styled A GRACIOUS WORD. I want you to notice this, poor troubled heartsI want you to suck in this part of the text even if you forget all the rest. Thus says the Lord God, Behold, O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves. Notice, God meets us upon our own ground and takes us up where we are. They said, We are as dried bones. Yes, says God, and I will quicken you. But the Lord even goes beyond anything which they have felt or said, for they did not say they were *buried*. No, they were as bones scattered in the open valley, unburiedbut the Lord knows they are worse than they think they areand so He goes further in mercy than they thought they had gone in misery!

He says, I will open your graves, and that looks as if they were finally laid in the sepulcher. But the Lord adds, and cause you to come up out of your graves. Listen, Sinner, you have described yourself in a very distressing manner, but God accepts it as true and deals with you as being such as you describe, or even worse! He regards men not only as dead, but as entombedin as hopeless a case as corpses pent up in the sepulcher and forgotten as dead men out of mind! O the mercy of the Lord! There is no boundary to it!

Now, observe how the Word brings comfort by introducing another actor upon the scene. You are like a dried bone, good for nothing, and able for nothing. But the Lord comes in, Himself, and He says, I will, I will. Oh, that grand, I will! I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves. I will. Now, listen. If God will save you, cannot you be saved? If it is all of Grace from top to bottom, cannot you be saved? If there is no merit needed of you; no previous goodness to qualify youcannot salvation come to you? If Christ died for the ungodly, cannot you have a share in His death? If He came into the world to save sinners, then why not you? If the Gospel is not another shape of Law requiring something of us, but if it is all free, free, free Sovereign Gracewhy should not you have it as well as I?

What should shut you out? If anything could have shut you out it could have shut me out, for I am just the same as you are by nature, yet I have obtained mercy, and why should not you? Come along and have it! It is freely given to all who seek it, trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ. But remember that God comforts us here by depicting the completeness of His working. He does not merely say, I will open your graves. That is something, but if they are dead, what is the good of opening the graves?

I have known careless ones drop into this place on a Sabbath as dead in sin as dead could be and buried, tooyou never would have thought that they would listen to the Gospel! But there has crept into their ears some such sweet Word of God as thisHe that believes in Him is not condemned, and they have said, Dear me, how sweet it is! How precious that is. Glory be to God, the grave has begun to open! But they felt they could not get hold of the Savior for themselvesand then the Lord has opened their hand and closed it on the promiseand when they get it, they will never give it up, but they have cried, He loves me! He loves me! I will risk my salvation on itI will trust Him! I will trust no one else. Thus the Holy Spirit has fetched them out of the grave though they were dry bones before! He will do the same with you. Oh that you may have Grace to believe what God says here!

Lastly, notice the feeling which is produced by it. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up out of your graves. Ah, what a feeling a man has that there is a God when God has saved him! When he begins to dance for very joy of heart because he is fully forgiven, then he knows Jehovah is God! When his heart feels restful and full of peace; when he can say, God is mine, Christ is mine, Heaven is mine, he does not need evidences of the existence of God, or arguments to prove the power of God! He carries a demonstration of the Truth of God within his own heart and tells of it to others with tearful eyes. Oh, he says, there is no mistake about it! There is a merciful God, for I have obtained mercy! There is a refuge for sinners, for I have fled to it! There is pardon, for I have obtained it! There is rest, for I enjoy it! There is a Heaven, for I begin to hear its bells ringing in my heart.

Then shall you know that God Jehovah is God, indeed, when He has opened your graves and brought you out! O God, bless this poor word to the troubled ones, for Jesus sake! Amen.

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TAUGHT THAT WE MAY TEACH
NO. 1578

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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And the Man said to me, Son of man, behold with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and set your heart upon all that I shall show you; for to the intent that I might show them unto you are you brought here: declare all that you see to the house of Israel.
Ezekiel 40:4.

WE learn from this text something concerning Ezekiel himself. He was certainly one of the greatest of the Prophets. His visions remind us of those of John, both for their brightness, splendor and numberand yet this eminent Prophet was, nevertheless, styled, son of man. He is continually called by that name. The title is used over and over again throughout the book of his prophecieson of man to remind him that even the Seer, the Prophet, the Inspired, the man who was indulged with vision upon visionwas still only a man. The best of men are men at the best! Those eyes that are strengthened to behold the cherubim and to gaze upon the stupendous wheels of Providence are still only the eyes of a son of man!

The title was used to teach him humility and also to remind him of the condescension of God towards him and to fill him with awe and wonder that he should be chosen from the rest of mankind, though no more than they, to see such wondrous sights withheld from other eyes. To us this wears a very promising aspect, for if God can reveal Himself to one son of man, why not to another? And if God can speak, as He did speak, so wonderfully through Ezekiel, one son of man, why not through you? Why not through me? For we, too, are sons of men! We have no worthiness or fitness and neither does Ezekiel claim any. He is reminded of his descenthe is still one of the sons of men. Oh, be of good comfort, you who think that God can never use youyou who are poor in spirit and wish to serve Himbut deeply feel your own insignificance!

Remember that God is able to do for you exceedingly abundantly above what you ask or even think! He can yet reveal His Son *in* you and Himself *to* you and by you, after such methods as you have never dreamed of! And, possibly, the painful experience through which you are passing, even now, may be preparing you to stand upon yet loftier mounts and to behold visions of God which in happier days you shall tell to the house of Israel and by which multitudes shall be blessed through you!

This is our present subjectwe will speak upon the manifestations with which God favors certain of His servants. Then, secondly, we will dwell upon their responsibility while they are enjoying such manifestationsthey are bound to behold with their eyes and hear with their ears and set their heart upon all that God shall show them. And then, thirdly, we will speak upon the objective which God has in giving these manifestations to His more favored people. It is that they may declare all that they see, that the whole house of Israel may, as it were, see by these favored eyes and hear by these chosen ears and may set their hearts upon the Word of the Lord because another has first done so.

I. First, I shall have a little to say upon THE MANIFESTATIONS WITH WHICH CERTAIN OF GODS SERVANTS ARE FAVORED. The Lord Jesus Christ draws near in a very special manner to some of His people. He did to Ezekiel, for I take it that the Man mentioned in the chapter, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, is none other than our Divine Lord, who, though a Man, yet exceeds all men in the brightness of His wondrous Person. It was He, doubtless, who appeared to Ezekiel. Long before Christ came on earth to die, He appeared to His servants in different ways. He sojourned with Abraham as a Wayfarer, for such He found the Patriarch to be.

He wrestled with Jacob at the brook Jabbok, for Jacob was wrestling with a sore trial. It was He that revealed Himself to Moses when the bush was burning and it was He that stood by Joshuas side as the Man having a drawn sword in His hand. In different ways and forms He proved that His delights were with the sons of men. Before the Word appeared in actual flesh and blood, He communed here and there with His chosen servants. He will show Himself to any of you who seek Him. He will unveil the beauties of His face to every eye that is ready to behold them. There is never a heart that loves Him but He will manifest His love to that heart.

But, at the same time, He does favor some of His servants who live near to Him and who are called by Him to special service, with very remarkable manifestations of His Light and Glory. These revelations are not incessant. I suppose that no man is always alike. John was in Patmos I know not how long, but he was in the Spirit on the Lords Day on one occasion and he specially notes it. I do not suppose that Daniel or Ezekiel saw visions every night, or beheld the glories of God every day. Humanity is scarcely capable of the incessant strain of a perpetual manifestation of God! These things are, as we shall see, like angels visits, few and far between. There is a fellowship that can always be kept up, but the flood tide of *manifestation*a noonday revelationwill not last on continually.

Ezekiel enjoyed a special manifestation and he tells us when it was, for men do not see Gods face without remembering it. He knew the date and recorded it. In the five and twentieth year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year, in the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after that they city was smitten. Days of heavenly fellowship are red letter days to be remembered so long as memory holds her seat. Yes, and it is noteworthy that the occasion of these manifestations was one of great distress. Five-and-twenty years of captivity must have been enough to wear down the spirits of Gods servants. Hence, He whose feet are as fine brass as if they burned in a furnace, comes and manifests Himself to His people, burning like brass in a furnace, giving them their times of comfort after 25 years of captivity!

He says, too, that it was 14 years after the city had been smitten, after it had been laid as a ruinous heap. Then God appeared. Oh, Beloved, when you have been long sorrowing, you may expect bright days! The coal-black darkness will brighten, after all! Nights do not last forever. Whenever you have much joy, be cautiousthere is a sorrow on the road. But when you have much sadness, be hopefulthere is a joy on the way to youyou can be sure of that. Our blessed Lord reveals Himself to His people more in the valleys, in the shades, in the deeps than He does anywhere else. He has a way and an art of showing Himself to His children at midnight, making the darkness light by His Presence. Saints have seen Jesus more often on the bed of pain than in robust health.

There were more manifestations of Christ in Scotland among the heather and the hills in the days of bloody Claverhouse than there are now. There was more seen of Christ in France, I do believe, in the days of the Huguenots than ever is seen now. I fear that our Master has come to be almost a stranger in the land in these days, compared with what He was once, when His people wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted, tormentedfor then He was meeting them at every turn and corner. Let us hope that if days are gloomy, now, and we, ourselves, are in trouble, our Beloved will come and manifest Himself to us as He does not to the world!

It appears, in this case, that the manifestation to Ezekiel was made when he was put into an elevated condition. He says, In the vision of God He brought me into the land of Israel, and set me up upon a very high mountain. God has ways of lifting His people right up, away, away, away from mortal joy or sorrow, care or wish, into the spiritual realm. And then, when the mind has been lifted above its ordinary level and the faculties are brought up by some Divine process into a receptive state, He reveals Himself to us. These times come not always, but blessed are they to whom they come at all! When on the mountain alone with God, their spiritual nature asserts supremacy over the body till they scarcely know whether they are in the flesh or notthen the Lord reveals Himself to them.

When He had elevated Ezekiel thus, it appears that He conducted him to certain places, for He says, For to the intent that I might show them unto you are you brought here. Gods children are brought in experience to unusual places, on purpose, that they may get clearer sights of the love and Grace and mercy of God in Christ than they could obtain elsewhere. I have sometimes been puzzled to know why I underwent certain states of mind. I have found out the reason, occasionallyperhaps as often I have not. I remember preaching to you one Sabbath from the text, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? and if ever a minister preached from that text fearing that it was true of himself I did! I was under an awful darkness all the while and I could not tell why.

But on the Monday evening there came to me one who, by his very appearance, I could see was not far from madness. His eyes were starting from his head. His face was full of terrorand when he was alone in the room with me, he said, You have delivered me from self-destruction. I am a man that God has forsaken and no one has ever spoken to my soul or my experience till last Sunday night. By Gods great Grace and infinite bounty we were able to pilot that Brother into smoother waters and I hope that he now lives to rejoice in God. I felt thankful to the last degree that I had been dragged through all my depression because I was able to help him. Sometimes our experience is for the good of others and sometimes it is for our own good. You cannot see the beauty of certain gems unless you place them on black velvet. When you have something black behind, then you see their luster.

So there are promises of God in which you never will discover their very brightest meaning unless they are set against some dark soul-trouble. Much of faiths education may be called black-letter learning. Very black the letters are, too, and very ugly looking, and they must be peered over. You cannot see the stars in the daytimeyou must wait till the sun has gone down. Many promises of God you cannot see till you are in the dark and when the soul is in gloom. It may be that the Lord allows it to get there that it may gaze upon the starry promises and value every ray of light that streams from them. So you see, dear Friends, God leads His people from one place to another of Christian experience, along hills and dales, ravines and precipicesall in order that their minds, being elevated, they may be prepared to see bright visions of Himself and know Him better, love Him better and serve Him better.

However, it is not outward circumstances that can affect the Divine purposethere must always be a movement of the Divine Spirit. In the third verse you read, He brought me there. When you get home, look through the chapter and see how this is repeated. And He brought me to the inner court and He brought me to the north gate and He brought me to this and to that. We never learn a Truth of God inwardly until God brings us to it. We may hear a Truth; we ought to be careful that we do not hear anything *but* the Truth of God, but God must bring that Truth home. No Truth is known well until it is burnt into us as with a hot iron. Some doctrines we can never doubt. Oh, said one to me, failing to convince me of some new theories, no one could get a new idea into your head except with a surgical operation. That witness is true if the new idea is contrary to the old-fashioned Gospel!

The things I preach are part and parcel of myself. I am sure that they are true. Are you infallible? you ask. Yes, when I declare what is in Gods Word. When I declare Gods Truth, I claim infallibilitynot for myself, but for Gods Word. Let God be true and every man a liar. It will not do to be saying, These are our views and opinions. Why, if the Doctrines of Grace are not true, I am a lost man! If they are not the very Truth of God, I have nothing to live for! I have no joy in life and I have no hope in death if they are not the Truth of God! May God bring you, dear Friends, into a Truth of God and I will defy the devil to bring you out of it! If God brings you to it. If He writes it as with His own finger upon your soul, you will know it with solemn certainty.

People may say, Where is your logic? And how does this consist with the progressive development of human thought? and all that. I reply, You can go and fiddle to what tune you please. As for me, these things are part and parcel of myself and I have made them my own. I have gripped them and they hold me fast. I have no choice about them. I do not *choose* to believe in Free GraceI believe it because I cannot help it! When one was asked whether he held Calvinistic doctrine, he answered, No. Oh, said the other, I am glad to hear that. Yes, he said, but Calvinistic doctrine holds me. There is a great difference between holding the Truth of God and the Truth of God holding you.

You will not hold the Truth of God aright unless you can say of it, with all your heart, The Lord brought me into it. He brought me towards the south. He brought me into the inner court. He brought me forth into the outer court. He brought me to the Temple. He did it all. All your children shall be taught of the Lord and there is no teaching like it, for He that is taught of God is taught Infallibly!

Thus I have spoken upon the manifestations with which God favors certain of His people.
II. Now, secondly, let us notice THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THESE CHOSEN MEN WHILE THEY ARE THUS FAVORED. The Man said to me, Son of man, behold with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and set your heart upon all that I shall show you. Did He not mean thisUse all your senses, all your faculties, all your wits to understand Divine Truth? When the Spirit of God favors you with Light, mind that you see and, when there is a sound of Grace, mind that you hear. Be not one of those forgetful hearers who behold their likenesses in a glass and then go their way and forget what manner of men they are.
Oh, how much more we would understand of Gods Word if we gave our mind to it! We tell our children to learn their lessons by heart. If we put the full meaning into that expression, that is the way to learn the things of God! Learn them all overtake them into yourself by every faculty you possess! Strive, as God shall help you by His Spirit, to get at their innermost meaning by every power that is given you. First, He says, See with your eyes. What are the eyes for but to see with? He means thislook, pry, search with your eyes. Do not let the Truth of God flit before you and then say, Yes, I have seen it. No! Stop it! Hold it by meditation before the minds eyes and see with your eyes. Look, look, look into it! Remember what is said of the angelsWhich things the angels desire to look into not, to look at, but, to look *into*.
Looking to Christ will save you, but it is looking *into* Christ that gives joy, peace, holiness, Heaven! Look into the Gospellet your eyes be intent and steadfastly fixed upon every Truth of Godespecially at choice times when God favors you with the noontide Light of His face! Then be doubly intent upon His Word. And then He puts it, Hear with your ears. Well, a man cannot use his ears for anything else, can he? Yes, but hear with your ears. Listen with all your might! You are to spy out the meaning with the minds eyes but, besides that, try to catch the very tone in which the promise or precept has been uttered. Treasure up the exact words, for though cavilers call it folly to speak of verbal Inspiration, I believe that we must have verbal Inspiration or no Inspiration.
If any man shall say to you, The *sense* of what your father said is true, never mind his wordsyou would reply, Yes, but I would like to know precisely what he said, word for word. I know that it is so in legal documents. It is not merely the sense that you look to, but every word must be correct. Gods Word, as it came from Him, came in such perfection that even to the syllables in which the sense was clothed, there was Infallibility about it. When I get Gods Word I would desire to hear it with my ears as well as see it with my eyesto see its sense and then to love the expressions in which that sense is conveyed to me! He cares little for the sense of the words who is not jealous over the words which convey the sense!
Oh, Brothers and Sisters, whenever God does, by His Word, open His heart to you, do not lose anything! Do not lose a sounda syllable! The Lord demands something more. Set your heart upon all that I shall show you. Oh, but that is the way to learn from Godby loving *all* that He saysfeeling that whatever God says, it is the thing you need to know. It is well when your whole heart comes to know the Truth of God and, when it knows it, encompasses it about with warm affections so that it may be like a fly in amber, the Word in the midst of your heartencased there, enshrined therenever to be taken away from you! Set your whole heart on the Word of God! Some people like to read so many chapters every day. I would not dissuade them from the practice, but I would rather lay my soul *soaking* in half a dozen verses all day than I would, as it were, *rinse* my hands in several chapters.

