

THE ABIDING OF THE SPIRIT THE GLORY OF THE CHURCH NO. 1918

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 5, 1886,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, says the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua, Son of Josedech, the High Priest, and be strong, all you people of the land, says the Lord, and work: for I am with you, says the Lord of Hosts: according to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remains among you: fear you not.”
Haggai 2:4, 5.*

SATAN is always doing his utmost to stop the work of God. He hindered these Jews from building the Temple and today he endeavors to hinder the people of God from spreading the Gospel. A spiritual temple is to be built for the Most High and if, by any means, the Evil One can delay its uprising, he will stop at nothing. If he can take us off from working with faith and courage for the Glory of God, he will be sure to do it. He is very cunning and knows how to change his argument and yet keep to his design—he little cares how he works, so long as he can hurt the cause of God. In the case of the Jewish people on their return from captivity he sought to prevent the building of the Temple by making them selfish and worldly, so that every man was eager to build his own house and cared nothing for the House of the Lord. Each family pleaded its own urgent needs. In returning to a long-deserted and neglected land, much had to be done to make up for lost time and, to suitably provide for itself, every family needed all its exertions. They carried this thrift and self-providing to a great extreme and secured for themselves luxuries, while the foundations of the Temple, which had been laid years before, remained as they were, or became still more thickly covered up with rubbish.

The people could not be made to bestir themselves to build the House of God, for they answered to every exhortation, “The time is not come; the time that the Lord’s House should be built.” A more convenient season was always looming in the future, but it never came. Just now it was too hot. Further on it was too cold. At one time the wet season was just setting in and it was of no use to begin. And soon after, the fair weather required that they should be in their own fields. Like some in our day, they saw to themselves, first, and God’s turn was very long in coming—therefore the Prophet cried, “Is it time for you, O you, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this House lie waste?”

By the mouth of His servant, Haggai, stern rebukes were uttered and the whole people were awakened. We read in verse 12 of the first chapter, "Then Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua, the son of Josedech, the High Priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and the words of Haggai the Prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the Lord." All hands were put to the work. Course after course of stone began to rise and then another stumbling block was thrown in the way of the workers. The older folks remarked that this was a very small affair compared with the temple of Solomon, of which their fathers had told them. In fact, their rising building was nothing at all and not worthy to be called a Temple.

The Prophet describes the feeling in the verse which precedes our text. "Who is left among you that saw this House in her first glory? And how do you see it now? Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?" Feeling that their work would be very poor and insignificant, the people had little heart to go on. Being discouraged by the humiliating contrast, they began to be slack and, as they were quite willing to accept any excuse, and here was an excuse ready-made for them, they would soon have been at a standstill had not the Prophet met the wiles of the archenemy with another Word from the Lord. Nothing so confounds the Evil One as the Voice of the Eternal!

Our Lord, Himself, defeated Satan by the Word of the Lord and the Prophet Haggai did the same. The subtle craft of the enemy is defeated by the Wisdom of the Most High which reveals itself in plain words of honest statement. The Lord cuts the knots which bind His people and sets them at liberty to do His will. He did this by assuring them that He was with them. Twice the Voice was heard—"I am with you, says the Lord of Hosts." They were also assured that what they built was accepted and that the Lord meant to fill the new house with Glory—yes, He meant to light it up with a Glory greater than that which honored the Temple of Solomon! They were not spending their strength for nothing, but were laboring with Divine help and favor! Thus they were encouraged to put their shoulders to the work—the walls rose in due order and God was glorified in the building up of His Zion.

The present times are, in many respects, similar to those of Haggai. History certainly repeats itself within the Church of God as well as outside of it and, therefore, the messages of God need to be repeated. The words of some almost-forgotten Prophet may be re-delivered by the watchman of the Lord in these present days and be a timely word for the present emergency. We are not free from the worldliness which puts self first and God nowhere, otherwise our various enterprises would be more abundantly supplied with the silver and the gold which are the Lord's, but which even professing Christians reserve for themselves! When this selfish greed is conquered, then comes in a timorous depression. Among those who have escaped from worldliness, there is apt to be too much despondency and men labor feebly as for a cause which is doomed to failure. This last evil must be cured. I pray that our text may, this morning, flame from the Lord's own mouth with all the fire which once blazed about it. May faint

hearts be encouraged and drowsy spirits be awakened, as we hear the Lord say, "*My Spirit remains among you: fear you not.*"

I shall enter fully upon the subject, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, by calling your attention to *discouragement forbidden*. Then I shall speak of *encouragement imparted* and, having done so, I shall linger with this blessed text which overflows with comfort and shall speak, in the third place, of *encouragement further applied*. Oh that our Lord, who knows how to speak a word in season to him that is weary, may cheer the hearts of seekers by what shall be spoken under this last head of my discourse!

I. To begin with, here is DISCOURAGEMENT FORBIDDEN. Discouragement comes readily enough to us poor mortals who are occupied in the work of God, seeing it is a work of faith, a work of difficulty, a work above our capacity and a work much opposed.

Discouragement is very natural—it is a native of the soil of manhood. To believe is supernatural—faith is the work of the Spirit of God. To doubt is natural to fallen men, for we have within us an evil heart of unbelief. It is abominably wicked, I grant you, but still it is natural, because of the downward tendency of our depraved hearts. Discouragement towards good things is a weed that grows without sowing. To be faint-hearted and downcast happens to some of us when we are half drowned in this heavy atmosphere, and it also visits us on the wings of the east wind. It takes little to make some hands hang done—a word or a look will do it. I do not, therefore, excuse it, but rather I condemn myself for having a nature prone to such evil.

Discouragement may come and does come to us, as it did to these people, from a consideration of the great things which God deserves at our hands and the small things which we are able to render. When in Haggai's days the people thought of Jehovah and of a Temple for Him—and then looked upon the narrow space which had been enclosed and the common stones which had been laid for foundations—they were ashamed. Where were those hewn stones and costly stones which, of old, Solomon brought from afar? They said within themselves, "This house is unworthy of Jehovah—why are we laboring thus?" Have you not felt the depressing weight of what is so surely true? Brothers and Sisters, all that we do is little for our God—far too little for Him that loved us and gave Himself for us. For Him that poured out His soul unto death on our behalf, the most splendid service, the most heroic self-denial are all too little and we feel it is so.

Alabaster boxes of precious ointment are too insignificant a gift. It does not occur to our fervent spirit to imagine that there can be any waste when our best boxes are broken and the perfume is poured out lavishly for Him. What we do fear is that our alabaster boxes are too few and that our ointment is not precious enough. When we have done our utmost in declaring the Glory of Jesus, we have felt that words are too poor and mean to set forth our adorable Lord. When we have prayed for His kingdom, we have been disgusted with our own prayers—and all the efforts we have put forth in connection with any part of His service have seemed too few, too feeble for us to hope for acceptance. Thus have we been discouraged. The enemy has worked upon us by this means, yet he has made us

argue very wrongly. Because we could not do much, we have half resolved to do nothing! Because what we did was so poor, we were inclined to quit the work altogether! This is evidently absurd and wicked. The enemy can use humility for his purpose as well as pride. Whether he makes us think too much or too little of our work, it is all the same to him—so long as he can get us off from it.

It is significant that the man with one talent went and hid his Lord's money in the earth. He knew that it was but one and, for that reason, he was the less afraid to bury it. Perhaps he argued that the interest on one talent could never come to much and would never be noticed, side by side with the result of five or 10 talents—and so he might as well bring nothing at all to his Lord as bring so little. Perhaps he might not have wrapped it up if it had not been so small that a napkin could cover it. The smallness of our gifts may be a temptation to us. We are consciously so weak and so insignificant, compared with the great God and His great cause, that we are discouraged and think it vain to attempt anything.

Moreover, the enemy contrasts our work with that of others and with that of those who have gone before us. We are doing so little as compared with other people—therefore let us give up. We cannot build like Solomon, therefore let us not build at all. Yet, Brothers and Sisters, there is a falsehood in all this, for, in truth, *nothing* is worthy of God! The great works of others and even the amazing productions of Solomon all fell short of His Glory! What house could man build for God? What are cedar, marble and gold as compared with the Glory of the Most High? Though the house was “exceedingly magnificent,” yet the Lord God had of old dwelt within curtains and never was His worship more glorious than within the tent of badgers' skins. Indeed, as soon as the great Temple was built, true religion declined! What of all human work can be worthy of the Lord? Our little labors do but share the insignificance of greater things and, therefore, we ought not to withhold them. Yet here is the temptation from which we must pray to be delivered.

The tendency to depreciate the present because of the glories of the past is also injurious. The old people looked back to the days of the former Temple, even as we are apt to look upon the times of the great preachers of the past. What work was done in those past days! What Sabbaths were enjoyed, then! What converts were added to the Church! What days of refreshing were then vouchsafed! Everything has declined, decreased, degenerated! As for the former days, they beheld a race of giants who are now succeeded by pigmies! We look at one of these great men and cry—

***“Why, man, he does bstride the narrow world
Like a Colossus! And we petty men
Walk under his huge legs and peep about
To find ourselves dishonorable graves.”***

But, Brothers, we must not allow this sense of littleness to hamper us, for God can bless our littleness and use it for His Glory. I notice that the great men of the past thought of themselves even as we think of ourselves. Certainly they were not more self-confident than we are. I find in the story of the brave days of old, the same confessions and the same lamentations which we utter now. It is true that in spiritual strength we are not what

our fathers were—I fear that Puritan holiness and truthfulness of doctrine are dying out, while adherence to principle is far from common—but our fathers also had faults and follies to mourn over and they did mourn over them most sincerely. Instead of being discouraged because what we do is unworthy of God and insignificant compared with what was done by others, let us gather up our strength to reform our errors and reach to higher attainments! Let us throw our heart and soul into the work of the Lord and do something more nearly in accordance with our highest ideal of what our God deserves of us. Let us excel our ancestors. Let us aspire to be even more godly, more conscientious and more sound in the faith than they were, for the Spirit of God remains with us.

Brethren, it is clear that discouragement can be produced by these reasons, and yet they are a mere sample of a host of arguments which work in the same direction—therefore *discouragement is very common*. Haggai was sent to speak to Zerubbabel, the governor, and to Joshua, the High Priest, and to all the remnant of the people. The great man may become discouraged—he that leads the van has his fainting fits and, even Elijah cries, “Let me die!” The consecrated servant of God whose life is a priesthood is apt to grow discouraged, too. Standing at God’s altar, he sometimes trembles for the Ark of the Lord. The multitude of the people are all too apt to suffer from panic and to flee at the sight of the enemy. How many are they who say, “The old Truths of God cannot succeed! The cause of orthodoxy is desperate—we had better yield to the modern spirit”?

This faint-heartedness is so common that it has been the plague of Israel from her first day until now! They were discouraged at the Red Sea at the mere rattling of Pharaoh’s chariots! They were discouraged when they found no water. They were discouraged when they had eaten up the bread which they brought out of Egypt. They were discouraged when they heard of the giants and of the cities walled to Heaven. I need not lengthen the wretched catalog. What has cowardice *not* done? The fearful and unbelieving have brought terrible disasters upon our camps. Discouragement is the national epidemic of our Israel. “Being armed and carrying bows,” we turn back in the day of battle. This is as common among Christians as consumption among the inhabitants of this foggy island. Oh that God would save us all from distrust and cause us to conduct ourselves like men!

Wherever discouragement comes in, it is dreadfully weakening. I am sure it is weakening because the Prophet was bid to say three times to the governor, High Priest and people, “Be strong.” This proves that they had become weak. Being discouraged, their hands hung down and their knees were feeble. Faith girds us with omnipotence, but unbelief makes everything about us hang loose and limp. Distrust and you will fail in everything! Believe and, according to your faith, so shall it be unto you. To lead a discouraged people to the Holy War is as difficult as for Xerxes’ commanders to conduct the Persian troops to battle against the Greeks. The vassals of the great king were driven to the conflict by whips and sticks, for they were afraid to fight—do you wonder that they were defeated? A Church that needs constant exhorting and compelling accomplishes noth-

ing. The Greeks had no need of blows and threats, for each man was a lion and courted the encounter, however great the odds against him.