Oh, to bathe in a text of Scripture and to let it be sucked up into your very soul till it saturates your heart! The man who has read many books is not always a learned man, but he is a strong man who has read three or four books over and over till he has mastered them. He knows something! He has a grasp of thoughts and expressions and these will build up his life. Set your heart upon Gods Word! It is the only way to know it thoroughlylet your whole nature be plunged into it as cloth into dye. The Lord bids us do this towards all that He shall show usset your heart upon all that I shall show you! We are to be impartial in our study of the Word of God and to be universal in its reception. Brothers and Sisters, do you pick over Gods Bible? I pray you, give up the habit!
I have known professors who would not read certain chapters. Never read another till you have read that passage which now displeases you! Learn to love it for if there is a quarrel between you and a Scripture, it is *you* that is wrong, not the Scripture! And if there is any part of the Word of God of which you can say, I differ from that, the Word of God will never changethe party to change is yourself! Try to follow the Lord fully, even though it should cause the revision of cherished sentiments and even the alteration of your denominational connections. Are we to be so particular in little things? asks one. Yes, it is in *little* things that loyalty comes. A loving and obedient child obeys his father without saying, This is a great thing and this is a little thing.
Whatever He says to you, do it. The habit of trifling with little duties grows, very soon, into a seared conscience about larger matters. Oh, but we need not be so particular, says one. Indeed, we must be! Why are you so precise? said one to a Puritan. Sir, he said, I serve a very precise God. The Lord your God is a jealous Godmind thatand He would have us to be a jealous people as to all His Word, whether of doctrine, or of precept, or of promise. Oh, for Grace to be willing and ready to see all that He would have us see and to hear all that He would have us hear and to receive into our heart all that He would have us receive!
Thus I have spoken upon the manifestations which God gives to some of His servants and the responsibility under which they are placed by them.
III. But now, thirdly, what is the practical design of all this? WHAT IS GODS REASON FOR MANIFESTING HIMSELF TO HIS SERVANTS? The objective is thisDeclare all that you see to the house of Israel. First, see it yourself, hear it yourself, give your heart to it yourself and then declare it to the house of Israel. I have lately heard of a minister who said in the pulpit, The doctrine of AtonementI have heard a great deal about it, but I do not understand it. He is going to take a holiday that he may solve some of his doubts. If he does not solve his doubts, soon, I would recommend he extend that holiday for the term of his natural life!
He who does not understand the doctrine of the Atonement should read The Shorter Catechism and pray God to enlighten him. That is a book written for the young and ignorantand it might be useful to many ministers. God grant us Grace that we may know what we do know and not attempt to declare to others anything but that which we have seen and heard and taken into our own hearts. But that being done, we are to tell the Truth of God to others, especially to those whom it concerns. Ezekiel had seen the form and vision of a temple and a cityhe was to speak of this to the house of Israel.
Dear Brothers and Sisters, you cannot tell who it may be to whom you are to speak, but this may be your guidespeak about what you have seen and heard to those whom it concerns. Have you been in gloom of mind and have you been comforted? The first time you meet with a person in that condition, speak about the comfort. Have you felt a great struggle of soul and have you found rest? Speak of your conflict to a neighbor who is passing through the same struggle. Has God delivered you in the hour of sorrow? Tell that to the next sorrowing person you meet. There is such a thing as casting pearls before swinethat can easily be done by an imprudent talkativenessbut when you find people who are hungry, give them bread! When you find people that are thirsty, offer them water. When you find that they need a blessing from God, tell them of that which has been precious to your own soul.
Yes, but still this is not your only duty. God has shown us His precious Word that we may tell it to the house of Israel. Now, the house of Israel were a stiff-necked people and when Ezekiel went to them, they cast him asidethey would not listen. Yet he was to go and teach the Word of God to them. We must not say, I will not speak of Christ to such a one because he would reject it. Do it as a testimony against him, even if you know he will reject it. Go, my Brother, and sow your Seed and remember that in the parable the sower did not only cast a handful on that fair spot of ground that was all ready for it, but he sowed among thorns and thistleshe even cast seeds on the highwayfrom which the birds of the air soon removed it.
Give a portion to seven and also to eight. In the morning sow your seed and in the evening withhold not your hand, for you know not which shall prosper, this or that, or whether it shall be alike good. Go and tell what God tells you. Remember what we read just now. What I shall show you in secret, that reveal you in the light. What I have spoken to you in closets, that reveal you upon the housetops. Are we all to be preachers, then? Yes, all that have been taught of God are to teach. Are we all to stand up in public? asks one. I did not say that, but somewhere or otherperhaps in the pew where you now sit, or on the steps as you go out, or by the roadside, or in the shop tomorrow morningyou can all put in a word edgeways for Jesus Christ. Drop a sentence or two for the honor of His name!
I do not know what to say, says someone. Do not say it, then, Brother, Sister. I would recommend you not say anything if you do not know what to say. But if you have seen with your eyes and heard with your ears and received into your heartthen you know what to say! And the first thing that comes to hand will be the best thing to say, for God, who knows the condition of peoples minds, knows how to fit you to their condition and make your experience as a Christian to tally with the experience of the man or woman who needs the aid of your light. Go, and the Lord be with you!
If there are any here who have never seen the Lord, if they have any desire after Him, if they have any sense of sin, if they have any wish for the eternal Light, let them remember those gracious WordsHim that comes unto Me I will in no wise cast out, and that precious invitation, Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. May the Holy Spirit bring you to trust in Jesus at once and to the name of the Lord be the praise forever and ever. Amen. Amen.

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HOLINESS, THE LAW OF GODS HOUSE
NO. 1618

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 11, 1881, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.
This is the law of the house; Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house.
Ezekiel 43:12.

I SHALL not enter into the immediate meaning of Ezekiels vision. I believe that the house of which Ezekiel speaks is typical of the Church of the Living God. In it I see not so much the *visible* Church as that spiritual, mystical Church of Jesus Christ which is the one place of His abode. It is found in a state of Grace on earth and in full Glory in Heaven. Below it is the holy Church militantabove it is the holy Church triumphant. The Church is the only thing upon earth which can properly be called the House of God, for He dwells not in temples made with hands, that is to say of this building. The finest architecture could never constitute a proper shrine for Deity. Look to yon blue heavens, gaze upon the spangled vault of night and view the ever-flashing, wide and open sea and tell me if any handiwork of man can rival the temple of Nature!

Peer into boundless space and see what a temple is already built within what walls would you hope to house the infinite Jehovah? He has deigned, however, to choose Zion and to desire it for His habitation. The saints are built together as a spiritual house, a habitation of God through the Spirit. He resides among His people according to His promise, I will dwell in them and walk in them. Hence the Church is the home of the Great Father, where He dwells in the midst of His family and takes His rest. Has He not said, This is My rest forever: here will I dwell, for I have desired it? As a man in his own house takes his case and finds delight, so does God take pleasure in them that fear HimHis foundation is in the holy mountains. The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. The Church is Gods house, for there He makes Himself known and manifests Himself as He does not unto the outside world. In Judah is God known, His name is great in Israel. His people know Him, for they are all taught of the Lord. None of them has need to say to his neighbor, know the Lord, for they all know Him as their Father, from the least even to the greatest.

What sweet familiarities are enjoyed in the Church! What holy intimacies between the great Father and His children! How tenderly does He reveal Himself so that the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him! His saints are a people near unto Himthey have access to Him at all times, for they dwell in His house and are His own dearly beloved children. What more glorious thing can be said of the Church than thisGod is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved? Of what but the Church, the true house of the Lord, could we read such words as theseThe Lord your God in the midst of you is mighty. He will save, He will rejoice over you with joy. He will rest in His love, He will joy over you with singing?

The Church is Gods house and, therefore, He provides for it even as a man cares for his own house spends his strength for it, exercises his wisdom on its behalf and is always thoughtful over it. God lays Himself out for His people. For this His Son has both died and risen again. For this the Lord arranges the purposes of Heaven. For this He works among the children of men. The Lords portion is His people, Jacob is the lot of His inheritanceto His chosen He has special regard! He will see to it that His spiritual house is not allowed to decay, or to be short of anything which makes for its comfort, security and honor. The Lord links His own name with the Church as a man does with his house. It is the house of the Lord and He is the Lord of the house. Beloved, it is the greatest honor that can happen to any man to be a member of the household of God! There are great houses in the world of long descent and of imperial rank, but what are they compared with the household of God? The one family in Heaven and earth named by the name of Jesus has far more true glory about it than all the families of princes! I had rather be the lowest saint than the greatest emperor! Such honor have all the saints!

Now, Brothers and Sisters, if you and I have had the privilege to be admitted into Gods house and to be made a part of His family, it is exceedingly necessary that we should know the law of the house. This is desirable at our entrance and equally necessary as long as we remain in the house of the Lord. Paul wrote to Timothy with this design, that you may know how you ought to behave yourself in the house of God, which is the Church of the Living God. To this end Ezekiel was sent of God to those who desired the favor of God. He was to show them the form of the house and the goings out and the comings in, and all the ordinances and all the forms and laws thereof. And he was to write it in their sight, that they might keep the whole form, all the ordinancesand *do* them.

Gods house is not lawless. It is the abode of liberty, but not of license. They that dwell in Gods house are in His immediate Presence and our God is a consuming fire! He had better be holy who dwells with the thrice holy God! The Lord will be sanctified in them that come near Him and if any enter the house to misbehave themselves, they will find that judgment begins at the House of God. How terrible are those wordsIf any man defiles the Temple of God, him will God destroy. Come we, then, with great attention to look at our text which will inform us as to the law of the house! O that the Spirit may cause us to understand and then lead us to obey!

Let us first try to expound the law of the house. Secondly, let us examine ourselves as to whether we have observed this law of the house. Thirdly, let us see the bearings of this law and, fourthly, let us take orders for having this law of the house obeyed.

I. First, LET US EXPOUND THE LAW OF THE HOUSE. Note the text carefully. It begins and ends with the same wordsThis is the law of the house; upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house. These words make a frame for the statute, or a sort of hand on each side pointing to it. This is the law of the house. Why are the words mentioned twice? Is it because we are such wayward scholars that we need to be told everything twice, at the least? Is it because we are so blind and dull that unless we have a thing repeated we are not likely to notice it, or noticing it, are sure to forget it? Or was this posted up because of the peculiar law as to going in and out of the Temple?

We read in the 46th chapter, at the 9th verse, But when the people of the land shall come before the Lord in the solemn feasts, he that enters in by the way of the north gate to worship shall go out by the way of the south gate; and he that enters by the way of the south gate shall go forth by the way of the north gate: he shall not return by the way of the gate whereby he came in, but shall go forth over against it. When the worshipper entered, he saw over the portal, This is the law of the house and when he went out, if he looked back at the gate of his departure, he would see there, too, This is the law of the house.

Or is it because this is the law of the house at the beginning of life and this is the law of the house at the end of it? Is it because this is the law of the house for the young convert and this is the law of the house for the most venerable saint? At any rate, the alpha and omega of Christian conduct is contained in the law of the house. You can go no higher than obedience to that Light of God! Indeed, you may say of it, It is high, I cannot attain unto it. Go as far as you may, this still remains, to the most advanced among us the law of the house, for the Lords Commandments are exceedingly broad. And what *is* this law of the house? Why, that everything about it is holy! All things in the Church must be pure, clean, right, gracious, commendable, God-like.

Everything that has to do with the Church of God must be holy! Here are the words, Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit round about shall be most holy. Observe that *all* must be holy. No, observe again, it must be *most* holy. In the old Temple there was only one little chamber in the center that was most holythis was called the Holy of Holies, or the Holiness of Holiness. But now, in the Church of God, every chamber, hall and court is to be most holy. As was the veiled shrine into which none entered except the High Priest and he but once a year and then not without bloodas was that august apartment in which God shone forth from between the cherubim! Such for holiness is the entire Church to be in every member and every service.

Observe that this law of the house is not only intense, reaching to the superlative degree of holiness, but it is most sweeping and encompassing, for we read, Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. The outer courts, the courts of the Gentiles, the walls, the promenades outside the walls, the slopes of the hillevery part that had to do with the mountain upon which the Temple stoodwas to be most holy! From which I gather that in the Church of God it is not merely her *ministers* that are to be most holy, but her common membersnot her sacraments, only, but her ordinary meals. Not her Sabbaths only, but her workdays. Not her worship only, but her daily labor. All that which surrounds our consecrated life is to be consecrated!

The secular matters which touch our religion are to be made religious whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we are to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Not only are the bells on the high priests garments to be holiness unto the Lord, but the bells of the horses are to be the same. The pots and bowls of our kitchens are to be as truly sacred as the golden vessels with which the priests served the altar of the Most High! Holiness should be far reaching and cover the whole ground of a Christians life. He should be sanctified, spirit, soul and body, and in all things he should bear evidence of having been set apart unto the Lord. Paul prayed that the very God of Peace would sanctify us wholly. Amen! So let it be!

We notice, once again, that this holiness was to be conspicuous. The Church is not, as a house, sequestered in a valley, or hidden away in a woodsit is as the Temple which was set upon the top of a mountain where it could be seen from afar. The whole of that mountain was holy. Conspicuous holiness ought to be the mark of the Church of God. We should be a peculiar people, distinguished as a race dwelling alone that cannot be numbered among the nations. We ought to be noted, not for talent, not for wealth, not for loud professions, but for *holiness*. Somehow or other true holiness is sure to be spied out and remarked upon. Like the violet, it tries to hide itself, but it is betrayed by its perfume. Like the star, it twinkles with modesty, but it is discovered by its light.

Grace cannot be put under a bushel. It would gladly be sheltered from its enemies by its obscurity, but the Holy City always stands on a hill and it cannot be hidden! Would God that whenever people speak of the Church to which we belong they may acknowledge its holiness! Would God that whenever they speak of you or me, they may have no evil thing to say of us unless they lie. The world does not know how to name the thing which it both admires and hates, but it soon perceives its existence and acknowledges its powerthe thing I mean is *holiness*, which is at once the glory and the strength of the people of God!

What is holiness? I know what it is and yet I cannot define it in a few words. I will bring out its meaning by degrees, but I shall not do better than the poor Irish lad who had been converted to the faith. When he was asked by the missionary, Patrick, what is holiness? Sir, said he, it is having a clean inside. Just so! Morality is a clean *outside*, but holiness is being clean *within*! Morality is a dead body washed and laid in clean white linenholiness is the living form in perfect purity. To be just to man is morality, to be hallowed unto God is holiness! The Church of God must not be reputedly good, but really pure. She must not have a name for virtue, but her heart must be right before Godshe must have a clean inside!

Our lives must be such that observers may peep within doors and may see nothing for which to blame us. Our moral cleanliness must not be like that of a bad housewife who sweeps the dirt under the mats and puts away rags and rottenness in the corner cupboards. We must be so clear of the accursed thing that even if they dig in the earth they will not find an Achans treasure hidden there! God desires truth in the inward parts and in the hidden part He would make us to know wisdom. We might instructively divide holiness into four things and the first would be its negative sideseparation from the world. There may be morality, but there can be no holiness in a worldling! The man who is as other men are, having experienced no change of nature and knowing no change of life, is not yet acquainted with Scriptural holiness.

The word to every true saint is, Come you out from among them. Be you separate: touch not the unclean thing. If we are conformed to the world, we cannot be holy! Jesus said of all His saints, They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. We are redeemed from among men that we may be like our Redeemerholy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. We are not to be separate as to *place*, avoiding men with monkish fanaticism, for nobody mixed more with sinners than did our Lord! This Man receives sinners and eats with them is the old reproach, but yet our Lord was not *one of them*, as everybody could see! Nothing could be more clear than the difference between the lost sheep and the Shepherd who came among them seeking out His own. Every action, every word, every movement betokened that He was another man from the sinners whom He sought to bless. So must it be with us. As the lily among thorns, so must we be among the mass of men.

My fellow professors, are you different from those among whom you dwell? Are you as different from them as a Jew is from a Gentile? Now, a Jew may do what he likeshe may live in the same style as an Englishman, a Pole, or a German, and he may in garb, in business, in speech be like the people among whom he dwells, but the image of father Jacob is upon him and he cannot disguise the fact that he is an Israelite. If he is converted to Christianity, he still does not lose his nationalityyou can still perceive that he is of the seed of Abraham. So ought it to be with the real Christian! Wherever he is and whatever he does, men ought to spy out that he is of the sect which is everywhere spoken againstand not an ordinary man. The title, the Peculiar People, belongs to all the followers of Jesus. They are strangers and sojourners, aliens and foreigners in this world, for they have come out at the Divine call to be separated unto the Lord forever.

There is no holiness without separateness from the world. Holiness, next, consists very largely in consecration. The holy things of the sanctuary were holy because they were dedicated to God. No one drank out of the sacred vessels except Gods servants, the priests. No victims were killed by the sacrificial knife, or laid upon the altar except such as were consecrated to Jehovah, for the altar was holy and the fire thereon was holy. So must it be with us if we are to be holywe must belong to Jehovahwe must be consecrated to Him and be used for His own purposes. Not nominally, only, but really and as a matter of fact we must live for God and labor for God. That is our reason for existence and if we answer not to this end, we have no excuse for livingwe are blots upon the face of Nature, waste places and barren trees which cumber the ground. Only so far as we are bringing glory to God are we answering the end and design of our creation!

We are the Lords priests and if we do not serve Him, we are base pretenders! As Christians, we are not our own, but bought with a price and if we live as if we *were* our own, we defraud our Redeemer. Will a man rob God? Will he rob Jesus of the purchase of His blood? Can we consent that the world, the flesh, the devil should use the vessels which are dedicated to God? Shall such sacrilege be tolerated? No! Let us feel that we are the Lords and that His vows are upon us, binding us to lay ourselves out for Him, alone! This is an essential ingredient of holinessthe cleanest bowl in the sanctuary was not holy because it was cleanit became holy when, in addition to being cleansed, it was also hallowed unto the Lord! This is more than morality, decency, honesty, virtue!

You tell me of your generosity, your goodness and your pious intentionswhat of these? Are you *consecrated*? If you are not consecrated to God, you know nothing of holiness! This is the law of the house, that the Church is consecrated to Christ and that every man that comes into her midst must be the same. We must live for God and for His glorious kingdom or we are not holy! Oh to make a dedication of ourselves to God without reserve and then to stand to it foreverthat is the way of holiness!