Each Spartan fought *con amore*—he was never more at home than when contending for the altars and the hearths of his country! We need Christian men of this same sort who have faith in their principles, faith in the Doctrines of Grace, faith in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit—and who, therefore, contend earnestly for the faith in these days when piety is mocked from the pulpit and the Gospel is sneered at by professional preachers. We need men who love the Truth of God—to whom it is dear as their lives! We need men into whose hearts the old Doctrine is burned by the hand of God's Spirit through a deep experience of its necessity and of its power! We need no more of those who will parrot what they are taught, but we need men who will speak what they know! Oh, for a troop of men like John Knox, heroes of the martyr and Covenanter stock! Then would Jehovah of Hosts have a people to serve Him who would be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might!

Discouragement not only weakens men, but *it takes them off from the service of God*. It is significant that the Prophet said to them, "Be strong, all you people of the land, says the Lord, and work." They had ceased to build! They had begun to talk and argue, but they had laid down the trowel. They were extremely wise in their observations, criticisms and prophecies—but the walls did not rise. One person knew exactly how big the former Temple was. Another declared that their present architect was not up to the mark and that the structure was not built in a scientific manner. One objected to this and another, to that. Everybody was wiser than all the rest and sneered at old-fashioned ways. It is always so when we are discouraged—we cease from the work of the Lord and waste time in talk and nonsensical refinements! May the Lord take away discouragement from any of you who now suffer from it!

I suppose some of you do feel it, for at times it creeps over my heart and makes me go with heaviness to my work. I believe that God's Truth will yet come to the front, but it has many adversaries today. All sorts of unbeliefs are being hatched out from under the wings of "modern thought." The Gospel seems to be regarded as a nose of wax, to be altered and shaped by every man who wishes to show his superior skill. Nor is it in doctrine, alone, but also in practice, that the times are out of joint. Separateness from the world and holy living are to give place to gaiety and theater-going. To follow Christ fully has gone out of fashion with many of those from whom we once hoped better things. Yet are there some who waver not, some who are willing to be in the right with two or three. For my own part, even should I find none around me of the same mind, I shall not budge an inch from the old Truth of God, nor sweat a hair for fear of its overthrow. I shall abide confident that the eternal God, whose Truth we know and hold, will vindicate Himself before long and turn the wisdom of the world into babble and its boasting into confusion! Blessed is the man who shall be able to stand fast by his God in these evil days. Let us not in any way be discouraged. "Be strong; be strong; be strong," sounds as a threefold voice from the Triune God! "Fear not" comes as a sweet cordial

to the faint—therefore let no man's heart fail him. Thus much about the discouragement.

II. Secondly, here is THE ENCOURAGEMENT IMPARTED which is the grand part of our text. "According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remains among you: fear you not." God remembers His Covenant and stands to His ancient promises! When the people came out of Egypt, the Lord was with them by His Spirit—therefore He spoke to them by Moses and through Moses He guided, judged and taught them. He was with them, also, by His Spirit, in inspiring Bezaleel and Aholiab as to the works of art which adorned the Tabernacle. God always finds workmen for His work and, by His Spirit, fits them for it.

The Spirit of God rested upon the elders who were ordained to relieve Moses of his great burden. The Lord was also with His people in the fiery cloudy pillar which was conspicuous in the midst of the camp. His Presence was their glory and their defense. This is a type of the Presence of the Spirit with the Church. At the present day, if we hold to the Truth of God; if we live in obedience to His holy commands; if we are spiritually minded; if we cry unto God in believing prayer; if we have faith in His Covenant and in His Son—the Holy Spirit abides among us. The Holy Spirit descended upon the Church at Pentecost and He has never gone back—there is no record of the Spirit's return to Heaven! He will abide with the true Church forevermore. This is our hope for the present struggle. The Spirit of God remains with us.

To what end, my Brothers and Sisters, is this Spirit with us? Let us think of this, that we may be encouraged at this time. The Spirit of God remains among you *to aid and assist the ministry which He has already given*. Oh, that the prayers of God's people would always go up for God's ministers, that they may speak with a Divine power and influence which none shall be able to oppose! We look too much for clever men. We seek out fluent and flowery speakers. We sigh for men cultured and trained in all the knowledge of the heathen—but if we sought more for *unction*, for Divine *authority* and for that power which hedges about the man of God, how much wiser would we be!

Oh, that all of us who profess to preach the Gospel would learn to speak in entire dependence upon the direction of the Holy Spirit, not daring to utter our own words, but even *trembling* lest we should do so! We must commit ourselves to that secret influence without which nothing will be powerful upon the conscience or converting to the heart! Know you not the difference between the power that comes of human oratory and that which comes by the Divine energy which speaks so to the heart that men cannot resist it? We have too much forgotten this! It were better to speak six words in the power of the Holy Spirit than to preach 70 years of sermons without the Spirit! He who rested on those who have gone to their reward in Heaven can rest, this day, upon our ministers and bless our evangelists, if we will but seek it of Him! Let us cease to grieve the Spirit of God, and look to Him for help to the faithful ministers who are yet spared to us.

This same Spirit who, of old, gave to His Church eminent teachers *can raise up other and more useful men*. The other day, a Brother from Wales told me of the great men he remembered. He said that he had never heard such a one as Christmas Evans, who surpassed all men when he was in the pulpit. I asked him if he knew another Welsh minister who preached like Christmas Evans. “No,” he said, “we have no such man in Wales in our days.” So in England we have neither Wesley nor Whitefield, nor any of their order. Yet, as with God is the residue of the Spirit, He can fetch out from some chimney-corner another Christmas Evans, or find in our Sunday school another George Whitefield who shall declare the Gospel with the Holy Spirit sent down from Heaven! Let us never fear for the future, or despair for the present, since the Spirit of God remains with us.

What if the growing error of the age should have silenced the last tongue that speaks out the old Gospel? Let not faith be weakened! I hear the tramp of legions of soldiers of the Cross. I hear the clarion voices of hosts of preachers. “The Lord gave the Word; great was the company of those that published it.” Have faith in God through our Lord Jesus Christ! When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive and received gifts for men. He then gave Apostles, teachers, preachers and evangelists—and He can do the same again. Let us fall back upon the eternal God and never be discouraged for an instant.

Nor is this all. The Holy Spirit being with us, *He can move the whole Church to exercise its varied ministries*. This is one of the things we need very much—that every member of the Church should recognize that he is ordained to *service*. Everyone in Christ, man or woman, has some testimony to bear, some warning to give, some deed to do in the name of the Holy Child Jesus—and if the Spirit of God is poured out upon our young men and our maidens, each one will be awakened to energetic service! Both small and great will be in earnest and the result upon the slumbering masses of our population will surprise us all. Sometimes we lament that the Churches are so dull. There is an old proverb which says of So-and-So, that he was, “as sound asleep as a church.” I suppose there is nothing that can sleep so soundly as a Church. But yet the Spirit of God still remains and, therefore, Churches go to be awakened. I mean that not only in part but as a whole, a Church may be quickened. The dullest professor, the most slovenly Believer, the most captious and useless member of a Church may yet be turned to good account. I see them like a stack of wood, piled up, dead and dry. Oh for the fire! We will have a blaze out of them yet!

Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove, brood over the dark, disordered Church as once You did over chaos, and order shall come out of confusion and the darkness shall fly before the light! Only let the Spirit be with us and we have all that is needed for victory. Give us His Presence and everything else will come in its due season for the profitable service of the entire Church.

If the Spirit is with us there will come multitudinous conversions. We cannot get at “the lapsed masses,” as they are called. We cannot stir the crass infidelity of the present age. No, *we* cannot, but *He* can. All things

are possible with God. If you walk down to our bridges at a certain hour of the day, you will see barges and vessels lying in the mud—and all the king's horses and all the king's men cannot stir them! Wait until the tide comes in and they will walk the water like things of life! The living flood accomplishes, at once, what no mortals can do. And so today our Churches cannot stir. What shall we do? Oh, that the Holy Spirit would come with a flood tide of His benign influences, as He will if we will but believe in Him—as He must if we will but cry unto Him—as He shall if we will cease to grieve Him! Everything will be even as the saints desire when the Lord of saints is with us! The hope of the continuance and increase of the Church lies in the remaining of the Spirit with us. The hope of the salvation of London lies in the wonder-working Spirit. Let us bow our heads and worship the Omnipotent Spirit who deigns to work in us, by us and with us!

Then, Brethren, if this should happen—and I see not why it should not—then we may expect to see *the Church put on her beautiful garments!* Then shall she begin to clear herself of the errors which now defile her! Then shall she press to her bosom the Truths of God which she now begins to forget! Then will she go back to the pure fountain of Inspiration and drink from the Scriptures of Truth! And then, out of the midst of her, shall flow no turbid streams, but rivers of Living Water. If the Holy Spirit will work among us, we shall rejoice in the Lord and glory in the name of our God.

When once the Spirit of God puts forth His might, all things will be in accord with Him. Notice that in the rest of the chapter—which I shall now read, not as relating to that Temple at all, but to the Church of God—there is great comfort given to us. If the Holy Spirit is once given, then we may expect Providence to cooperate with the Church of God. Read verse 6—“Yet once it is a little while, and I will shake Heaven and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. I will shake all nations.” Great commotions will cooperate with the Holy Spirit! We may expect that God will work for His people in an extraordinary fashion if they will but be faithful to Him. Empires will collapse and times will change for the Truth's sake. Expect the unexpected! Reckon upon that which is unlikely if it is necessary for the growth of the Kingdom! Of old the earth helped the woman when the dragon opened his mouth to drown her with the floods that he cast forth—help shall come unexpected to us when affairs are at their worst.

Especially do I look for a shaking among the hosts of unbelief. How often did the Lord of old rout His enemies without His Israel drawing a sword! The watchword was, “Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.” The adversaries of old fell out among themselves—and they will do so again. When Cadmus slew the dragon with his javelin, he was told to sow its teeth in the earth. When he did so, according to the classic fable, he saw rising out of the ground nodding plumes, crested helmets and broad shoulders of armed men! Up from the earth there sprang a host of warriors—but Cadmus needed not to flee, for the moment they found their feet, these children of the dragon fell upon each other till scarcely one was left! Error, like Saturn, devours its own children! Those that fight against the

Lord of Hosts are not agreed among themselves and they shall sheathe their swords in each other's bosoms.

I saw in the night vision, the sea, the deep and broad sea of the Truth of God flashing with its silver waves. Lo, a black horse came out of the darkness and went down to the deep, threatening to drink it dry. I saw him stand there drinking and swelling as he drank. In his pride, he trusted that he could snuff up Jordan at a draught! I stood by and saw him drink and then plunge further into the sea, to drink still more. Again he plunged in with fury and soon he lost his footing and I saw him no more, for the deep had swallowed him that boasted that he would swallow it! Rest assured that every black horse of error that comes forth to swallow up the sea of Divine Truth shall be drowned in it! Therefore be of good courage! God, who makes the earth and the heavens to shake, shall cause each error to fall like an untimely fig!

And next, the Lord in this chapter promises His people that they shall have all the supplies they need for His work. They feared that they could not build His House because of their poverty. "But," says the Lord of Hosts, "the silver and the gold are Mine." When the Church of God believes in God and goes forward bravely, she need not trouble as to supplies. Her God will provide for her. He that gives the Holy Spirit will give gold and silver according as they are needed—therefore let us be of good courage! If God is with us, why need we fear? One of our English kings once threatened the great city of London that if its councilors talked so independently, he would—yes—he would, indeed, he would—take his court away from the city!

The Lord Mayor on that occasion replied that if his majesty would graciously leave the river Thames behind him, the citizens would try to get on without his court. If any say, "If you hold to these old-fashioned doctrines, you will lose the educated, the wealthy, the influential." We answer—but if we do not lose the godly and the Presence of the Holy Spirit, we are not in the least alarmed. If the Holy Spirit remains with us, there is a river the streams of which make glad the city of God! Brothers and Sisters, my heart leaps within me as I cry, "The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." "Therefore we will not fear, though the earth is removed, and though the mountains are carried into the midst of the sea."