But this does not complete the idea of holiness unless you add to it conformity to the will and Character of God. If we are Gods servants, we must follow Gods commandswe must be ready to do as our Master bids us because He is the Lord and must be obeyed. We must make the Lord Jesus our example and, as Ezekiel says, we must measure the pattern. It must be our meat and drink to do the will of Him that sent us! Our rule is not our judgment, much less our fancy, but the Word of God is our statute book. We are to obey God that we may grow like God. The question to be asked is, What would the Lord have me do? Or, What would Christ, Himself, have done under the circumstances? Not, What is my wish, but, What is Gods Law about this! Not, What will please me, but, What will please Him? Having been begotten again by God into the image of Christ and so having become His true children, we are to grow up into Him in all things who is the Head, being imitators of God as dear children, for so, and so only, shall we be holy!

Understand, then, that with regard to the whole range of the Church, however wide her action, conformity to the Character of God is the law of the house. Likeness to Christ must be seen in every single member and in every act of every member in the whole body and in all its corporate acts. This is the law of the house. I must add, however, to make up the idea of holiness, that there must be a close communion between the soul and God, for if a man *could* bewhich is not possibleconformed to the likeness of God and consecrated to God, yet if he never had any communication with God, the idea of holiness would not be complete. The Temple becomes holy because God dwells in it. He came into the Most Holy Place in a most especial manner and this accounted for its being the Holy of Holies. Even so, special communion with the Lord creates special holiness. Gods Presence demands and creates holiness.

And so , Brothers and Sisters, if we would be holy we must dwell in God and God must dwell in us. We cannot be holy at a distance from God. How is it with you? How is it with this Church? Is God with us in all our services? Is He recognized in all our efforts? Does He reign in all our hearts? Does Jesus abide with us, for this is according to the law of the house that God should be everywhere recognizedthat we should, in all things, conform to His willin all things be consecrated to His purposes and, for His sake, in all things be separated from the rest of mankind. This is the law of the house.

II. Now, secondly, I need your help while I say, LET US EXAMINE OURSELVES BY THIS LAW. Let each man question himself as to whether he has carefully observed the law of the house. Brothers and Sisters, the Church of God is holy. It is founded by a holy God upon holy principles and for holy purposes. She has been redeemed by a holy Savior, with a holy Sacrifice and dedicated to holy service. Her great glory is the Holy Spirit, whose influences and operations are, all, holy. Her Law-Book is the holy Bible, her armory is the holy Covenant, her comfort is holy prayer. Her convocations are holy assembliesher citizens are holy men and holy womenshe exists for holy ends and follows after holy examples.

Dear Hearer, are you, then, as part of her holiness to the Lord? Ask yourself questions founded on what I have already said. Do I so live as to be separated? Is there in my business a difference between me and those with whom I trade? Are my thoughts different? Does the current of my desire run in a different direction? Am I at home with the ungodly, or does their sin vex me? Am I one of them, or am I as a speckled bird among them? Search, Brothers and Sisters, search and see whether you are holy in that sense or not!

Next, let each one ask Am I consecrated? Am I living to God with my body, with my soul, with my spirit? Am I using my substance, my talents, my time, my voice, my thoughts for Gods Glory? What am I living for? Am I making a pretense to live to God and am I, after all, really living to self? Am I like Ananias and Sapphira, pretending to give all and yet keeping back a part of the price? The preacher would search his own heart and he begs you all to search yours. Next, ask the question, Am I living in conformity to the mind of the holy God? Am I living as Christ would have lived in my place? Do I, as a master, as a servant, as a husband, as a wife, or as a child, act as God, Himself, would have me act so that He could say to me, Well done, good and faithful servant?

He is a jealous Godam, I obeying Him with care? If I am not walking in obedience to God, I am behaving disorderly. I am breaking the law of the house and that house, the House of the living God. Ought we not to take heed lest we insult the King in His own palace and perish from the way when His wrath is kindled but a little? Then, again, do I live in communion with God? I cannot be holy and yet have a wall of division between me and God. Is there a great gulf of separation between me and the Lord? Then I am a stranger to holiness! I must have fellowship with Him or else I am living in a manner which is sinful, dangerous, grievous, injurious. Brother, Sister, let me ask you these pressing questionsDo you walk with God? Do you abide in fellowship with Jesus?

I know there are some who would rather not give an answer to those questions. I have met with Believers who have said, If you asked me whether I was a drunk or dishonest, I should say, No, at once. If you asked me whether I have been upright and moral, I could say, Yes, most certainly. But when you ask, Are you walking in communion with the Lord? Are you enjoying habitual fellowship with God? I am not prepared to give you an answer, for I am weak upon this point. Are there not some professors among you who do not see the face of God by the month, together, and seldom enjoy the Presence of God at all? Their nearness to God is a thing of rare occasions and not of everyday consciousness. At a meeting, when religious excitement stirs them, they are a little warmed up, but their general temperature suits the North Pole rather than the Equator.

But, oh, dear Friends, this will not do! We want you to always dwell near Godto wake up in the morning with His light saluting the eyes of your soul and to be with Him while you are engaged in domestic concerns or out in the busy world! We want you, often, to have a secret word with the Well-Beloved during the day and to go to bed at night feeling how sweet it is to fall asleep upon the Saviors bosom! Brothers and Sisters, how sweet to say, When I awake I am still with You. Jealous hearts count it a sorrow when even their *dreams* disorder their minds and prevent their thinking of the Lord in their first conscious moment! I would to God we were so encompassed with Divine love, so completely sanctified, so thoroughly holy, that we never lost, for an instant, a sense of the immediate Presence of the Most High!

I leave that work of self-examination with yourselves in the quiet hours of this afternoon. Do, not neglect it, for, as servants of the Lord, it is incumbent upon you to remember that holiness becomes His house and it will be ill for us to be walking contrary to His mind. Measure the patternand measure yourselves by the law of the house.

III. Now, thirdly, WHAT ARE THE BEARINGS OF THIS LAW OF THE HOUSE? Those bearings of the Law to which I now refer are theself the Church of God shall be most holy, it will have, as the result of it, the greatest possible degree of the smile and favor of God. A holy Church has God in the midst of her! The consequence of Gods Presence is a holy liveliness in all her members, for where God comes near to man, lethargy and death soon fly away. Where the sacred Presence abides, sickness of soul disappears! Jehovah-Rophi heals His people among whom He dwells and the inhabitant shall no more say, I am sick.

This, again, causes joyand the bones which were broken rejoice! Where there is holiness God comes and there is sure to be love, for love is of the very essence of holiness. The fruit of the Spirit is love both to God and man. That love begets union of heart, brotherly kindness, sympathy and affectionand these bring peace and happiness. Among the truly holy there are no divisions, no heresies, no separation into parties, but all are one in Christ. From where do wars and fights come? Not from holiness, but from unconquered lusts! When we shall be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect, we shall love as He loves.

This, of course, leads to success in all the Churchs efforts and a consequent increase. Her prayers are intense and they bring down a blessing, for they are holy and acceptable unto God by Jesus Christ. Her labors are abundant and they secure an abundant harvest, for God will not forget her labor of love. The holy Church, with God in the midst of her, is the place of brotherly unity and, consequently, wet with the dew of Hermon and there God commands the blessing, even life forevermore! Saints in such a state keep high holiday all the year round, having foretastes of Heaven. Their trials are sanctified and their mercies are multiplied and thus faith grows exceedingly and hope is confirmed. To their assemblies angels come trooping down and up from them, by the way of the ladder which Jacob saw, they ascend to God.

O happy people! Thrice happy in their Holy God! A holy Church, my Brothers and Sistersmay we see it! A Church most holy in all her solemn services shall be fair as the sun, clear as the moon and terrible as an army with banners. The nations among whom she dwells shall hear of her famethey shall come from afar and ask to see her Princeand they shall be astonished at His Glory! The sons of the aliens shall come bending to her feet. Her converts shall be like flocks of dovesshe shall, herself, wonder from where they came! There shall be no lethargy, no defeat, no disappointment, no doubt of eternal Truths of God and no suspicious of infinite love. In the power of the Holy Spirit she shall be bravely confident, gloriously self-sacrificing and so shall she go from victory to victory. Mount but this white horse of holiness, O you armies of the Lord, and Christ shall lead the way and all of youclothed in fine white linen shall follow Him and go forth conquering and to conquer!

On the other hand, imagine a Church without holiness. What will come of it? Without holiness no man shall see the Lord and if the Church cannot ever see her Lord, what is her condition? Go to Zion and see what happens to Gods house when once defiled! Mark how the holy and beautiful house was desolate and burnt with fire! Remember how God loathed Zion and bade her enemies cast her down, stone from stone, and sow with salt the very site on which she stood! Was there ever destruction like that which fell upon Jerusalem? Let us accept, among our brotherhood, unholy men and womenand let us tolerate and indulge themand we shall soon see the anger of the Lord wax hot!

Let us, ourselves, give way to laxity of principle and practice. Let us lose our consecration and our communion, and what will soon be the effect? Probably, first, will come heartburning, envy and strife. Next, divisions, schisms, false doctrines, rivalries, contentions. Or possibly the evil may take the form of lethargy, inactivity, worldliness, lack of love to Christ and souls. By-and-by there will be diminished gatherings at the meetings for prayer, a cessation of all earnest pleading and consecrated living. Then a falling-off of congregations. Then a lack of power in the ministrya defect in the doctrine, perhapsor else in the earnestness of the speaker. And all the while no conversions and no visits from the Lord!

Shall it be, in years to come, that men will pass by the Tabernacle, and ask, What is that huge house? And the reply will be, It was built by an earnest, godly company in former years, but they are dead and things are changed. What is it now? There is a fine organ and a polished preacher, but the multitudes have departed and the few who still keep together are of the cold, respectable order, who have no life or zeal. Then will this house be a proverb, a byword and a hissing throughout the whole earth! How often I am jealous about this with a burning jealousy! My heart breaks when I hear of some of you that you live unholy lives! There are some, I fear, among you who so walk as to dishonor the Cross of Christ.

I mean not such as we can lay our finger on and say, This man is a drunk, or unchaste, or dishonest, else, as you well know, you would not long be sparedno, not a moment longer than was necessary for the proof of your wrong and of your impenitence in it! But I mean such as cannot be thus dealt with became their sins are not openthe tares that grow up in the wheatthe actions not yet discovered because we cannot cast the lot so as to light upon this man or that, and say, It is he. I tremble lest there should be among us some utterly unknown to us and undiscoverable by the most vigilant eye, whose sin, nevertheless, like a leprosy, should eat into the house and make it unfit for the habitation of God! Oh, that we may never be so fallen that God, Himself, shall say, Let them alone.

It was an awful moment when, in the holy place at Jerusalem, there was heard the moving of wings and a voice which said, Let us go hence. Then the Glory of God will have departed. Woe, woe, woe! Let the curtain drop with a shower of tears upon it! God grant it never may be so!

IV. So now, lastly, dear Brothers and Sisters, LET US TAKE ORDER TO SECURE OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW OF THE HOUSE. I believe that Jesus is always working in His own way for the purity of every true Church. His fan is in His handsee it moving continuallyand He will thoroughly purge His floor. Gods melting fire is not in the *world* where the dross contains no gold, but, His fire is in Zion and His furnace in Jerusalem. The lord will judge His people. The Lord tries professors and their professions!

I believe that there is a judgment going on over Church members that some are little aware of. Paul speaks of a Church in his day in this manner. He notes their inconsistencies and adds, For this cause some are sickly among you, and many sleep. A special jurisdiction is over the palace of a king! A special rule pertains to a house which does not apply to people out of doors. Church members are under peculiar discipline, as it is written, You only have I known of all the nations of the earth; therefore I will punish you for your iniquities. Our Lord Jesus often makes the ministry to be as a great winnowing fan. Somebody is offended and leaves. What a mercy! You could not have *forced* him to depart, but he leaves of his own accordand so the house is cleansed.

The breath of the Spirit blows away much chaff. When our Lord preached His usual doctrine, the chaff kept with the wheat, but when He came to speak of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, the baser sort were offended and, walked no more with Him. Did He grieve over that separation between the precious and the vile? I think not! He meant it should be so. A certain Truth of God put in a certain way, with a personally pointed applicationperhaps not intended by the preacher as to that particular individualis, nevertheless, intended by God for that case and the cutting word removes the rotten branch. Thus the purging work proceeds from day to day. We may expect our Master to come among us, every now and then, with a scourge of small cords to smite right and left to purge the temple of God lest it should become a den of thieves. He is a jealous God and He will not suffer defilement among His own people!

Have you never seen great Christian communities at a certain phase of their existence come into troubled waters and break up like wrecks? There must have been a secret reasonprobably the one claimed at the time was by no means the true one. Lack of holiness led to lack of love and unloving spirits soon found a pretext for dispute. Those who should have met this with love and quenched it by gentle wisdom acted in a harsh spirit, being themselves deficient in Graceand so flint met steel and sparks abounded! Then came fire. Then came general conflagration. The open mischief was an

effect, rather than a causeand it may be hoped was even part of the *cure*.

True, many a table of the moneychangers was upset and many a dove was seen to fly away in frightbut the scourge did not fail to make a clearance. How much better would it have been had there been no need for such a purging! If churches are not holy, they cannot be prosperous, for God afflicts those who break the law of His house. Now, cannot we give earnest heed that this law is regarded among us? Yes, you say, take care that you who are pastors, elders and deacons are watchful and faithful. Guard well the door of the Church and see to it that you do not admit the ungodlybe vigilant, also, in discipline, so that when any are manifestly unholy they are put away.

Brothers and Sisters, this is our desire and labor but, after all, what can *we* do? With all our diligence, what can a small band of officers accomplish in a great Church which is numbered by the thousands? Brothers and Sisters, this must be taken up by all of *you*. Let every man bear his own burden. I would have every man sweep in the front of his own door. I pray that each person who belongs to this Church may be jealous for its purity and watch, both over himself and his brethren, lest any form of sin should be a root of bitterness to trouble us and, thereby, many should be defiled. Let us set to this work at once! Here is the first exercise for uslet us repent of past failures in holiness. We shall never overcome sin till we are conscious of it and ashamed of it. That is why the Lord said to the Prophet, You, son of man, show the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and let them measure the pattern. And if they are ashamed of all that they have done, show them the form of the house and the fashion thereof.

The first step towards purity is *penitence*. Let us bow our heads and lament before the Lord the sins of our holy things, our personal trespasses, our transgressions against love, our offenses against the law of the house! He that is least ashamed will probably be the person who has most cause to blush! And he who will be most humbled will be the man who has least transgressed. In any case we have sinned as a Church and come short of the Glory of Godand an honest confession is due from us. Having acknowledged our error, let us next make the law of Gods house our earnest study that we may avoid offenses in the future. You will hardly keep the law if you do not know it.

Search the sacred Word of God day and night. Let the inspired page be your standard. Never mind what your minister tells youobserve what the Spirit of God tells you. Get to your Bibles, search them, and there see how you ought to behave in the house of God. Be much upon your knees asking the Lord to teach you His mind and will, and specially beseech Him to write His Law upon your hearts, for you will never keep it in your life till it is written *there*. When you have studied the law of the house, then next be intensely real in your endeavor to observe it. How much of the religion of the present day is a sham! Men talk of being holydo they know what they mean? We speak of consecration and yet live as if we were mere worldlings hunting for wealth, or fame, or pleasure!

Some sing of giving all to God and yet their contributions are miserably small. Some say they are living wholly for God, but if they had lived wholly for themselves it would not have made any particular difference in what they have done! Oh, let us be *real*! Do not let us preach what we do not believe, nor profess to be believers in a creed which is not true to our own souls. Get a grip of eternal things! Hold themfeel their solemn weight and live under their influence! That which is unreal is unholy! The bloated Pharisee is unholy. The empty formalist is unholy. But the sincere penitent, the truly honest Seeker after holiness is already holy in some degree! Your eyes, O Lord, are upon truth! Then let us cry for a sincere and growing faith in God concerning this matter of holiness. Let us believe in Jesus, that by His Holy Spirit He can make us holy. Do not let us believe that any sin is inevitablerather let us feet bound to overcome it. Let us not trust in our own struggling and striving, but let us as much trust Christ to work sanctification in us as to work justification for us. Let faith deal with the water as well as with the blood, for they both flowed from the same fountain in the Saviors riven side!

And then, lastly, let us pray to be set on fire with an intense zeal for God. I do not believe that there is such a thing as cold holiness in the world. As soon as a bullock was dedicated to God and brought to the altar, it had to be burned with fireand so must *every* consecrated life. You and I are never the Lords while we are cold-hearted. We must be on fire if we are to be sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Get rid of zeal from the Church and you have removed one of the most purifying elements, for God intends to purge Jerusalem by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning. Oh, to be baptized into the Holy Spirit and into fire! May refining fire go through and through our souls till all that defiles shall be utterly consumed and we shall be as ingots of pure gold, wholly the Lords!

Thus have we rehearsed in your ears the law of the house. May the Holy Spirit enable you to keep it unto the end.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1054 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

WATERS TO SWIM IN
NO. 1054

A SERMON DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 25, 1872, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.
Waters to swim in.
Ezekiel 47:5.

THE whole vision, though bearing other meanings, may be applied to the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It began at Jerusalem as a tiny rivulet. By our Saviors preaching, a few disciples, some of whom became Apostles, were converted. These were the means of the conversion of a still larger number. But at first the stream was very shallow, for the whole Church could meet in one upper room. Even after the Pentecostal increase it was but as a small brook. Herod thought that he could leap across it, or could dam it up, but his persecutions swelled the stream. Very shortly after, the watercourse grew broader and deeper till it attracted the attention of the Roman Emperors and excited their alarm.