The best comfort of all remained—"The desire of all nations shall come." This was in a measure fulfilled when Jesus came into that latter Temple and caused all holy hearts to sing for gladness, but it was not wholly fulfilled in that way, for if you notice, in the ninth verse it is written, "The Glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former; *and in this place will I give peace,*" which the Lord did not fully do to the second Temple since that was destroyed by the Romans. But there is another Advent, when, "the desire of all nations shall come" in power and Glory—and this is our highest hope! Though Truth may be driven back and error may prevail, Jesus comes and He is the great Lord and Patron of Truth—He shall judge the world in righteousness and the people in equity! Here's our last resource—here are God's reserves. He whom we serve lives and reigns forever and ever! And He says, "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is

with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” “Therefore, my beloved Brethren, be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

III. I would have finished if it had not been that this text seemed, to me, to overflow so much that it might not only refresh God’s people, but give drink to thirsty sinners who are seeking the Lord. For a moment or two I give myself to ENCOURAGEMENT FURTHER APPLIED.

It is at the beginning of every gracious purpose that men have most fear, even as these people had who had newly begun to build. When first the Holy Spirit begins to strive with a man and to lead him to Jesus, he is apt to say—“I cannot; I dare not; it is impossible. How can I believe and live?” Now I want to speak to some of you, here, who are willing to find Christ. I want to encourage you by the Truth of God that the Spirit lives to help you. I would even like to speak to those who are not anxious to be saved. I remember that Dr. Payson, an exceedingly earnest and useful man of God, once did an amazing thing. He had been holding inquiry meetings with all sorts of people and great numbers had been saved. At last, one Sunday, he gave out that he would have a meeting on Monday night with those persons who did *not* desire to be saved—and, strange to say, some 20 persons came who did not wish to repent or believe.

He spoke to them and said, “I am sure that if a little film, thin as the web of the gossamer, were let down by God from Heaven to each one of you, you would not push it away from you. Although it were almost invisible, you would value even the slightest connection between you and Heaven. Now, your coming to meet me tonight is a little link with God. I want it to increase in strength till you are joined to the Lord forever.” He spoke to them most tenderly and God blessed those people who did not desire to be saved, so that before the meeting was over, they were of another mind! The film had become a thicker thread and it grew and grew until the Lord Christ held them by it forever. Dear Friends, the fact of your being in the Tabernacle, this morning, is like that filmy thread—do not push it away! Here is your comfort—the Holy Spirit still works with the preaching of the Word.

Do I hear you say, “I cannot feel my need of Christ as I need to feel it?” The Spirit remains among us. He can make you feel more deeply the guilt of sin and your need of pardon. “But I have heard so much about conviction and repentance and I do not seem to have either of them.” Yet the Spirit remains with us and that Spirit is able to work in you the deepest conviction and the truest repentance. “O Sir, I do not feel as if I could do anything.” But the Spirit remains with us and all things that are necessary for godliness, He can give. He can work in you to will and to do of His own good pleasure. “I want to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” Who made you want to do that? Who but the Holy Spirit? Therefore He is still at work with you and though, as yet, you do not understand what believing is, or else I am persuaded you would believe at once, the Spirit of God can instruct you in it! You are blind, but He can give you sight—you are paralyzed, but He can give you strength—the Spirit of God remains!

“Oh, but that doctrine of regeneration staggers me—you know, we must be born again.” Yes, we are born again of the Spirit and the Spirit remains with us still. He is still mighty to work that wondrous change and to bring you out of the kingdom of Satan into the Kingdom of God’s dear Son. The Spirit remains with us, blessed be His name! “Ah, dear Sir,” says one, “I want to conquer sin!” Who made you desire to conquer sin? Who, but the Spirit that remains with us? He will give you the sword of the Spirit and teach you how to use it! And He will give you both the will and the power to use it successfully. Through the Spirit’s might, you can overcome every sin, even that which has dragged you down and disgraced you! The Spirit of God is still waiting to help you. When I think of the power of the Spirit of God, I look hopefully upon every sinner here this morning! I bless His name that He can work in you all that is pleasing in His sight. Some of you may be very careless, but He can make you thoughtful. Coming up to London to see the Exhibition, I hope you may, yourselves, become an exhibition of Divine Grace! You think not about these things, but He can make you feel, at this moment, a sweet softness stealing over you until you long to be alone and to get home to the old armchair and there seek the Lord. You can thus be led to salvation!

I thought, when I came in here, that I would have a picked congregation and so I have. You are one of them! Wherever you come from, I want you now to seek the Lord. He has brought you here and He means to bless you. Yield yourselves to Him while His sweet Spirit pleads with you! While the heavenly Wind softly blows upon you, open wide every window. You have not felt that you needed it, but that is the sure proof that you need it, for he that does not know his need of Christ is most in need! Open wide your heart that the Spirit may teach you your need. Above all, breathe the prayer that He would help you, this morning, to look to the Lord Jesus Christ, for, “there is life in a look at the Crucified One—there is life at this moment for you.”

“Oh,” you say, “if I were to begin I should not keep on.” No, if *you* began, perhaps you would not, but if *He* begins with you, He will keep on. The final perseverance of saints is the result of the final perseverance of the Holy Spirit—He perseveres to bless and we persevere in receiving the blessing! If He begins, you have begun with a Divine power that faints not and neither is weary. I wish it might so happen that on this fifth day of the ninth month, not the Prophet Haggai, but I, God’s servant, may have spoken to you such a word as you shall never forget! And may the Lord add to the word, by the witness of the Holy Spirit, “From this day will I bless you!” Go away with that promise resting upon you! I would like to shake the hand of every stranger here this morning, and say, “Brother, in the name of the Lord I wish you, from this day, a blessing.” Amen and amen!

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

“THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS”

NO. 3442

**A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 21 1915.**

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 25, 1870.**

***“And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come:
and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of Hosts.”
Haggai 2:7.***

THE second Temple was never intended to be as magnificent as the first. The first was to be the embodiment of the full glory of the dispensation of symbols and types—and was soon to pass away. This comparative feebleness had been proved by the idolatry and apostasy of the people, Israel. And when they returned to Jerusalem they were to have a structure that would be sufficient for the purposes of their worship, but they were not again to be indulged with the splendors of the former house which God had erected by the hand of Solomon. Had it been God's Providence that a Temple equally magnificent as the first should be erected, it might have been very readily accomplished. Cyrus appears to have been obedient to the Divine Will and to have been a great friend of the Jews, but he expressly, by edict, diminished the length of the walls and gave express command that the walls should never be erected as high as before. We have also evidence that a like decree was made by Darius, an equally great friend of the Jews, who could, with the lifting of his finger, have outdone the glory of Solomon's Temple! But in God's Providence it was not arranged that it should be so and, though Herod, not a Jew, and only a Jew by religious pretense to suit his own particular purpose, lavished a good deal of treasure upon the second Temple for the pleasure of the nation he ruled, and to gain some favor from them, yet he rather profaned than adorned the Temple, since he did not follow the prescribed architecture by which it ought to have been built, and he had not the Divine Approval upon his labors. No Prophet ever commanded, and no Prophet ever sanctioned the labors of such a horrible wretch as that Herod! The reason seems to me to be this—in the second Temple, during the time it should stand, the dispensation of Christ was softly melted into the light of spiritual Truth. The outward worship was to cease there. It seems right that it should cease in a Temple that had not the external glory of the first. God intended there to light up the first beams of the spiritual splendor of the second Temple, namely, His true Temple, the Church, and he would put a sign of decay on the outward and visible in the Temple of the first. Yet He declares by His servant, Haggai, that the glory of the second Temple should be greater than the first. It certainly was not so as in respect of gold, or silver, or size, or excellence of archi-

ecture—and yet it truly was so, for the Glory of the Presence of Christ was greater than all the glory of the old Temple’s wealth! And the glory of having the Gospel preached in it, the glory of having the Gospel miracles worked in its porches by the Apostles and by the Master was far greater than any hecatombs of bullocks and he-goats—the glory of being, as it were, the cradle of the Christian Church—the nest out of which should fly the messengers of peace, who, like doves, should bear the olive branch throughout the world. I take it that the decadence of the old system of symbols was a most fitting preparation for the incoming of the system of Grace and Truth in the Person of Jesus Christ! And the second Temple has this glory which excels—that while the first was the glory of the moon in all its splendor, the second is the moon going down—the sun is rising beyond her, gilding the horizon with the first beams at the morning!

I intend to speak to you at this time about *the true spiritual Temple*, the true second Temple, the spiritual Temple, which, I think, is here spoken of—although the second Temple, literally, is also intended—*the true spiritual Temple built up, according to the text, as the desire of all nations.*

I find this passage a very difficult one in the original—it bears several meanings in itself. The first meaning that I give you, though it runs contrary to the great majority of Christian expositors, is the most accurate explanation of the original. We shall bring in the other explanations by-and-by. Reading it thus, “I will shake all nations,” and the desire—the desirable persons, the best part, or as the Septuagint reads it, the *elect* of all nations—shall come. They shall come—the true Temple of God, and they shall be the living stones that shall compose it, or, as others read it, “The desirable *things* of all nations shall come,” which is, no doubt, the meaning, because the eighth verse gives the key—“The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, says the Lord of Hosts.” The desirable things of all nations are to be brought in as voluntary offerings to this true second Temple, this spiritual living Temple.

Let us begin, then, and take that sense, first. And in this case we are told, in the text concerning this second Temple, what these living stones are—

I. THE HISTORICAL DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS SHALL COME.

The choice men, the pick, the best of all men shall come and constitute the true Temple of God. Not the kings and princes, not the great and noble after the flesh—these are but the choice of men after the manner of man’s choice—but not many great men after the flesh, not many mighty are chosen and called! But still, those whom God chooses must be the choice ones of mankind. They will not claim to be so by nature—on the contrary, they will repudiate any idea of any natural goodness in themselves. But God sees them as what they are to be, as what He intends them to be, as what He makes them to be and in this respect they are the desire, they are the choice of all nations! To God, His people are His royal treasure, His secret jewels, the treasury of kings—they are very precious in His sight. Their very death is precious. He keeps record of their bones and will raise their dust at the Last Day. If the nation did but know it,

the saints in a nation are the aristocrats of that nation. Those who fear God are the very soul, marrow, and backbone of a nation. For their sakes God has preserved many a nation. For their sakes He gives unnumbered blessings. “You are the salt of the earth”—the earth were putrid without them. “You are the light of the world”—the world would be dark without them. They are the desire, I say, though often the world treats them with contempt and would cast them out. It has always been thus with the blind world—to treat its best friends worst—and its worst enemies often receive the most royal entertainment. Now what a joy it is to us to think that God has been pleased to make unto Himself a people according to His own sovereign will and good pleasure and that He has made these to be the desirable ones out of all nations—that with these choice and elect ones He will build up His Church!

But the text not only tells us of the stones, but of the remarkable mode of architecture. “The desire of all nations shall come”—*they shall be brought together*. Human means shall be used to bring each one to its place, to excavate each one from its quarry. And while it is God who speaks, He speaks like God, for He uses “shalls” and “wills” most freely, and according to the Eternal Purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus, before the earth was, so shall the fulfillment be. We who preach the Gospel may preach with devout assurance of success. The desire of all nations *shall* come! Out of this congregation the truly desirable ones shall come to Christ. Out of the soil in which the sower sowed—the honest and good ground—is brought forth the harvest. Out of the nations, though they reject Christ and continue in their idolatry, yet there are some choice spirits who come—some whom the Lord looks upon with great delight—and these *shall* come. We do not labor in vain, neither do we spend our strength for nothing. We fall back upon the Doctrine of Divine working and Divine choice for consolation—certainly not for an excuse for indolence, but for consolation when we have done our best, that God is glorified in the end, “the desire of all nations shall come.”