They thought that it was time to drain the river lest it should become a torrent so great as to sweep them away. Their attempts to stay its course only added to its floods. Its current became stronger and wider than before, and on it went from age to age till at last it had become a mighty river, watering the whole earth and greatly blessing the nations. It is destined to grow until it shall be like the main ocean itself, for the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. We bless God that the day of small things which dawned at Bethlehem has already grown to a day of great thingsand our faith fully expects to see greater things than these!

The vision might equally well be applied to the growth of Christian experience. When we first know the Lord the Gospel is a very precious thing to us. We rejoice in its pardon and the consequent salvation which we expect to receive through it. But, compared with what we shall know of it by-and-by, our knowledge of the Gospel at first is like a tiny rivulet. As we advance in Grace it becomes a river flowing up to the ankles. As we are further instructed, so that our faith is confirmed and our Graces are developed, it deepens into a river up to the kneesand by-and-by up to the loins. And farther on (with some it has already happenedI trust it may happen to us all) it becomes waters to swim in. I shall speak of the text as illustrating the Christians experience when he arrives at that stage.

At the same time the vision might be applied to our *knowledge* of the Gospel as well as to our experience of it. The Gospel was gradually revealed, first, in outline in the Old Testamentin symbol and type to the older saintsand then was taught by our Lord. Then the details were, as it were, put into His outline by the Apostles under the guidance of the Holy Spiritand so, to our own soul, the knowledge of the Gospel does not shine forth all at once. There is a daybreak before the fullness of noon. There is a bladea tender green bladebefore the full corn in the ear. The babe cries in penitence before the perfect man in Christ Jesus sings the song of assurance.

Perhaps we have not yet come to know the height, and depth, and length and breadth of the love of Christneither have we yet discovered how exceedingly broad the Gospel isbut what we now dont know we shall know hereafter. Contracted notions we shall leave behind as the bird casts off the shell in which it was imprisoned! Dim ideas will vanish as the trees walking were seen no more when the blind mans eyes were fully opened. Childish knowledge makes us dream of comprehending the Gospel in the hollow of our hand, but when we become men and put away childish things we shall find in it waters to swim in.

I see in the metaphor before us three ideas. The first is abundance. The second is space. And the third is trust, for there are not only great waters, but waters to swim in.

I. The first thought of the text concerning the Gospel is thisthe idea of ABUNDANCE. Beloved, God has provided for His people, in the Gospel of His dear Son, no stinted store. He has not killed a sheep and invited one or two to His supperHis oxen and His fatlings are killed and, All things are ready. The provisions of God are on a royal scaleon an *infinite* scale. There is so much provided at the Gospel feast that none need keep back from fear that there is not enough! Neither shall the greatest eater at that feast ever say, I have exhausted what was provided for me. The wine ran short at the marriage feast at Cana until the Lord came in and then there was enough and to spare.

As a king gives to a king so has God given to the poor ones of the earthto His afflictedto sin-stricken souls who seek His face. Honey out of the rock and oil out of the flinty rock He gives His people. Moses spoke concerning Israel, Butter of cattle and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats with the fat of kidneys; with wheat; and you did drink the pure blood of the grape. But the food of the *spiritual* Israel is richer by far. The child of God, as he advances in the Divine life rejoices in the abundance of Covenant provisions. Let me mention some which strike me as exceedingly abundant.

The first is the abundant provision for the removal of sin and for making us accepted in the Beloved. To put away my sin there needed an infinite Atonement. I do not marvel, therefore, that it should have needed the Son of God to die for exceedingly great sinbut sometimes, as my soul has stood at the foot of the Cross and considered who He was that shed His blood for me, I have felt as if the price were too much. When I have seen my sin I thought it impossible for it to be removed. But when I have seen my Savior, I have thought it equally impossible that there could be any conceivable sin which Jesus blood could not wash away. An infinite degree of merit must reside in the sufferings of our blessed Lord! Such sufferings as they were, of body, of mind, and of spiritthe suffering of being forsaken of man and of God, tooand being left alone in utter desertion to die when He became obedient even unto death.

It is the astonishment of all worlds that Christ should be the victim for human sin, and, when we think of Him, we say, O God, what waters there are here of pardoning lovewhat waters to swim in. Surely whole hosts of sin shall be swept away by this mighty river of atoning blood.

It rises high and drowns the hills
Has neither shore nor bound.

Now if we search to find our sins,
Our sins can neer be found.

The wonder is, however, that while there is provision made to put away our sin, there is equal provision made to impute righteousness to us. We were guilty, for all broke the Law. God provided a Substitute who suffered the penalty of our law-breaking, but, He has done moreHe has found a Representative who has kept the Law for us, so that after washing us He clothes us. After taking away our guilt He makes us positively righteous and praiseworthy before the Throne of Justice through Jesus Christ, His Son, whose righteousness we wrap about our loins and in it stand fair and comely before the eyes of infinite Purity. Oh, this is right royal and truly Divine!

Here is blood most precious removing every spot, and a righteousness most glorious conferring a matchless beauty, a beauty such as Adam in his perfection never had, for his was but human righteousness! But this day the children of God wear the righteousness of the Lord Himselfand this is the name which Jesus is called, The Lord our Righteousness! Brethren, here are waters to swim in, if we only contemplate this one particular of the arrangement for our justification in the sight of God!

Turn next to Gods stores for our sustenance and for our protection. For our sustenance there is bread provided from Heaven such as angels have never tasted. There is water leaping from the rock such as the fathers drank not in the wilderness. There is no fear that either the heavenly granary or the celestial fountain shall ever be exhausted. The manna was without limit except according to the capacities of the peopleand so the bread which we eat, even Christ the Infinite One is not measured out to us by weight, but each may have according to his eating. We are never straitened in Himif stinted at all, we stint ourselves. After feeding millions of saints upon Himself for these hundreds of years, Jesus is as full and as precious, and as soul-satisfying as ever He was.

O blessed food! How well has God stored His granaries for all His people! And the heavenly drink is equally abundant. Rivers are ours to drink offloods and standing pools of living water. Drought can never befall us, for the deep which lies under has been broached for us. And as for our protection, think, my Brothers and Sisters, how the Lords right arm is uplifted that His power may preserve the saintshow His Wisdom goes to and fro in the earth watching for their goodhow His heart of love beats high with constant affection for them. Just think how the whole of Godhead bows itself to protect the chosenfor does He not compare Himself to the hen that covers her chickens? Has He not said, He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings shall you trust: His truth shall be your shield and buckler?

God, even our own God, is both the sustenance and the preservation of His people! And if we should need more, though more there cannot be yet, if our unbelief should think of moreis not all Providence on our side? Blows there a wind that does not waft us blessings? Breaks there a wave upon any shore which does not bear us good? The huge wheels of Providence, as they are, are full of eyesand these eyes look toward the chosen of God. All things work together for good to them that love God. And dont you see? If your eyes are opened you will see themhorses of fire and chariots of fire surrounding all the saints! Invisible spirits of superior race are servitors to the beloved sons of God! All Heavens hosts are ready for our defense!

If it were necessary, the new Jerusalem would empty out itself of its thousands, as Thebes did of its myriads from all its hundred gatesand every angel would, with sword drawn, assail our foes and put them to utter routfor the Lord will not allow one of the least of His own to perish! See then, Brethren, what waters to swim in are here so that for our provision and our protection we need not fear. Our needs are great, but the supplies are greater. Our daily dangers are enough to provoke our anxieties, but the Lords eternal preservations lay those anxieties at once to rest. Blessed Lord, we are poor feeble infants, but when we lie on Your bosom we feel ourselves mighty in Your strength. We are penniless beggars, but when we feast at Your table we would not exchange our position for the banquets of Ahasuerus or the feasts of Solomon! It is our bliss to be nothing and to find our all in You.

We must not tarry, however, but remark that the same breadth and depth will be found if we reflect upon the provision made for our training and our perfecting. Beloved, the Lord will not merely keep us alive and preserve us from perishing, but He means to make something of us. He has great designs in view. The poor clay of the earth, when it is first dug up for the brick maker does not know what is to become of it. It passes through many processes and at last is built up into a goodly housea mansion for its owner. The clay of the pit may yet be built into a palace for a king! And shall we, poor earthly things, ever be living stones in the temple of God? I trust we are in some sense already so! But shall we ever glisten and glow like rubies and emeralds, each one after his own kind, as a portion of that city whose jeweled light is enough to blind the eyes of mortals by its excess of glory?

Shall we ever be a part of the radiance of Heaven? Shall we be revealers in our measure of the Glory of God? Yes! We shall come to that and though it may seem impossible, yet we shall believe it if we reflect a moment. God has already done much for us by giving us the inner lifea matchless miracle! It needs as much of His power to make new hearts and right spirits as to create new worldsyet He has done that for us. He has, moreover, preserved us up to this moment amid a thousand dangers, and has made those dangers contribute to our growth in Grace. He has made our afflictions minister to our spiritual advancement. I owe more than I can tell to the Engravers tool, and yet tis sharp and I feel the lines of its cutting even now. Yet, let not the Engraver stay His hand, for how shall His work be done if He does not bear hard and cut deep? If there are no sharp cuts, surely there shall be no working out of His grand idea!

Moreover, in addition to affliction He has provided all the Truth of God in the Bible to sanctify us. He has given us the blood of Christ to purify us. He has sent forth the blessed and eternal Spirit to refine us, and, as subordinate agencies, He has provided all our comforts, as well as all our trialsall our companionships with holy men and all the beacons of unholy livesthat we may be educated for the skies. He is putting forth His wisdom and His strength, and His prudence, and His lovel must repeat myselfto make something of us, though we are nothing by nature, and it does not yet appear what we shall be.

I think, sometimes, when I see my own nature, that it were difficult for me ever to become a vessel fit for the Masters use in the halls of the golden house above. And then, when I think Who has begun to work us to the same thing, and Who it is that still is persevering in the workwhy then I conclude that if I were even worse than I am, He could yet make me what He would have me to be! And seeing the power that is ready to work it out, my soul rejoices in hope of complete conformity to the Divine ideal. Here, again, are waters to swim in.

Brethren, take another view of Gods great goodness to us. What waters to swim in have we by way of consolations and strengthening. Are you ever cast down? I hope you are not, but if you are, as some of us are frequently bowed down into the very dust, what a relish you will have for the promises of God! I am sure that a number of promises in the Bible were written on purpose for me. You may dispute it and say, No, they were meant for me. I have no wish to contest the point, but I still believe, as I have said, that they were meant for me, for they fit my case so exactly even in their very words that they appear as if my case were especially intended. No doubt other Believers think the same, and will join with me in blessing God for such a grand Bible. Well does our hymn-writer put it

What more can He say than to you He has said You, who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?

None can comfort a child like a mother. The mother knows exactly the childs state, and by her very love she throws a sweetness into what she says which another could not successfully imitate. There are no comforts like the comforts of God. The Comforter puts into the Inspired Word a singular sweetness which the most able ministers cannot arrive at, even though they should be, like Barnabas, sons of consolation. Brothers and Sisters, let us think over our comforts now, for a minute, and our consolations. Have we not this for consolationthat God has loved us with an everlasting love, even the Lord who cannot change? Up to now He has never failed usHe has promised that all good things shall be ours as we need them, and it has been so.

Have we not this for a consolationthat He has given us Christ, and therein has given us all things? Can He deny us anything now, after having given to us His own dear Son? Let us think how dear we are to Christ, how much we cost Him, how precious we are in His sight. Can He leave us? Can He be unkind to us? Let us reflect upon the way in which the Lord has always appeared for us in times of difficulty, and rescued us in days of jeopardy. Turning to the Book and finding it written, I am God: I change not, let us be consoled for the future and go on our way confident that all shall be well. All the Covenant promises are meant to console us. All the gifts of Sovereign Grace are intended to give us joy! The attributes of God are springs of consolation for us. The Human Nature of Christ in which He comes near to us is a source of bliss! The gentleness and tenderness of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us on purpose to be our Comforter are dear subjects of delight! Indeed, if we are down cast we must blame ourselves. Why are you cast down, O my Soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope you in God: for I shall yet praise Him. The consolations of the Spirit are waters to swim in.

Beloved, we must draw to a close upon this one thought of abundancejust think of what God has done for us by way of making us happy and noble! He has not only pardoned us, but He has received us into His *family*. And He has taken us there, not to be His hired servants as we once thought He might do, but He has made us His own sons! And what is more than that, He has made us heirsand not secondary heirs eitherbut joint-heirs with Christ Jesus, so that we have come right up from the place of the slave into the position of the heir of all things! Our Lord Himself, our dear and ever blessed Savior, was not content to pluck us like brands from the burningnot content to make us His sheep whom He should watch over with tender carebut He has taken us to be His *spouse* and He calls us His beloved.

Yes, and He has done more. He has taken us to be members of His body, and we are of His flesh and of His bones. Was there ever such an exaltation as this? When Scripture speaks of lifting a beggar from the dunghill and setting him among princes, surely it falls short of this wonderthat of taking a worm of the dust, a sinful wretch that was only fit for Helland putting him into union with Christ Jesus, so that he should be a part of the mystical body of the Son of God! This is marvelous, and as I think of it, I feel that I have brought you to the sea shore and shown you an ocean to swim inthe depth of which you cannot fathom! Oh the depths of the mercy of God!

Now, in all this nobility which God has given us there is not a single piece of unhappiness. I should imagine that to rise into some positions in society must entail sorrow instead of happiness, for, as you ascend the heights the air grows chillier and the frosts are more perpetual. But the nobilities which God bestows are, all of them, of that happywhat if I should sayhomely, divinely comforting sort, that the nobler we are, the happier we are? If He makes us sons, our sonship is not all responsibilityit means love. And if He makes us heirs, oh, what happiness to be possessors of earth and Heaven! And if He makes us His own spouse, the chief thought of our marriage union is not service, but love! God is not to us, Baali, but, Ishi shall His name be called. Not, lord, but husbandduty is there, but love is in the forefront. We become members of His bodyit is an honor, but it is much more than thatit is a bliss to be vitally, eternally united to Christ, our Covenant Head!

Why, dear saints of God, however poor you may be, and however low in spirits, and however sickly in body, you have a whole sea of happiness before you! You have a drop of bitterness now and then, but you have an Atlantic of sweetness, rivers of wine and milk. Rejoice, rejoice, says the Scriptures, and that most fitly, too, because there are, after all, more reasons for rejoicing than arguments for sorrow. And then, beyond! Beyond! Think of that which remains in Immanuels land beyond Jordan! Open your eyes a moment. Do not let them rest upon that stream which is not near so wide as you have fabled it, whose waves are not so rough as your fears have made them. Look beyond that narrow stream of death what do you see?

Moses sight from Nebo is nothing compared with the view which faith gets of the Glory to be revealed! We shall see Him, and shall be like He is and shall be with Him eternally! His glory is our souls delight on earthit shall be our souls transport in Heaven! What will it be to see the shining ranks of the glorified, and hear their blessed song and join with them and with the angelic choirs forever and forever?

Far from a world of grief and sin,

With God eternally shut in.

Oh, Beloved, here are waters to swim in! Let us bathe our weary souls in them by faith before we leave this place. The Lord grant it, in the power of His Holy Spirit, and He shall have the praise.

II. But now, secondly, our text gives us the idea of space, amplitude, room. Waters to swim in. Room enough. And here, let us remark that in the Gospel, when our experience and our knowledge have deepened, we shall find a place of broad rivers and streams under the following aspects. First, as to thought. Many persons have the notion that the Gospel is very contracted and narrow. I am afraid that a large number of our members have not yet obtained a comprehensive idea of the Gospelno, I am half afraid that they never will under some preachers who do not seem to have any clear view of the Gospel system themselves, or, if they have, they fail to communicate it.

Some deny the need of a system at all, but, somehow or other, everything we know throws itself into a systematic shape. And though we ought, beyond all things, to deprecate a cast-iron creed and the attempt to force every Truth of God into one circle, yet it is a good thing to have a definite idea of what we believe in the things of God. Some have a tolerably clear idea, but it is a very narrow and contracted one.

Now there is nothing contracted in the Bibleit is a great Book of a great God, inspired by a great Spirit and calculated to give men great mindsfor it is, in the great subjects of holy thought, waters to swim in. Think only for a moment of one or two subjects of thought, and you will see the waters to swim in. Think of God as He is revealed in Holy Scripture. The Father ordaining all things, according to the council of His willtake the whole line of Truth which connects itself with the Father. Then consider the Son as Man and as God, the Surety of the Covenant, the Substitute for His people, the Intercessor, Prophet, Priest, and King the Lord who is yet to come. You have a wide range of thought.

Then consider the Holy Spirit. Dr. John Owen has written a massive volume upon the work of the Spirit, and you might write a thousand such volumes and not exhaust the mighty theme! He dwells upon the work of the Spirit in creation. The work of the Spirit in sustentation. The work of the Spirit in inspiration. The work of the Spirit upon the human body of Christ. The work of the Spirit upon our Lord in His ministry. The work of the Spirit in regeneration, in illumination, in consolation. Here are waters to swim in Brethren! Indeed, the waters are so broad that I cannot attempt even to number them or make a map of them. Take only those lines of thought which come from the TrinityFather, Son, and Spirit and you have boundless Truth before you!

Young man, you need never say, I need to get a thought-breeding book. Man alive, was there ever such a thought-breeding book as the Bible? You need never say, I found myself stinted for need of subjects. Oh, if you know anything at all in your soul about the things of God, you will admire the infinity of Scripture and never complain of having slender room for thought! Then think of the doctrine of election and all those stupendous Truths of God which spring out of predestination. If you love deep subjects you certainly will find waters to swim in there! But if you are not a child of God, you are likely to find them waters to drown in as well as waters to swim in, for it needs a man to be taught to swim by Gods own Grace in such waters as these! But when he once knows how to swim, it is one of the most delightful exercises in the world to take a bold stroke into the Everlasting Covenant and dive into the deep things of God.

Think, again, of the subject which lifts itself aloft from the opposite pointhuman responsibility, and turn that overa rugged subject, assuredly, but most true, and as certainly taught in the Scripture as the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty in election. There are many who will not believe both these Truths of God, but rest assured, you will have to put out one eye, and you will practically lose one arm unless you will believe both, for they are both taught in the Scriptures, and both sides of the Truth will furnish you with waters to swim in. If a man should have the largest mind that ever existed upon the face of the earthif he should be a Newton or a Lockestill, if he would set himself down and prayerfully study Scripture, he would find that the themes for meditation are altogether boundless waters to swim in.

I could enlarge, but that might not be so profitable to you as to go forward. Brothers and Sisters, there are waters to swim in, next, not only as regards subjects of thought but matters of faith. There are topics in Scripture which one can hardly think of very long togetherthey are too perplexing. If we bend towards them and fix our eye upon them, we may strain our eyeballs before we shall see with understanding. There are mysteries beyond us. I thank GodI bless God that He has given me a Gospel, much of which I cannot understand! For I am sure if I were able to grasp all revealed Truth and I met the devil in my vestry tonight, and he said, Why, you have comprehended it all in your small brain: therefore, it cannot be from GodI should not know how to answer him.

But now, if he ever meets me and tauntingly enquires, How do you make these two doctrines square? How do you make them consistent? I answer him thus, Are you, also, omniscient? Is nothing too hard for you? It is no business of mine to make Gods teaching consistent in mans judgment! If the Lord has revealed a Truth, all I have to do is to believe it. I will look at it as long as ever I canI will pry into it as far as I can gobut, when God locks the door and does not leave me the key, I shall not attempt to break the door open. And if He does not tell me, I believe it is my wisdom not to need to know. Going to Heaven does not lie in untying Gordian knots.

Oh, how sweet to have something to believe where you get right out of reasons depths! We thank God that in the Scriptures there is a good deal which you cannot reason onwhich you could not explain to a man who has only reason to go uponsomething which he scoffs at because he cannot see what it means by his blind carnal eyes. I am glad to think that there is something for higher faculties to graspsomething for the spirit, the new-born spirit, to lay hold upon! I thank God that there are great things to be believed as well as great things to be understood. And if I were now to try and show you the vast area which is opened up to faith, I am sure you would exclaim in the words of the text, There are, indeed, waters to swim in.

Then, blessed be his name, there are waters to swim in not only for thought and faith, but also for love. Some make the doctrines of the Gospel a cold stream, like the waters of the Arctic pole, and love would be frozen if she were to venture into them. But the Scriptures are like the gulf stream, warm, as well as deep, and love delights to plunge into them and swim in them. Time would fail me if I were to try and show you the room there is for love in the Scriptures. We will therefore dwell only on one thing. Think of the love of Christ to usthe love which nailed Him to the Crossthe love which made Him give up His reputation on earth as well as His royalties in Heaven. Think of the love which made Him become a worm and no man, despised of men and a reproach of the people for our sakes!

A certain writer has written two volumes upon the sufferings of Christ upon the Cross. He has managed to write a chapter upon the nails, and upon the sponge, and upon the thorns, and upon the vinegar. And I must confess I have read his book with no small delight, and I have thought that he did not make too much of anything he handled. And, if he did seem to strain a point here and there too much one way, he might have gone a great deal farther the other way if he but had his eyes more open.

In the agonies of Christ there is, to the contemplative mind, a fullness of love unspeakable which makes the heart feel, now I can love here without stint. I can love the dear companion of my life. I can love my children. But there comes the thought, I may make them idols, and I may thus injure both them and myself. That is not waters to swim in. But, if we loved the Lord 10,000 times more than we do, we should transgress no command in so doingno, rather, the only transgression lies in falling short! Oh, that we could love Him more! There can be no excess of love in loving Him supremely. The coolest logic can justify the most intense enthusiasm towards Christ. If a man had no heart, but were all head, he might reasonably act towards the Savior as those do whose whole nature is on a blaze with affection for Him, and who seem, sometimes, to have forgotten the dictates of reason in the impulses of love. Oh, what waters to swim in is the love of Christ us!

But, it is just the same with the love of the Father. And, (I think I have told you once or twice lately), I am sure it is so with the love of the Holy Spirit. While it was most gracious of the Lord Jesus to come and live with men, is it not quite as gracious of the Holy Spirit to dwell in men? I marvel at Christ among sinners, but I marvel quite as much at the Holy Spirit *in* sinners, for the best of saints are still sinners! To *live* in us, indwelling in these poor bodies of oursoh, the love of the pure and Holy Spirit to do so! Here are, indeed, waters to swim in.

Yet, once again. I have not exhausted this thought of space. There is room here for the exercise and expansion of every faculty within the range of the Gospel. These are days of modern thought. As you are all aware, men have become wondrously wise and have outgrown the Scriptures. Certain unhappy childrens heads are too big, and there is always a fear that it is not brain, but water on the brainand this modern thought is simply a disease of *wind* on the brainand likely to be a deadly one if God does not cure the Church of it. Within the compass of the orthodox faith within the range of the simple Gospelthere is room enough for the development of every faculty, however largely gifted a man may be!

It doesnt matter, though the man is a Milton in poetry, though he is a master in metaphysics and a prince in scienceif he is but pure in his prose, accurate in his metaphysics, and honest in his sciencehe will find that the range of his thought needs no more space than Scripture gives him. It has been thought by some that these persons who run off to heretical opinions are persons of great mind. Believe me, Brothers and Sisters, it is a cheap way of making yourself to be thought so, but the men are nobodies! That is the sum of the matter. We are satisfied with the theology of the Puritans and we assert this day that when we take down a volume of Puritan theology we find in a solitary page more thinking and more learningmore Scripture, more real teachingthan in whole folios of the effusions of modern thought!

Modern men would be rich if they possessed even the crumbs that fall from the table of the Puritans. They have given us nothing new, after all. A few variegated bladders they have blownand they have burst while the blowers were admiring them! But, as for anything worth knowing which has improved the heart, benefited the understanding, or fitted men for service in the battle of lifethere have been no contributions made by this modern thought worth recording. Whereas the old thought of the Puritans and the Reformers, which I believe to be none other than the thought of God thought out again in mans brain and heart, is constantly giving consolation to the afflicted, furnishing strength to the weak, and guiding mens minds to behave themselves aright in the house of God and in the world at large.

There are waters to swim in, in the Scriptures! You need not think there is no room for your imaginations there. Give the coursers their reinsyou shall find enough within that Book to exhaust them at their highest speed. You need not think that your memory shall have nothing to rememberif you had learned the Bible through and through, and knew all its textsyou would have much to remember above that! You would still need to remember its inner meaning, and its conversations with your soul, and the mysterious power it has had over your spirit when it has touched the strings of your nature as a master harper touches his harp strings and has brought forth music which you knew not to be sleeping there.

There is no faculty but what will find room enough in the Word of God, if we will but obediently bring it to the service of the Lord. There are, in this respect, waters, to swim in.

III. But now, lastly, the text has the idea of TRUST, at least, to my mind. I think it will have to yours, also. Waters to swim in. I should like to swim very much. When I have been at the seaside I have had a great passion for swimming, and I think I should have been able to swim by this time, but I could never persuade myself to take both feet off the bottom at one time. I have gone into the bath and when I have felt a little of the buoyancy of the water I have lifted one foot, and I have been half inclined to remove the other, but somehow it was not done. I could not, after all, quite trust the liquid element.

The text speaks, of waters to swim in, and swimming is a very excellent picture of *faith*. In the act of swimming it is necessary that a man should float in the waterso far as he is passive and the water buoys him up. You must keep your head above water if you are to swim. We are told that the body is naturally buoyant, and that if a person would lie quite still upon the water he would not sinkbut if he kicks and struggles he will sink himself. The first sign of faith is when a man learns to lie back upon Christto give himself up entirely to Himwhen he ceases to be active and becomes passive! When he brings no good works, no efforts, no merits to Jesus by way of recommendation, but casts his soul upon the eternal merit and the finished work of the great Substitute. That is faith in its passive formfloating faith.

In the heavenly river you must float before you can swim. I pray God to teach every sinner here to rest upon Jesus. You need to save yourself, do you? You will drown, Man! You will drown! As surely as you live you will drown! Will you give up and let Christ save you? Will you believe that He *can* save you? Fall back into His arms. You will float, then. There is no drowning a soul that gives itself up to Christ, and trusts entirely to Him. But the text does not speak of waters to

float in, though this is essential. Many people never get beyond that floating period, and they conclude that they are safe and all is well because they fancy their heads are above water.

But the man who is really taught of God goes on from the floating to the swimming. Now swimming is an *active* exercise. The man progresses as he strikes out. He makes headway. He dives and riseshe turns to the right, he swims to the left, he pursues his coursehe goes where he wills. Now, the holy Word of God and the Gospel are waters to swim in. You know only what it is to floatmany of you. You are resting in the Truth of God for your salvation, but making no advance in heavenly things. Oh, Beloved, let us learn to *swim* in those watersswim in them! I mean let us learn to trust God in active exertions for the promotion of His kingdomto trust Him in endeavors to do good.

How blessedly our friend, Mr. Miller of Bristol, swims! What a master swimmer he is! He has had his feet off the bottom many years and as he swims he draws along behind him some 2,000 orphan children, whom, by Gods Grace, he is saving from the floods of sin and bringing, we trust, safe to shore. Dear Brother, dear Sister, could you not swim, too? Oh, but I have no money. You need to walk, I see. But I have very slender gifts compared with what I need. Cannot the Lord give you gifts and graces? Will you not trust Him? Dear Brother, are you called to serve God in a very difficult sphere of labor? Cannot you go on? I have nobody to hold me. Oh, I see, you are all for walking on the bottom. Brethren, it is waters to *swim* in. Cannot you swim without any help except the help of the All in All?

See how the arch of Heaven stands without a pillar? See yon lamps of Heaven how they burn? Who gives them oil? See how they are swung in Heaven without a golden chain to hold them in their place? Yet they flicker not! Neither do they fall from their socketsneither does the arch of Heaven tremble! May the Holy Spirit teach us to trust! Oh, may God teach us not only the passive trust which leans on Christ and floats, but the *active* trust which manages the waterswalks them, swims them, dives into them at will, as God helps it! We are not trustful enough of the invisible God. We are young eaglets, born of God to mount up to the sun, but we stand shivering by the nest, not daring to try our wings.

Young eaglets, trust the invisible airtrust it and rise aloft! It shall bear you up, and you shall not fall. Trust it more! Put out all your wing strength. Lean on it more and it will bear you up, up, up, beyond clouds and mists, up to the very sun itself! He shall rise highest who can trust most. He shall have most who can believe most in God. If you will treat with the Eternal on His own terms of boundless credit, and trust yourself without reserve to Him, there are great things in store for you!

Blessed Master, give us waters to swim in. Though they should be stormy waters. Though they should be drowning waters to our unbelief they shall be swimming waters to our faith! And as we swim to Heaven we will rejoice in You, having no confidence in the flesh. May God bless these few words to you, beloved Friends, and comfort us all with His own consolations, and be unto us ever more and more God All Sufficient. Amen.

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THE MODERN DEAD SEA AND THE LIVING WATERS

NO. 1852

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, JULY 19, 1885, *BY C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.
The waters shall be healed.
Ezekiel 47:8.

Ezekiel is robed in dreadful tempest and his whole book is as the terrible crystal for brightness and for mystery, yet he often gives us visions of exceeding comfort. For instance, who can think without joy of that tender branch of the cedar which is to be planted by God in the mountain of the height of Israelwhich shall grow so exceedingly that all fowl of every wing shall dwell in its branches? Do we not all rejoice that, whatever may become of the institutions of modern society, we have received a Kingdom which cannot be moved? The Kingdom of our Lord Jesus, which began as a tender slip, is yet to increase till it is likened to a goodly cedar upon a high mountain and eminentis not this an unspeakable joy? Think, also, of that other vision, so weird and strange, of a valley full of dead bones, very many and very dry. What an answer does that vision give to the question of unbelief! Can these dry bones live? How plainly does the Lord answerI will put My Spirit in you and you shall live! When I think of that goodly cedar, I see that the Kingdom will come unto Christ. And when I think of the valley of dry bones, I am comforted concerning the masses around me. We, too, as we walk through this morgue of a city, may hope that life will conquer death and an exceedingly great army, quickened by the Spirit of our God, shall yet rise from these dry bones!

The remarkable vision which lies open before us, is exceedingly reassuring to those who are troubled by reason of the dreadful condition of the timesand which of us is not? The Prophet bids us think of those waters, dreary and dreadful, known by the suggestive name of the Dead Sea! This was the Chamber of Horrors of the land of Canaan! Travelers describe it as a place of utter desolation. Lying in a deep hollow, some 1,300 feet below any other sea, the Dead Sea may be described as a deep sunken into the earth, like the mouth of the abyss. Masses of bitumen float upon its surface and line its shores. Sulfurous exhalations abound and on its banks are hot sulfuric springs. Bathing in its thick brine is not pleasant, for it causes the skin to tingle with its acrid salts long afterwards. Neither is it desirable to linger upon the brink of itthere is nothing to attract you to do so. Very scanty is the vegetation; few are the birds and rare the living things. It is the domain of destruction! The sea is so salty that no fish can live in it and though it has been asserted that smaller organisms exist in it, these have seldom been foundon the contrary, the fish that come down into it from the Jordan die at onceand drifted shellfish are washed up dead upon the bank. Nothing of life loves the brine, the sulfur and the bitumen of the Dead Sea. The slimy lake is, at seasons, dangerous to health, and even to life. Travelers have, of late, crossed it safely at the right seasonbut formerly those who made a voyage upon it rarely returned to tell the tale, or, before long, sickened and died.

The doomed lake bears dark mysteries in its bosomdown deep in its depths lie the drowned cities of the plain, whose infamies provoked the wrath of Heaven and brought upon them a fire-shower such as earth has never known before or since. It may be that the briny waters hide mysteries of sin which were better hiddenfor modern crime is fertile enough in inventions of filthiness and needs no aid from the rottenness of antiquity. Thus, the Dead Sea is a place most dread and dismalthe bath of death, the haunt of despair, the home of desolationand in these respects it is a fit picture of our fallen humanity, a truthful symbol of the whole world which lies in the Wicked One. The world of men is cursed by evils of dreadful name. The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty. There are no mysteries of love in this lost world, but mysteries of sin, of judgement and of the wrath of God are plentiful! The world is a veritable Dead Sea upon a gigantic scale!

Such, also, is the city in which we livemust I call it modern Sodom? Every wave that breaks upon the shore of this human lake now seems to wash up remains of monstrous things unearthly, inhuman, beastly, devilish! Fair islands, here and there, rise out of its dark deepsthe bright creations of Gods Gracebut all around them the waters cast up mire and dirt. God is at work creating new heavens and a new earth and, in the process, forms of beauty are developed. But to this day the old unrenewed city remains a reeking copy of the Hell which burns below. Those who have dared to look into its depths return with horror upon their faces to say that it were not lawful for a man to utter what they have seen! London is a simmering cauldron of vice and crime. O God, how long shall it be?

In certain respects, such is every mans natural heart until he is renewed by Grace. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wickedand may be well typified by the Sea of Death. If we could but look into it with such eyes as God has, what would we *not* see? When we are led to gaze on it through our tears because the Holy Spirit has anointed our eyes with eye salveand we perceive things in their naked truthwe are distressed beyond expression. What a thing is human nature! Mr. Whitefield used to say that man is half beast and half devil. But to my mind he is all beast and all devil if God does not hold him in check by the restraints of fear and the fetters of Law. Let him alone and who can imagine what man would grow to? All manner of iniquities, such as lust, greed, oppression, drunkenness, falsehood, cruelty and murder lurk within the human heart, like wild beasts in the jungle! No man knows what villainy he is capable ofhe only needs to be placed under certain circumstances and he will develop into a very fiend!

Thus the world, the city, the heart are each symbolized by the Dead Sea. Can they ever be purified? Can these waters be healed? According to our text, the Lord says expressly, *the waters shall be healed*. Let us believe His promise and take heart of hope from this good hour! Here is room, my Brothers and Sisters, for the faith which, like charity, believes all things, hopes all things. If any of you desire to exercise a faith by which you can glorify God, believe that the world can yet be delivered from sinbelieve that London can yet be made a holy city! Believe that your own heart, by the power of Gods Spirit, can be purified even as Christ is pure! Even when it seems to be furthest off from hope; even when we are staggered at the sin which surrounds us, we are still to believe that the Lord shall reign forever and everand sin and Satan shall be crushed under our Redeemers feet!

Let us believe in God as God deserves to be believed in. Let us rely implicitly upon Omnipotence and trust without a doubt in that strong will which can never be turned from its purpose of Grace. *The waters shall be heal*edall the brine and bitumen of the Dead Sea shall not stop the Divine work. The putrid waters of London shall be made sweet as the well of Bethlehem! The atrocities of war and oppression shall cease and the reign of evil shall end, for the Lord has purposed it and it shall be done! The kingdoms of this world must become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His ChristLondon must be won for Jesus and our own hearts must be wholly His! *The waters shall be healed*.