And if you will notice in the whole text, it appears that *they do not come without much shaking*. In one sense, no man comes to God with compulsion. And in another sense, no man comes without compulsion. You see two boxes opened. There are two ways of opening them. You see one box wrenched—evidently there has been used rough means. Who opened it? A thief. God never opens men’s hearts in that way! You see another box open—no sign of damage, no sign of any particular labor. Who opened it? The person who had the key—probably the owner. Hearts belong to God and He has the keys and opens them—sweetly opens them. And yet, though no force is used, that puts aside the positive, free agency of man which God interferes not with, yet there is a spiritual force which may well be described as a shaking. It is only when the tree of the nation has a thorough shaking, that at last the prime, ripe fruit will drop down into the great Master’s lap! He shakes by Providence, by the movement of the human conscience. He shakes by the impulses of His Holy Spirit. He shakes the spirit and as the result, the desirable persons out

of all the nations are brought to Himself. Stones that He would have come at last out of the quarry—and He builds them up into a Temple.

And now observe that these persons, according to another rendering of the text, *when they come to build up the Church they always bring their desire with them*—they bring with them the most desirable thing. The desirable things of all nations shall give the silver, and the gold, and so on. He that comes to Christ brings with him all he has—and he who has left his true substance behind him has not come to Christ. What, now, is the desire of all the nations when hearts are renewed? Well, silver and gold will always be desirable, and men who give their hearts to Christ will bring what they have of that to Christ. But the most desirable things of manhood are not metals—are they dirt, mere dross, hard materialisms? No, the desirable things of manhood are things of the soul, the heart, the spirit! And into the Temple, the great second Temple, there shall come, not merely masses of gold and silver that can adorn with outward splendor, but also love, and faith, and holy virtue—more priceless than gems, far richer in value than rarest mines! Oh, what a sight the Church of God is when holy angels look upon it! We hear of some of the first Spanish invaders going into the temple of Peru and seeing floors, roofs and walls made of slabs of gold—and standing astonished! But oh, in the Church there are slabs of faith on the floor of that great Temple, and walls of love of Christian self-sacrifice, and roofs of holy joy and Christian consolation! It is a Temple that makes spiritual eyes flash with gladness! What care they for the splendor of kings and princess. But they care much for the true, desirable things of nations—holy emotions, holy desires, ascriptions of gratitude and devout acts of service for the Lord God! Oh, how glorious is the second Temple, then, when the desirable men come to it and bring with them all the desirable things to make it glorious in the sight of God!

And then *this Temple, thus built and thus adorned, will continue*. The text implies that, “I will shake all nations.” The Apostle says that this signifies the things that can be shaken—that the things that cannot be shaken will remain—and that the desire of all nations must be put down as a thing that cannot be shaken. The Church, then, shall never be shaken, and the precious things that the Church gives to her God shall not be shaken! Time will change many things. Great princes will be considered mere beggars, by-and-by, in the esteem of men who know how to judge by character. Great men will shrivel into very small things—when they come to be tried, even by posterity. And the Judgment Day—ah, how will that try the great ones of this earth! But the Christian Church—the very gates of Hell shall not prevail against her! Time shall not be able so much as to chip one of her polished stones. Her treasures of faith, and what not, the rich things that God has given her—these things shall never be stolen—they can never be shaken! And then the crown of all is, “I will fill this house with My glory, says the Lord.” This is the reason, the great charm of it all! God Himself dwells, as He dwells nowhere else, in His Glory. The Church, which we think two, and call militant and triumphant, is but one, after all, and God dwells in it! Oh, if we had but eyes to see it, the Glory of God on earth is not much less than the Glory of

God in Heaven, for the glory of a king in peace is one thing, but the glory of a conqueror in war is another thing, though I know which I prefer. Yet if I transfer the figure, I have no preference between the Glory of the God of Peace in the midst of His obedient servants in His ivory palaces, and the Glory of the Lord of Hosts in the thick of this heavenly war, as He conflicts with human evil and brings forth glory to His saints out of all the mischief that Satan seeks to do to His Throne and to His scepter. God is known in the Jerusalem below, as well as in the Jerusalem above. “The Lord is in the midst of her.” Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shined. God is in the midst of her—she shall not be moved. And though the kings gather together for her destruction, yet His Presence is the river, the streams whereof make glad the City of God! Yes, glorious things may well be spoken of Zion when we have such stones as precious men, such gifts as precious graces, such abiding character as God gives, and such a Presence as the Presence of God Himself! But now, in the next place, if we take the other rendering of the text—

II. THE GLORY OF THE SPIRITUAL SECOND TEMPLE IS ACTUALLY THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST.

“I will shake all nations,” and He who is the desire of all nations shall come—a rendering which is not incorrect, and is established by a great mass of theologians, though, according to some of the ablest critics, a rendering scarcely to be sustained by the original. He who is the desire of all nations shall come, and that shall be the Glory of the second spiritual Temple! Jesus Christ, then, is the desire of all nations, if so we read the text, and this is doubtless true. *All nations have a dark and dim desire for Him.* I say a dark desire, for without that adjective I could scarcely speak the truth. Most interesting chapters have been written by students of the history of mankind upon the preparedness of men’s hearts for the coming of Christ at His Incarnation. It is very certain that almost all nations have a tradition of the Coming One. The Jews, of course, expected the Messiah. There were persons instructed according to the culture of various nations, which, though they do not expect the Messiah quite as clearly as the Jews, had almost as shrewd a guess as to what He might be and do as the mere ritualistic and Pharisaic Jews had. There was a notion all over the world at that time of Christ’s coming, that some great one was to descend from Heaven and to come into this world for this world’s good. He was in that respect darkly and dimly the desire of all nations. But in all nations there have been some persons more instructed to whom Christ has really been the object of desire with much more intelligence. Job was a Gentile and a fearer of God. We have no reason to believe that Job was a solitary specimen of enlightened persons—we have reason, rather, to hope that in all countries all over the world God has had a chosen people who have known and feared Him, who have not had all the Light of God which has been given to us, but who better used what Light they had and were guided by His secret Spirit to much more of Light, perhaps, than we think it right, with our little knowledge, to credit them with! These, then, as representatives of all the nations,