Ezekiel saw in vision the means of the healing of the dreary Lake of Deaththe method was simple, but effectual. What he saw represented the Gospel dispensation. The whole system of Divine Gracethe Gospel attended by the Power of the Holy Spirit, the Cross and all the Truths of God that come out of it, the message of salvation, the preaching of faith, the testimony of God the Father to the redeeming work of His Sonall this is the river which flows down into this desert world by its own force and is now making its way into the most horrible guilt and corruption, with set purposethat the waters may be healed!

I want to encourage your faith, this morning, in a time when that faith is very sorely tried. Be of good courage, for the waters, of which we all loathe to drink, shall be purified! The waters shall be healed.

I. And, first, to encourage your faith, I bid you to CONSIDER THE PROMISE. The place where the promise is written, in plain black and white, upon the sacred page, is opened before your eyes. Put your finger on it and let it rest there. Thus says Jehovah, The waters shall be healed.

We feel sure that this Word of prophecy shall be accomplished to the letter in due time because *He that made the promise is able to fulfill it.* Apart from us and all our weaknesses; apart from man and all his wickedness, God, who has spoken the Word, will perform it without fail. The Lord knows what He says. He speaks advisedly and not after the manner of the rash and boastful. Neither do His hands neglect to do what His lips have promised. He brings His supreme power and Godhead to carry out the Word of His mouth. The promise of Grace is the fiat of Omnipotence The waters shall be healed. One *shall* of God is worth all the legions of an empire! Yes, all the forces of the universe. *Shall*, says God, and the event is sure. What can resist the thunder of His Word? Who shall stay His hand, or frustrate His design? Hear, O unbelief, and doubt no more *The waters shall be healed*!

The Lord will fulfill this Word thoroughly. This promise shall not be kept to the ear only, but it shall be fulfilled in the largest conceivable sense. The Prophet, in vision, saw the waters of the Dead Sea so completely healed that there were fish in ityes, swarms of fish, and these fish so many that there was occupation for all those who cast the net, so that they stood from one shore to the other! Where there had been no life before, living things literally swarmed and teemed, as in the great main ocean itself! Brothers and Sisters, when God speaks of what He is about to do in the world, by way of Grace, interpret it very broadlyget no narrow ideas into your minds concerning the Grace of the Infinite! When our Lord Jesus sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied, He will not have seen a handful of men, here and there, gathered to Him, but He will have seen a multitude that no man can number, worshipping the Father, each one of whom shall eternally bless His name for deliverance from sin! What hosts have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb! Ah, Beloved, God will cleanse London perfectly clean when He puts His hand to it! Even this Augean stable shall yet be sacred as the temple of Jehovah! No cleansing of the outside of the cup and platter will God makeHe will purge out secret sins, both in high places and in cottages and He will create for Himself, in this place, a city of priests! Glory be to His name for such a hope! Blessed be the Lord God! He will sanctify our hearts and spiritsin the secret parts He will implant truth and in the hidden parts He will make us to know wisdom!

Observe that when God makes the promise on which my finger is still restingfor I love to press the very words, The waters shall be healed He gives us an idea of how He will do it. *He will fulfill this Word in connection with the present dispensation.* To my mind this is clear enough from the fact that these waters flowed forth from Mount Zion. They flowed originally from that ancient hill of which God had said, Here will I dwell forever. The healing stream proceeded from that sacred place, the Holy of Holies, on Mount Zion, which is the type of Gods indwelling in His Son Jesus and in His Church. The rising river flowed hard by the altar of burnt-offering and became visible to the prophetic eye as it trickled forth from under the closed door at the east end of the Temple. These waters, in vision, were seen to flow towards the *east*to create greenery in the desert and to melt into the Dead Sea. From this I gather that our God means to use His Church for His purposes of Grace. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shined.

We believe that He means to win His ultimate triumphs by the preaching of the Gospel. Whenever the coming of our Lord shall beand oh, that it were today, for we never needed Him more than nowwhenever His Second Advent shall take place, yet it shall not be a dishonor to the Church, but it will be her glory to triumph with the King at her head. It may be that by His personal appearing, she shall win the victory. If our Lord delays His coming, He will send the wondrous influences of the Divine Spirit in much greater abundance than todayand then His Church shall work marvels in the land and salvation shall adorn her! The King shall marshal His troops around the central city of His choice and His Church shall be glorious in the eyes of all men because of the splendor of her Lord!

Do not throw down your weapons and say, Christ must come and wage this war. Perhaps so, but still He will carry on the battle by His chosen people. It is ours to stand fast like British squares in the day of battle. Hold the fort because your Lord is coming! Do not abandon it under some idea that He will work after a novel fashion and dispense with the Gospel and the testimony of His saints. I believe that the Lord Jesus will win the battle on the old linesUp, Guards and at them! Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears, for you must fight as long as you live since the Lord has sworn to have war with Amalek from generation to generation. If you die at your posts, so be itbut never desert them! Till Jesus comes, gird yourselves and fight His battles. Your rest remains and it will be a full reward to you, but you have not yet come to it. By the river of God, which flows this day, *the waters shall be healed*.

Note, carefully, that this Divine promise, the waters shall be healed, *will not put aside instrumentality*, but when it is fulfilled, it will call forth more abundant agencies. The waters run into the Dead Sea and purify its waters. Then fish begin to multiply and mans part comes inThe fishers shall stand upon it from En Gedi even unto En Eglaim. Rest assured that there will be plenty of fishers when, by His healing process, the Lord makes plenty of fishwe shall be fishers of men in right earnest when the times of refreshing shall come from His Presence! The Lord does not intend to put the fishers on one side any more than He will dismiss the reapers in the time of harvest. Mark how the Lord Jesus said, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men. He never intends the Gospel net to be laid aside till all His elect are taken in it and drawn out from the waters of sin and death.

Those will be happy days when the Lord will cause the people to long for the Gospelwhen those horrid wretches who are now lying asoak in the sulfurous lake of sin shall become wholesome fish and invite the fisher to cast his net! In those days many of you, my Brothers, who never handled a net before, will be moved by a holy call to catch men! And you, my Sisters, will have to help us with the rope to draw the net on shore! You slothful Christian men and women who have never gone to sea in this fishery, will then be moved to the work and will say, like Peter, I go afishing. All round the lake, the Prophet saw fishermen and he says of the waters, They shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. Oh, for the day when every Believer will be fishing for the souls of men! God send us that blessed time right speedily!

On the strength of the promise now before us, if there were nothing else, let us look for such a consummation. *The waters shall be healed* purity shall prevailthe Kingdom of God shall come. Our daily prayer shall not go up to Heaven in vain. Let us again cryYour will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven. For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen!

II. Having asked you to consider the promise, I invite you, next, to CONSIDER THE WONDER OF THE HEALING WATERS that we may be helped, thereby, to believe that healing will come, even to the Dead Sea of this present evil world, this present sinful Babylon, this present deceitful heart.

The wonders of the waters which Ezekiel saw, lay in many things. First, consider, *from where they came.* These waters sprang from the midst of Jerusalem, from the secret place of Gods Throneand this was why they were so potent. The 12th verse ascribes the fruit-producing power of the waters to thisbecause they issued out of the sanctuary. In that sanctuary was the Throne of JehovahEternal Sovereignty is the fountainhead of those gracious decrees in which the Lord has purposed to do good to the sons of men. He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy and in the freeness of His sovereign will He has purposed that this Dead Sea of humanity shall yet be healed! The healing waters flow from the Throne of God and of the Lamb. As God is God, He has decreed and purposed to redeem His peopleand in that decree and purpose is the fountain of good to men.

These waters flowed, in the vision, hard by the Altar of Burnt-Offering. Learn from this that the one channel of mercy to the sons of men is by the Sacrifice of Christ. By that Altar, where our great High Priest offered up Himself once and for all, there flows the River of Life. Since Christ has died, the world must yet be blessed. Those drops of blood that fell on Calvary were never gathered up and they have left the broad crimson mark of the redeeming Lord upon this globe of ours and, therefore, His it must be! Mankind shall be delivered from utter destruction because in Christ Jesus, our God has found a Ransom. There is hope in this, that *the waters shall be healed*.

These waters, though they flowed unseen across the Temple area, presently bubbled up from under the threshold of the door of the house. You know who is the Door of the Temple of Godby Him we enter in unto Godand by Him God comes forth in blessing unto us. The waters flowed from below, welling up from the deep that lies under, in the Person and work of our Lord. Salvation comes not to us from any of the sons of men, but from the deeps of Gods own heart. Streams of ever-flowing mercy flow to us through our Lord Jesus Christ! Blessed be His name!

When the waters first appeared, the Prophet saw them trickling from under the closed door and this suggests another interpretation. The east door was shut, according to the vision recorded in the previous chapter, but the waters gushed forth from under the threshold. Old Judaism had its door closed against us Gentiles and yet the Gospel came from it to the nations! Israels door is now shut till the Prince shall come and enter through it, yet from under its threshold, the river of the Gospel flowed to us Gentiles! Holy men of Jewish race came forth to tell of salvation bought with blood and justification perfected for faithand by their means the heathen received the Light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ! The stream began in the eternal purpose, it flowed through the sacrifice of Christ and proceeded out of the midst of that old Temple whose gate was shut! In Abrahams seed, all the nations of the earth are blessed! Surely that which comes from Gods purpose through the sacrifice of Christ cannot be in vain. If God could make old Judaism to bud and blossom with the Gospel, what can He not do? If from under the shut gate the waters came gushing forth in gladsome stream to us perishing heathen, they can still flow to the vilest of the vile!

Note next, as a wonder in connection with these waters, *how they* increased. They deepened so fast that, although there was but a little stream at the beginning, within less than a mile there were waters to swim in! Yes, they had become so deep and broad that the Prophet had to use an expression in the dual, signifying a double streamthe flood had become too deep and wide to be passed over! These waters were not fed by rivulets running into them, but they miraculously grew of themselves. In the vision they advanced from being ankle deep to being up to the knee and then up to the loins, and then they rose to be deep, unfathomable waters! All this the Prophet tested by his own wading into them.

Now, if this happened by Gods power, and if this happened so speedily, we may look for other marvels! The waters shall be healedthe Dead Sea shall yet teem with life! You and I have waded into these waters, have we not? If so, we know how they have increased upon us. Do you not remember when you rejoiced to have received a little Grace, so that it washed your feet and your life was cleansed? Do you not remember how very speedily these waters were up to your knees and you had power with God in prayer? It was but a few hours, more, before your heart was comforted and your inmost spirit was made gladfor the waters were up to your loins. Very soon, perhaps within hours, you were swimming in streams of heavenly love as you found that Christ was yours, your God your Heaven, your All! Do you not see that the God who has done all this for you can do as much for others? Can He not heal the waters of the Dead Sea of our day? Let us hope on, work on and believe in God to the end!

Putting our finger, again, upon that promise, let us rest assured that *the waters shall be healed*.
Rapidlyfor I have to be brief where there is so much to be said notice *what these waters produced*. They began to flow and very soon vegetation came into the wilderness. They flowed into the desert and into the Acacia Vale, as Joel calls it. And soon, on both sides of the river, there were trees and, all of a sudden, the trees were bearing fruit! Wherever the Gospel goes, it carries life, growth and fruit with it. The fruits were for mans nourishmentthese were the ordained food of Paradise, the best provender for man at his best! What food there is in the Gospel! Wherever it flows, the famine of the soul ceases. The Gospel contains all manner of fruit, for all sorts of seasons and appetites. It provides food for the young and food for the old; food for the feeble and food for the strong; food for the happy and food for the sad! This Tree of Life brings forth fruit abundantly, constantly and speedily. The leaves of the Trees of Life contained medicine, full of mystic virtuethey were for the healing of the people. Whatever diseases afflict men, they have but to pluck these leaves, and apply them, and health follows! Oh, that blessed Gospel! It has had a double effect for our good, for it has fed our souls and healed our infirmities! Well might its waters be called a double stream!
Do you not know that it is thus singularly useful? If you have never eaten of its fruit, I must seem to be talking nonsense to you. If you have never been sick and felt the healing power of its leaves, I must seem to mock you with decisions. But if you have been hungering and thirsting, you know what these streams and these fruits areand if you have been sick unto deathyou have found, in Gods Grace, a medicine better than the balm of Gileadand it has made you whole! If the Gospel can thus cause Trees of Life to grow, *the waters shall be healed* the horrible Dead Sea of lust shall yet be purified, the sulfurous breath of vice shall yet be blown away, the death of sin shall yet give place to holy lifeand the Lord, alone, shall be exalted where before He has been dishonored!
As a further wonder, note *where the stream flowed*. One would have thought that such a clear crystal stream as this, proceeding from the Throne of God and of the Lamb, would have sought a pure channel for itself among the gardens of the Lord. But instead we are told, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea which, being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. What a mercy it is that the Gospel goes into the desert! Think of what this island used to be, when our ancestors wandered about in their nakedness among its oak groves. Think of the times when the great wicker image was set up and the Druids surrounded it, and that image was crammed full of hundreds of men and women who were all to be consumed in one dread fire while the people stood by to see their fellow creatures offered to their national Moloch!
That is all over now. No longer is the mistletoe cut with the golden sickle, or the fierce deity appeased with blood of men. The missionary came and preached the Gospel and the Druids ceased out of the land. They were both the legislature and the hierarchy, but they could not stand before the Divine Truth of God! They were everybody *then*, but they are nobody *now*. I do not know what may yet happen here, but I do know thiswhen the Gospel comes, the images, the idols, the filthy things, the cruel things, the horrible things must go. The Gospel is still sent to sinners and it will save sinners. We are to preach the Gospel to every creature, beginning at Jerusalem, and He who bade us do this will not permit us to labor in vain. The River of Life once purified Britain and it will cleanse it yet again*The waters shall be healed*.
The waters ran down into the horrible sea. You would have said, as you stood there, No! No! Do not waste these pure floods in that Hell lake! Do not let them disappear in pollution! Jordan, for many years, has been lavishing her silver streams upon this Dead Sea and it has absorbed them all, but it has not been made a whit the purerand every fish that has drifted down the Jordan has died as soon as it has touched this detestable lake! Do not pour the heavenly river into such a Pandemonium. Many speak thus nowadaysDo not meddle with this vice and wickedness. Do not even hear about it, for it will pollute you! Forget its foul flow, it is sulfurous as Tophetthe smell of such iniquity will choke you! This avoidance of evil is natural and safe, but what is to become of this Dead Sea if the precious crystal stream does not flow into it? Will God abandon our race to the devil? Would He have His Church abandon her function of salting the earth? I do not believe it! I tell you, there is to be a link made by almighty Grace between the Temple at Jerusalem and the very site of Sodom and Gomorraha silver stream is yet to traverse the space between the Throne of the Most High and the foul Dead Seamercy is to triumph over judgement and righteousness is to conquer sin! It shall yet be said on earth and sung in Heaven, Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!
Blessed be His name, that to the very chief of sinners this life stream has flowed and will continue to flow till time shall be no more! Who can diminish this flood? Not even he that glories to drink up Jordan at a draught! Who can divert it? It is not to be turned by the will of man. Who can destroy its saving force? Not even the Dead Sea, itself, shall be able to contend against the healing energy of this wondrous river. Let us begin to sing of the river whose streams make us glad. Let our spirits break out with exultation, for,

the waters shall be healed.
III. Thirdly, for a moment or two I want you to CONSIDER THE EFFICACY OF THE WATERS. I will quit the figure in some measure in order to explain how the Gospel is adapted to heal the wickedness of men. What does the Gospel do? asks one. I answerIn the Gospel we set before men the horrible nature of sin and thus we lead them to turn from it. He does not preach the Gospel who fails to declare that sin slew the Son of God! The Cross unveils the baseness and ingratitude of sin and makes it to appear exceedingly sinful. The Gospel brings men to know the unchangeableness of the Divine Law and that sin is the transgression of that Law and that every sin will have its just recompense of reward. There is no preaching the Gospel unless you declare the terrors of the Lord. God has winked at the times of mans ignorance, but now commands all men, everywhere, to repent, for sin is not a thing to be played with, but a deadly enemy to be shaken off into the fire, as Paul shook off the viper from his hand. All this tends to the removal of human sin.
The Gospel gives man hope and that is a grand thing for the degraded and self-condemned. To have a hope that you can be a better man is a great help in escaping from sin. To hope that you can be renewed and become like the angels of God, though now you are like the devils in Hell, is a great encouragement to turn to God! My Gospel bids me go to the very vilest of the vile and bid him hope. I count no man so loathsome that God may not look upon him in love. What a Gospel this is, for hope is the beginning of amendment, the first letter of the alphabet of reform! Where there is no hope, the sinner gives the reins to his lusts and thinks it wise to enjoy his sin while he may. O Souls, this is the Gospel, indeed, to you, that there is forgivenessforgiveness, even, for loud and crying sins!
The Gospel purifies men because it gives them Christ, Himself, to be their Savior. It brings them the Son of God to be their salvation. It says, Poor Souls, you cannot help yourselves! Here is One on whom help has been laid, even a mighty One! Here is One that took your sin and put it away. Here is One that will be a Friend to you in your worst times of need. Here is One that is bone of your bone and flesh of your fleshlay your burdens down at His dear feet, for He has a fellow feeling for you! Here is a Leader and Commander for you who will lead you forth from the slavery of sin. Come, buckle on your harness to war against your sins, for He will give you power to overcome them. I tell you there is no Gospel like a Gospel that says, Sinner, here is Christ for you! Poor, wearied, burdened, heavy-laden Sinner, take Christ to be yours and you have all you need between this place and Heaven!
Moreover, the Gospel does not merely tell men certain Truths of God, but it gives life, power and Grace to them. There comes with the Gospel an almighty Power which changes the nature of the man. It touches his understanding and enlightens it. It touches his will and changes it. It touches his affections and purifies them. This Power is the Holy Spirit, equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Sonnothing less than very God of very God! This Holy Spirit goes forth with the Gospel, giving hearts of flesh, causing men to be born again and creating all things new. The Truth comes not in Word only, but in the Power of the Holy Spirit. The waters shall be healed by such a Gospel, attended by such a Power as this!
I heard it said the other day, We do not need more preachers, for the supply is more than equal to the demand. But then, the Gospel creates its own demand! Wherever the Gospel goes, it makes men thirsty for itself. It makes men hungry for itself. It does its own work without aid from any foregoing human preparedness! It does not even ask to be left aloneit will effect its purpose even though it is tampered with! Its own essential Omnipotence secures its own preservation, enlargement and success. How I marvel at those who quit the heavenly stream for their own little brooks and streams! A certain divine has lately made a discovery by which he is going to pour a flood of light upon the Bible! The Bible, it seems, has been a dark, mysterious Book to our forefathersthough martyrs died for it and saints were comforted by ityet those poor beings were in the dark for lack of 19th Century discoveries! At length the hour has come, and the man with ita great genius has arisen who has found light with which to illuminate the Bible!
We used to sing
A glory gilds the sacred page,
Majestic like the sun.
It gives a light to every age,
It gives, but borrows none.
Are we to alter our tune and cheerfully accept the contributions of this uncommon person? I think not! Did you ever hear of a madman who, with a common match, determined to show up the sun in the middle of the day? Come here, you that never saw the sun before! It is a dim affair, but we will strike this match and then you shall see what you shall see! Brothers and Sisters, this talk is all foolishnessneither the scientists nor the divines can light up the Light of God! This Book is clear enough of itself and this Gospel is mighty enough of itself without the aid of human wisdom! It will not be cleared, but clouded, by modern doting upon evolution! The river of the Gospel will force its own way despite modern thought! It will win and conquer, whoever may oppose!
The power of the Gospel to cleanse this horrible Lake of Gomorrah lies in thisit touches the heart, it moves the affections, it changes the nature, it renews the entire man! Moreover, it binds men in a holy brotherhood and leads them back to their Father and their God. Its torrent bears away the pride which makes one man stand at a distance from his fellow. It drowns the oppression by which the great man thinks to trample down the poor. Its waves say, as they flow, All you are Brothers and Sisters and One is your Master, even Christ. Thus it works a holy revolution among men and a restoration of the royal rights of Jesus. God send it, send it to us, to London and to the entire worldand to His name shall be the praise!
IV. I must close by noticing, fourthly, THE LESSON OF THE WATERS. What is their voice to us, today?
I think the first lesson is that *God works in very unexpected ways*. There is that Dead Sea. We look down upon it with horror. Can it ever be healed? It never would have occurred to you or to me that yonder Temple, so pure and sacred, would have a spring welling up from under its threshold. Or that it was so little and so tiny that you might cover it with your hand, at first, and yet from that spring should come a sufficient purgation even for Sodoms sea! The Lord knows how to do His own work and He does it by apparently slender means. Who has despised the day of small things? Mark the little band at Jerusalem, when the number of the men was about 120that stream grew within a few days till we read thatthe same day there were added unto them about 3,000 souls. Then another day or so after, we read, And the number of the men was about five thousand. That small beginning most rapidly increased, is increasing and will increase!
The Gospel has the same potency and force about it, today, that it has had in ages past. Always expect the unexpected! Consider that God has great things in reserve. He shot yon arrow, but His quiver is still full! He has scarcely begun the battle! Jehovah of Hosts has stricken here, a blow and, there, a blow, but behold, He comes forth to do greater execution by the sword of His strength! O great Prince, Ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and Your right hand shall teach terrible things! Come quickly, we pray You! What else ought we to learn? As the Dead Sea has to be cleansed by that stream of water, *all that we can do is, first of all, pray*. Pray, Spring up, O Well! Pray that out of the midst of each of us may flow rivers of Living Water. Pray that God would work by His Spirit yet more abundantly. The Holy Spirit has descended we do not need Him to be poured out, but we would realize His power in another fashionwe would descend into the floods of His sacred influenceswe beg of Him to baptize us into His mighty waters and sweep every sin away before Him!
When we have done that, what next have we to do? Why, *begin fishing*. Wherever this stream rushes along, there will be fish. In this London there are fish. Go and fish in the streets, fish in the street corners, fish in any little room you can open! Fish in the great crowds if they will come to you. The stream is breeding swarms of lifebe you fishers of men! God says to His Church today, I have much people in this city. Do not despair! God has an elect company in every parish of London. Get to work by this sea and stand there from En Gedi to En Eglaim, from Highgate to Norwood, from Stratford to Kensington, from one end of the city to the other! God help you to cast the net!
Above all, we must not come to be the marshes of which we read just now. Certain spots of land were overflowed by the river and the sea, but afterwards, they were left high and dry as the stream retired, so that they were neither sea nor dry ground, but marshes. Beware of this! The most abominable beings out of Hell are Christians without Christianity, and there are plenty of them! They have a name to live and are dead. They have no love to men, nor love to God, nor zeal for Christs Gloryand yet they talk of being Christians! Beware of high professors who are unholy livers! These are jackdaws with peacocks feathers stuck upon themand they shall, one day, be stripped of all their plumes. These are not the children of the living God, but children of the devil!
When they are brought before the Judge, to have their true parentage discovered, they shall be cut in sunder! So the great Solomon will ordain! Oh, that you and I may be true-born children of God! May we never be among those mongrels who are neither heathen nor Jews, neither Christians nor outsiders! May we be one thing or the other! Let us heed the voice of the ProphetIf the Lord is God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him. All the blessing that ever comes from Heaven will never save neutrals, for the marshes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt. God deliver us from such a curse, for Jesus Christs sake! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONGenesis 9:8-15; Ezekiel 47:1-12; Revelation 22:1-15.
HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK19, 874, 353.
Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2182 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

JEHOVAH-SHAMMAHA GLORIOUS NAME FOR THE NEW YEAR
NO. 2182

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, JANUARY 4, 1891, *DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.
The name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord Is There [or in the Hebrew, Jehovah-Shammah.]
Ezekiel 48:35

THESE words may be used as a test as well as a text. They may serve for examination as well as consolation and, at the beginning of a year, they may fulfill this useful double purpose. In any case they are full of marrow and fatness to those whose spiritual taste is purified. It is esteemed by the Prophet to be the highest blessing that could come upon a city that its name should be, JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH, The Lord Is There. Even Jerusalem, in its best estate, would have this for its crowning blessingnothing could exceed this. Do *we* reckon the Presence of the Lord to be the greatest of blessings? If in any gathering, even of the humblest people, the Lord God is known to be present in a peculiarly gracious manner, should *we* make a point of being there? Very much depends upon our answer to these queries.

Doubtless many would be greatly pleased if there were no God at all, for in their hearts they say, No God. God is not to them a father, a friend, a trust, a treasure. If they were to speak from their hearts and could hope for a satisfactory answer, they would ask, Where can I flee from His Presence? If a spot could be found where there would be no God, what a fine building speculation might be made there! Millions would emigrate to No Gods Land, and would feel at ease as soon as they trod its godless shore! There they could do just as they liked, without fear of future reckoning.

Now, Friend, if you would escape from the Presence of God, your state is clearly revealed by that fact. There can be no Heaven for you, for Heaven is where the Lords Presence is fullness of joy. If you could be happy to be far off from God, I must tell you what your fate will be. You are now going away from God in your heart and desire and, at last, the great Judge of All will say to you, Depart, you cursedand you will then be driven from the Presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.

I know that there is a company who can truly say that they feel only happy when they are conscious that God is with them. The place where they meet with the Lord is very dear and precious to them because of His unveilings. The memory of holy convocations is sweet because the Lord was among them. They would not care to go where God is not. If there were a place forsaken of God, however happy and full of merriment men might think it, they would not be found among its guests. Where we cannot enjoy *Gods* company, we will not go. Our motto isWith God, anywhere. Without God, nowhere. In Him we live, and move, and have our being and, therefore, it would be *death* to us to be apart from God! Without God we should be without hope. Ah, my dear Friend, whatever your difficulties, trials and sorrows, all is well with you if God is your delight and His Presence your joy! But, however high your temporal enjoyments may rise, it is all wrong with you if you can rest away from the God of Grace. The child must be in a sad state of heart when he does not care to have his fathers approving smile. Things must be terribly wrong with any creature when it can be content to walk contrary to its Creator. Nothing but the corruption of the heart could permit any man to be at ease away from God.

Will you permit these thoughts to saturate you for a little time? I have spoken them with the desire that each one of us may ask himself, Is the Presence of God my delight? If so, I am His, and He will be with me. On the contrary, Is the Presence of God a matter of indifference, or even of dread? Then my condition is one of guilt, disease and danger. May the Lord, in His infinite mercy, set me right!

This much may stand as a preface, but it must not be treated as most prefaces are, namely, left unread, or glanced over and forgotten. I pray you, carry it with you all along.

I. Now kindly notice that, according to our text, THE PRESENCE OF GOD IS THE GLORY OF THE MOST GLORIOUS PLACE. The Prophet Ezekiel has been telling us many remarkable things which I shall not attempt to explain to youand my chief reason for not doing so is the fact that I do not understand them, myself. Even if I could open up every dark saying, now is not the time to go into an explanation of all the sublime mysteries which were seen by the eagle eye of Ezekiel, for I seek present, practical edificationand this we can gain in an easier way. It is clear from the text that when God shall bless His ancient people and restore them to their landand the Temple shall be rebuilt and all the glory of the latter days shall arrivethis will still be the peculiar glory of it all, that, *the Lord is there*. The Prophet works up a climax and closes his Book of prophecy with these glorious words, *the Lord is there*.

What a glorious state this world was in at the very first, *in the age of Paradise*, for the Lord was there! Our glorious Creator, having taken the first days of the week to make the world and fit it up for man, did not bring forward His dear child until the house was built and furnished and supplied for his use and happiness! He did not put him in the Garden to dress it till the roses were blooming and the fruits were ripe! When the table was furnished, He introduced the guest by saying, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. The Lord put man, not in an unreclaimed plot of soil where he must hunger till he could produce a harvestbut into an Eden of delights where he was at home with creatures of every sort to attend him! He had not to water dry lands, nor need he thirst, himself, for four rivers flowed through his royal domain, rippling over sands of gold. I might say much of that fair garden of innocence and bliss, but the best thing I could say would be the Lord was there! The Lord God walked in the Garden in the cool of the day and communed with manand man, being innocent, held high converse with his condescending Maker! The top stone of the bliss of Paradise was this allcomprehending privilegethe Lord is there.

Alas, that has vanished. Withered are the bowers of Edenthe trail of the serpent is over all landscapes, however fair. Yet days of mercy came and Gods saints, in divers places, found choice spots where they could converse with Heaven. *In the first days,* our gracious God spoke with His chosen ones in their daily walk, as Enoch; or under the oak, as Abraham; or by the brook, as Jacob; or before the bush, as Moses; or near the city wall, as Joshua. Wherever it might be, the place became to them the gate of Heaven, for the Lord was there! Amid a torrent of sin and sorrow, you may cross the stream of time upon the steppingstones of the places marked, JEVOHAH-SHAMMAH. The Lords delights were with the sons of men and to them, *nothing* brought such bliss as to find that the Lord still would be mindful of man and visit him.

In the days when God had called out unto Himself a chosen nation, *He revealed Himself at Sinai*, when the mountain was altogether on a smoke and even Moses said, I do exceedingly fear and quake. Well might he feel a holy awe, for the Lord was there! I will not dwell upon the Glory of the tabernacle that was pitched in the wilderness, with its costly furniture and its instructive rites, for, after all, the Glory of the tabernacle was that the Lord was there! A bright light shone between the wings of the cherubim and so the Psalmist, in later days spoke unto the Lord saying, You that dwells between the cherubim shine forth. Above the sacred tent was the pillar of fire by night and the pillar of cloud by dayan emblem of the constant Presence of God, for all through the wilderness His glorious marching was in the center of the armies of His Israel. The desert sand glowed with the blaze of the present Deity! No spot on earth was so like to Heavens high courts as that wilderness the Lord, Himself, led His people like a flock. Holy was Horeb, for the Lord was there! Then were the days of Israels espousals, for the Most High tabernacled among her tribes and made them a people near unto Him.

In Canaan, itself, the days of sorrow came when the nation went after other gods and the Lord became a stranger in the land. *When He returned, and delivered His people by the Judge*s, then the nations knew that Israel could not be trampled on, for the Lord was there. This was the Glory of Davids reign. Then the Lord made bare His arm and the enemies of His chosen were driven like snow from the bleak sides of Salmon when the rough blast carries it away. This was the shout of the joyful people, The Lord of Hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our refuge! Never were the hills of Judah more fruitful, nor the vales of Sharon more peaceful, nor the homes of Israel more restful, nor the sons of Zion more valiant than when to the harp of David the song was raised, They have seen Your goings, O God; even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary. This is the hill which God desires to dwell in; yes, the Lord shall dwell in it forever.

You remember how, in later ages, when Solomon was crowned and his reign of peace had been inaugurated, *he built for God a Temple* adorned with gold and precious stones, and all manner of cunning, work of the artificer? But it was not that glittering roof, it was not those massive pillars of brass in the forefront, it was not the hecatombs of bullocks whose blood was poured forth at the altar which were the glory of the Temple on Mount Zion. Beautiful for situation, it was the joy of the whole earth, but its Glory lay in thisGod is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early. The excellence of the Temple was seen when, on the opening day, the Lord revealed Himself and the cloud filled the House of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloudfor the Glory of the Lord had filled the House of the Lord. Little remains for man to do when in, very deed, the Lord dwells in the midst of His saints. Apart from priests and ceremonies, that place is sacred wherein the Lord Most High has His abode. Say of any place, Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord Is There, and be it tent or temple, you have spoken glorious things of it!

I almost tremble while I remind you of the truest Temple of God *the body of our Lord*. The nearest approach of Godhead to our manhood was when there was found, wrapped in swaddling bands and lying in a manger, that Child who was born, that Son who was given, whose name was called, Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. As for you, O Bethlehem, favored above all the towns of earth, out of you He came, who is Immanuel, God With Us! Verily, Your name is Jehovah-Shammah! All along, through 30 years and more of holy labor, ending in a shameful death, God was, in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. In the gloom of Gethsemane, among those somber olives, when Jesus bowed and in His prayer sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground, He was seen of angels as the Son of God bearing human sin! Speak of Gethsemane and we tell you God was there! Before Herod, Pilate, Caiaphas and on the Crossthe Lord was there! Though, in a sense, there was the hiding of God, and Jesus cried, Why have You forsaken Me? yet in the deepest sense Jehovah was there, bruising the great Sacrifice. The thick darkness made a veil for the Lord of Glory and behind it, He that made all things bowed His head and said, It is finished. God was in Christ Jesus on the Cross, and we, beholding Him, feel that we have seen the Father. O Calvary, we say of you, The Lord is there.

Here I might fitly close, for we can mount no higher, but yet we could not afford to leave out those other dwellings of the Invisible Spirit who still, by His Presence, makes holy places even in this unholy world! We have to remind you that God is the Glory of the most glorious living thing that has been on the face of the earth since our Lord was here. And what is that? I answer, Jesus is gonethe Prophets are gone and we have no Temple, no human priest, no material Holy of Holies

Jesus, wherever Your people meet,
There they behold Your Mercy Seat!
Wherever they seek You, You are found,
And every place is hallowed ground.

And yet there is a special place where God dwells among men and that is *in His Church.* He has but oneone Church, chosen by eternal election, redeemed by precious blood, called out by the Holy Spirit and quickened into newness of lifethis, as a whole, is the dwelling place of the Covenant God! Because God is in this Church, therefore the gates of Hell shall not prevail against her.

The Lord is there might be said of the Church in all ages. I have seen the crypts and underground chapels of the catacombs. And it made me feel that they were glorious places when I remembered that the Lord God was there, by His Spirit, with His suffering peoplewhen holy hymn and Psalm and solemn prayer went up from the very heart of the earth from men who were hunted to the death by their foesthe Lord was there! In those dreary excavations, unvisited by sunlight and wholesome air, God was as He was *not* in the palaces of kings and is not in the cathedrals of priests! In this land of ours, when a few people met together, here and there, to hear the Gospel and to worship, they made cottages, caves and hollows in the woods to be holiness unto the Lord.

Yes, and when crowds met beneath your Gospel oaks, or gathered together by the hillside to listen to the pure Word of Grace, the Lord was there and souls were saved and sanctified! When the Puritans solemnly conversed together of the things of God and held their little conventicles for fear of their adversariesGod was there! On Scotlands bleak moors and mosses, when the Covenanters gathered in the darkness and the storm for fear of Claverhouse and his dragoonsGod was there! Those who wrote in those days tell us that they never knew such seasons in days of peace as they enjoyed among the hills, amid the heather, or by the brookfor Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord was there! And so onward, to this very day, wherever the chosen of God lift up holy hands and worship Him, whether it is in cathedral or in barn, beneath the blue sky or beneath a thatched roofanywhere and everywhere when the heart is right and the soul adores the living Lord, this is the special Glory of the place Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord Is There!

Flying forward, as with a doves wing, to the future that is drawing near, we think of the Truth of God that there is to be a *millennial age*a time of glory, peace, joy, truth and righteousness. But what is to be the Glory of it? Why this, Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord Is There! The Lord Jesus Christ will come and begin His personal reign on earth among His ancients. In like manner, as He went up into Heaven, and the disciples saw Him, so will He descend a second time, to be seen here among men. And His glorious Presence shall fashion the golden age, the thousand years of peace! Then shall the nations shout, The Lord Is Come! What hallelujahs will then rise to Heaven! Welcome, welcome, Son of God! How will all His faithful ones rejoice with unspeakable joy and sing and sing again, for now the day of their reward has come and they shall shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father! In all the Glory of the latter days everything is wrapped up in this one phrase, the Lord is there.

Oh, come, You Day-Spring, come and cheer Our spirits by Your advent here!
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And deaths dark shadows put to flight!
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

Up yonder, where many of our beloved ones have already goneup yonder, within that gate of pearl where eyes cannot, as yet, see, what is it that makes *Heaven* with all its supreme delights? Not harps of angels, nor blaze of seraphim! Just this one fact, the Lord is there. What must it be to be with God? O soul that loves Him, what will your fullness of pleasure be when you shall dwell with Him for whom your soul is hungering and thirsting! What joy to be forever with the Lord! This perfect bliss may be ours this very day! We little know how near we are to our glorification with our Lord. The veil is very thin that parts the sanctified from the glorified

One gentle sigh, the soul awakes
We scarcely can say, hes gone,
Before the ransomed spirit takes
Its mansion near the Throne.

The joy and glory of those Divine mansions is that the Lord is there. Heavens loftiest peak shines forever in this clear lightThe Lord God and the Lamb are the Light thereofthe Lord is there.

Enough of this. I have proved my point, that the Glory of the most glorious place is that the Lord is there.
II. Suffer me for a few minutes to speak to you upon another point THE PRESENCE OF GOD IS THE BEST PRIVILEGE OF HIS CHURCH. It is her glory that the Lord is there. Note this, and mark it well. Brothers and Sisters, we as a Church have grown to great numbers and we are not deficient, either, in gifts or in Graces, or in work for our Lord. But let me solemnly remind you always that our chief, our only strength, must always lie in thisthe Lord is there. If the Lord should depart from us, as He has gone from churches which are now apostate, what an abyss opens before us! If He should take His Holy Spirit from us, even as the Glory departed from the Temple at Jerusalem, then our ruin would become a thing to mention with dread, a case to be quoted for a warning to future generations! O Lord, our God, take not Your flight! Abide with us, we pray You! Our only hope lies in Your making the place of Your feet glorious among us!
If the Lord is among us, the consequences will be, first, *the conservation of true doctrine*. The true God is not with a lieHe will not give His Countenance to falsehood. Those who preach other than according to His Word, abide not under His blessing and are in great danger of His curse. If any man speaks another gospel (which is not another, but there are some that trouble us), God is not with himand any transient prosperity which he may enjoy will be blown away as the chaff. God is with those who faithfully speak His Truth, hold it devoutly, believe it firmly and live upon it as their daily bread. May it always be said of this Church, the Lord is there, and, therefore, they are sound in the faith, reverent towards Holy Scripture and zealous for the honor of Christ! Trust-deeds and confessions of faith are useful in their way, even as laws are useful to society, but as laws cannot secure obedience to themselves, so articles of belief cannot create faith, or secure honesty. And to men without conscience, they are not worth the paper they are written upon. No subscription to articles can keep out the unscrupulous! Wolves leap into the fold however carefully you watch the door. The fact is, the most of people say, Yes, that doctrine is in the creed and is not to be denied, but you need not *preach* it. Put it on the shelf as an ornament and let us hear no more about it. Truth must be written on the *heart* as well as in the book! If the Lord is among His people, they will cling to the eternal Truths of God and love the doctrine of the Cross, not by force of law, but because Divine Truth is the life of their souls.
Where God is present, *the preservation of purity* will be found. The Church is nothing if it is not holy. It is worseit is a den of thieves! Setting the seal of its pestilent example upon evil living, it becomes the servant of Satan and the destroyer of souls. Who is to keep the Church pure? None but God, Himself. If the Lord is there, holiness will abound and fruits of the Spirit will be seen on all sides. But if the Lord is once withdrawn, then flesh and blood will rule and gender towards corruption, after its own mannerand the church will become a synagogue of formalists. Pray, my Brothers and Sisters, continually, that the Lord may dwell in our Zion, to maintain us in all holy obedience and purity of life!
Where God is, *there is the constant renewal of vitality*. A dead church is a reeking Golgotha, a breeding place of evils, a home of devils. The tombs may be newly whitewashed, but they are none the less open sepulchers, haunts of unclean spirits. A Church all alive is a little Heaven, the resort of angels, the Temple of the Holy Spirit. In some of our churches everybody seems to be a little colder than everybody else. The members are holy icicles! A general frost has paralyzed everybody and though some are colder than others, yet all are below zero! There are no flowing rills of refreshment. Everything is bound hard and fast with the frost of indifference. Oh, that the Lord would send forth His wind and melt the glaciers! Oh, that the Spirit of God would chase winter out of every heart and every church! No human power can keep a church from the frostbite which numbs and kills. Unless the Lord is there, growth, life, warmth are all impossible. You that make mention of the Lord, keep not silent and give Him no rest, but cry day and night to Him, O Lord, abide with us! Go forth with our armies! Make us to be the living children of the living God!

When the Lord is there, next, *there is continuing power*. With God there is power in the ministry, power in prayer, power in all holy work. We may do a vast deal of work and yet nothing may come of it, but, on the other hand, we may only be able to do comparatively little and yet great results may flow from it, for *results* depend not on the quantity of the machinery, but on the Presence of the Lord!
Do you not all know persons who are not peculiarly gifted and yet are eminently useful? You do not remark anything about them that is specially noticeable and yet their whole career enlists attention by its power. Their words are effective, for there is character behind them. A consistent life gives force to a plain testimony. It is not so much what is said as who says it! And that is not allGod, Himself, is at the back of the man who is living for Him. He causes him to speak in His name so that none of his words fall to the ground. Is it not said of the godly, His leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper? This is so with every Church where the Lord abides. His Presence makes it a power with its children and adherents, a power with the neighborhood and a power with the age. Its example, its testimony, its effort is effective! God uses it and, therefore, it answers its end. The power is with Godbut the Church is the instrument by which that power exercises itself. He uses a living people for the display of living power and He gives to them, both life and power, more and more abundantly. As we desire power with which to labor for God, we must pray that the God of Power will remain in our midst.
Furthermore, whenever it can be said of an assembly, the Lord is there, *unity will be created and fostered*. Show me a church that quarrels, a church that is split up into cliques, a church that is divided with personal ambitions, contrary doctrines and opposing schemesand I am sure that the Lord is *not* there. Where there are envying, jealousies, suspicions, backbiting and dislikes, I know that the Holy Dove, who hates confusion, has taken His flight. God is Love and He will only dwell where love reigns. He is the God of Peace and will not endure strife. The children of God should be knit together. It would be a shameful sight, indeed, should children of His family fall out and chide and fight. Saints who dwell with God love each other with a pure heart, fervently. Some professors act as if they hated each other! I may not say, with a pure heart, but I will say, fervently. Where God is present, the Church is edified in love and grows up, like a building fitly framed together, to be a holy Temple in the Lord. Oh, for more of this unity!
Where the Lord is, *there is sure to be happiness*. What meetings we have when the Lord is here! It is a Prayer Meeting, but when you have said that, you have not fully described it, for it is far more. It was an unusual meeting for prayer, for, God being there, every prayer was spoken into His ear and all the desires and petitions of the saints were prompted by His Holy Spirit! Why, the very room was lit up with the Glory of the Lord! And whether we were in Heaven or not, we could hardly tell! What happy times we have in preaching the Word of the Lord when Gods own Presence is realized! His paths drop fatness. What joyous seasons we have frequently enjoyed at the Communion Table! The provision is but bread and wine, but when, by faith, we perceive the real and spiritual Presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the breaking of the bread we eat His flesh, and in the fruit of the vine we drink His blood! When we have gathered in the Lords Presence we have sung
No beams of cedar or of fir
Can with Your courts on earth compare!
And here we wait, until Your love
Raises us to nobler seats above.

At the Masters Table I have often been so blessed that I would not have exchanged places with Gabriel! The Lord was therewhat more could I desire? Joy, delight, rapture, ecstasywhat word shall I use?all these have waited around the Table of Fellowship, as musicians at a kings banquet. If God is there, our Heaven is there!

III. I shall now close by noticing, in the third place, that since this Presence of God is the Glory of the most glorious place and the choice privilege of the most privileged, it is our exceeding joy. THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD IS OUR DELIGHT IN EVERY PLACE.

We will think of *our own dear homes*. What a delightful family we belong to if it can be said of our house, Jehovah-Shammah, The Lord Is There! Has it a thatched roof and a stone floor? What does it matter? The father of the family lives near to God and his wife rejoices to be his fellowhelper in prayer, while the children grow up to honest toil and honorable service. Assuredly that cottage home is dear to God and becomes a place where angels come and go! Because God is there, every window looks towards the Celestial City. It is a comfort that we need not go across the road to morning prayer, or step out every evening to worship, for we are priests, ourselves, and have a family altar at home where the incense burns both morning and night. We talk not of matins and vespers, but we glory that the Lord is there when we bow the knee as a household!

What is more delightful than to gather round the family hearth to hear the Scriptures read and listen to the senior, as he talks to the younger ones, of what God has done for him and what the Lord is waiting to give to all who trust Him? Free from all formality, family prayer makes a house a temple, a family a church and every day a holy day! Truly, I may say of families of this kind, wherever they dwell, that it is none other but the House of God, and it is the very gate of Heaven, for, the Lord is there. Friend, is God in your house? If it has no family prayer, it has no roof to it. There is no true joy in domestic life unless the Lord is there. All else is fiction! God alone is true delight. I charge you, if your homes are not such that God could come to them, set your houses in order and say, As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Will you dare to dwell where God could not lodge with you? May all men say of your home, The Lord is there!

Here is *a Christian who lives alone*, altogether apart from family life. All his dear ones are dead, or far away. In his lone chamber, when he bows his knee in secret prayer, or whenever he takes his walk abroad to meditate, if he is, indeed, a true lover of the Lord Jesus, the Lord is there. Wherever the Believers lot is cast, if he lives in fellowship with Christ, he may say of his quiet room, or of the garden walk, or even of the stable or the loft, Jehovah-Shammah, The Lord Is There. Many a humble attic is a right royal residence, for, the Lord is there. Better Pauls inner dungeon at Philippi, with his feet fast in the stocksand the Presence of the Lord than the most grand apartment of Caesars palace and an unknown god! The Lord is very gracious to His lonely ones. They can say, And yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. In a hospital, or in a workhouse what does it matter if Jehovah is at your side to cheer you?

Some of us can bear witness that we have had the nearest approaches of God to our souls in *times of intolerable pain* and even in seasons of intense depression of spirit as to earthly things. I was brought low, and the Lord helped me, said David. And we can say the same. The Lord has said, When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, as much as to say, If I am not with you anywhere else, I will be with you then. In the furnace, one like unto the Son of God was seen. If Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego never had that glorious fourth Person in their company before, they had Him when they were cast into the midst of the glowing coals! Jehovah-Shammah makes a seven-times-heated furnace a pleasant arbor! We may say of the refining fire, of the threshing floor and of the oilpress, God has been there! In the time of trouble He has been a very present help. One might almost say, Send me back to my prison, as one *did* say who lost Gods Presence after he had gained his liberty! One might well cry, Ah, let me have back my pain if I may again overflow with the joy of the Lords Presence.

Dear Friends, I thank God that you and I know what it is to enjoy the Presence of God in a great many different ways. *When two or three of the people of God meet together* and talk to one another about the things of God, the Lord is never away. You remember that blessed text, They that feared the Lord spoke often, one to another. They had holy talks about heavenly things. It was such sweet conversation that the Lord, Himself, turned eaves-dropper and listened and heard. What He heard pleased Him so well that He, then and there, made a note of it. Yes, and wrote it down and ordered that a book of remembrance should be preserved for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. Was not this sure evidence of His most gracious Presence? John Bunyan knew that God was there when he went about tinkering and came to Bedfordand there were three godly women sitting in the sun, at workand as they worked they talked so sweetly that the tinker stood and listened and was drawn to better things! By such means he became a Believer and a preacherand the writer of the Pilgrims Progresswhich has so refreshed us all. The Lord was there and, therefore, he dreamed a heavenly dream in Bedford jail. Wherever His people meet, the Lord is graciously near. Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.

Yes, but when Christian people *go forth to work*when you come to your Sunday school, or go out with your bundle of tracts, to hand them out in your district, or when you join a little band and stand on the street corner, yonder, and lift up your voice in the name of Jesusyou may expect, if you go with prayer and faith, that it shall be written, JehovahShammah, The Lord Is There. It is only a young man standing up in a cottage to speak and he has not much to say, yet there are penitential tears and broken heartsit is so, for God is there! It is only a humble woman speaking to a few persons of her own class and yet angels are rejoicing over a repenting sinneryes, because God is there! It is only a little room in one of our back streets and the city missionary has come in. There are a dozen or two of the neighbors called together and he is talking of Jesus and His loveoh, but if the Lord is there, do not tell me that the missionary is not in the Apostolic successionhe need not

claim it, he is, himself, an Apostle of God to those poor people! He needs no gorgeous vestments, nor the swell of an organ, nor even the thunders of the multitude as they raise the solemn hymn! The few so simple and so poor have *God with them* and it is enough! Wherever you are seeking to do good, in prayerful dependence upon the Holy Spirit, it shall be said the Lord is there.

And now, from this time forth, Beloved, you that fear God and think upon His name, *wherever you go*, let it be said, Jehovah-Shammah, The Lord Is There. I often feel sorry when the Sabbath is nearly over and so do many of you. I know you wake on Monday morning and take those shutters down, again, or go off to that workshop where you suffer so much ridicule, or return to the ordinary grind of daily labor and mix up with so many of the ungodlyand you do it mournfully. Now, pray that you may keep up the Sabbath tone all week! Make every place, wherever you go, to be the House of God. A dear Brother of ours went to a shop where he worked with four ungodly menand his Lord went with him. It was not long before we had the privilege of baptizing that friends master and all his shop mates, for the Lord was there! The other day there came a fresh man to work who could not bear to hear a word upon religion, but our Brother was the means of his conversion, too, and the new man is coming among us, warm with his first love! Our Brother made up his mind that he was not going to be conquered by any scoffers, but, on the contrary, he was determined to conquer them for Christ! He will not yield to the influences of sin, but he resolves, in the name of the Lord, that evil influences shall yield to the power of the Truth of God and to the attractions of the Cross. Write across your workshop, The Lord is here. If you cannot do it literally, do it spiritually, Jehovah-Shammah, The Lord Is There.

Do not be found anywhere where you could not say that the Lord was there! If you are called into the world in the pursuit of your daily vocation, cry unto the Lord, If Your Spirit goes not with me, carry me not up hence. Determine that you will have the Spirit of God with you and, if it is in busy Cheapside, or in the lonesome country while you are hoeing the turnips or attending to a flock of sheepin any field, any street, or any roomit shall be said that God is there! Take Jesus with you when you go and, when you come home, may His Spirit still be with you! God grant that it may be so! The Holy Spirit can work you to this!

What shall I say to those who do not know the Lord and do not care for Him? O Friend, the day will come in which Jesus Christ will say to you, I never knew you: depart from Me, you workers of iniquity. Do not let Him say that, but, tonight, commence an acquaintance with Him. May His Holy Spirit help you to do so! I am sure the Lord Jesus Christ could not say to me, I never knew you. It is impossible, because I could reply to Him, Never knew *me*, Lord? Why, I have been to You with so many burdens. I have run to You with so many troubles that I am sure You know me as one knows a beggar whom he has relieved many times a day

Do You ask me who I am?
Ah, my Lord! You know my name.
You remember me, for in my despair I cried to You and You did relieve me of my burden! You know me, for in my sorrow, my broken heart found no comfort but in You! You have known me all these years in which I have had to cry to You for something to preach about, and for help while

preaching. You know how I have had to come to You and confess my failures, and mourn my shortcomings, and lament my sins, and trust in Your blood for cleansing.

My Lord cannot say that He does not know *me*, for He has known my soul in adversity. Blessed be His name, I know Him and lean all my weight upon Him! They that know Him shall be with Him and He will receive them unto Himself foreverand this shall be their GloryJehovahShammah, The Lord Is There. With Him shall they dwell, world without end! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONIsaiah 45:8-25. **HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK774, 847, 806.**

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON:
DEAR FRIENDSIn this, the beginning of another year, I find myself in Mentone gradually recovering health after a period of pain and weakness. To begin Volume 37 of weekly sermons has fallen to the lot of no other man. I am grateful for the peculiar privilege and all the more so because all the previous 36 volumes continue to be purchased and read, and preached. I beg each friendly reader to breathe a prayer for the preacher and for these hundreds of sermons, that the Lord may use both the living voice and the printed page to His own Glory and to the salvation of men. Mans thoughts change, but the Word of the Lord endures foreverand this is the Word which in these sermons is preached to men. May the Holy Spirit acknowledge the testimony!
Wishing to all my readers A HAPPY NEW YEAR,
I am their servant for Christs sake,
C. H. SPURGEON.

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