were desiring the coming of the Great Deliverer, the Incarnate God. And in this sense, representatively, the whole of the world was desiring Christ in that higher sense—and He was the desire of all nations. But, my Brothers and Sisters, does this mean, or does it not mean, that Christ is exactly what all the nations need? If they did but know, if they could but understand Him, He is just what they would desire and should desire! Were their reason taught rightly, and were their minds instructed by the Spirit to desire the best in all the world, Christ is just what they need! *All the world desires a way to God.* Hence men set up priests and anoint them with oil, and smear them with I know not what, only that *they* may be mediators between them and God! They must have something to come between their guilt and God’s glorious holiness. Oh, if they knew it, what they need is Christ! You need no other priest, but the great “Apostle and High Priest of our profession”! You need no mediator with God, but the one Mediator, the Man, Christ Jesus, who is also equal with God. Oh, world, why will you go about to seek this priest and that other deceiver, when He whom you need is appointed by the Most High? He whom Jacob saw in his dream as the Ladder which reached from earth to Heaven is the only means—the Son of Man and yet the Son of God! *The world needs a peacemaker.* Oh, how badly it needs it now! I seem, as I walk my garden, as I go to my pulpit, as I go to my bed, to hear the distant cries and moans of wounded and dying men. We are so familiarized each day with horrible details of slaughter, that if we give our minds to the thought, I am sure we must feel a nausea, a perpetual sickness creeping over us! The reek and steam of those murderous fields, the smell of the warm blood of men flowing out on the soil must come to us and vex our spirits. Earth needs a peacemaker and it is He, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, and the friend of Gentiles, the Prince of Peace, who will make war to cease unto the ends of the earth!

Man needs a purifier. Very many nations feel, somehow or other, that political affairs do not go as one could wish. There are great excellences in personal government, but great disadvantages. There are great excellences in republican government, but remarkable difficulties, too. There are supreme excellences, as we think, in our own form of government, but a great many things to be amended, for all that. And this world is altogether out of joint—it is a crazy old concern, and does not seem as if it could be amended with all the tinkering of our reformers in the lapse of years. The fact is, it needs the Maker, who made it, to come in and make it right! It needs the Hercules that is to turn the stream right through the Augean stable. It needs the Christ of God to turn the stream of His atoning Sacrifice right through the whole earth, to sweep away the whole filth of ages! And it never will be done unless He does it. He is the One, the true Reformer, the true Rectifier of all wrong and, in this respect, the desire of all nations! Oh, if the world could gather up all her right desires. If she could condense in one cry all her wild wishes. If all true lovers of mankind could condense their theories and extract the true wine of wisdom from them, it would just come to this—we need an Incarnate God

and we have got the Incarnate God! Oh, nations, but you know it not! You, in the dark, are groping after Him and know not that He is there!

Brothers and Sisters, I may add Christ is certainly the desire of all nations in this respect, that *we desire Him for all nations*. Oh, that the world were encompassed in His Gospel! Would God the sacred fire would run along the ground, that the little handful of corn on the top of the mountains would soon make its fruit to shake like Lebanon. Oh, when will it come, when will it come that all the nations shall know Him? Let us pray for it! Let us labor for it!

And one other meaning I may give to this—He is the desirable One of all nations, bringing back the former translation of this text. *He is the choice One of all nations*. He is the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely. He, whom we love, is such an One that He can never be matched by another. His rival could not be found among the sons of men. There is none like He! There is none like He among the angels of light! There is none that can stand in comparison with Him. The Desire, the one that ought to be desired, the most desirable of all the nations is Jesus Christ, and it is the Glory of the Christian Church, which is the second Temple, that Christ is in her, her Head, her Lord! It is never her glory that she condescends to make an iniquitous union with the State. It is her Glory that Christ is her sole King. It is her Glory that He is her sole Prophet, He is her sole Priest and that He then gives to all His people to be kings and priests with Him, Himself the center and source of all their glory and their power!

I cannot stay longer, though the theme tempts me, but must just give you the last word, which is this, *the visible Glory of the true second Temple will be Christ's Second Coming*. He, Himself, is her Glory, whether at His First Coming, or at His Second Coming. The Church will be no more glorious at the Second Coming than now. “What?” you ask, “no more glorious?” No, but more *apparently* glorious. Christ is as glorious on the Cross as He is on the Throne—it is only the appearance that shall alter. “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father, but they evermore are brightness, itself, in the Person of Jesus Christ. Now, Brothers and Sisters, we are to expect, as long as this world lasts, that all things will shake that are to be moved. They will go on shaking. We call the world sometimes “terra firma”—it is not this world, surely, that deserves such a name as that—there is nothing stable beneath the stars! All things else will shake, and as the shaking goes on, Jesus Christ will, to those who know Him, become more and more their desire! I suppose if the world went on, in some things mending and improving, and were to go up to a point, we would not want Christ to come in a hurry, we would rather that things should be perpetuated—but the shaking will make Christ more and more the desire of the nations. “The whole creation groans,” is groaning up to now, but it will groan more and more “in pain together travailing”—the Apostle says—“even until now.” The travailing pains grow worse and worse, and worse, and it will be so

with this world—it will travail till, at last, it must come to the consummation of her desire!

The Church will say, “Come, Lord Jesus.” She will say it with gathering earnestness. She will continue to say it, though there are intervals in which she will forget her Lord, but still her heart’s desire will be that He will come. And at last *He will surely come and bring to this world not only Himself, the desire of all nations, but all that can be desired*, for those days of His, when He appears, shall be to His people as the days of Heaven upon earth, the days of their honor, the days of their rest—the day in which the kingdoms shall belong unto Christ! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, it is not for me to go into details on a subject which would require many sermons, and which could not be brought out in the few last words of a sermon. But here is the great hope of that splendid building, the Church, which is desired. Her glory essentially lies in the Incarnate God who has come into her midst. Her Glory manifestly will lie in the Second Coming of that Incarnate God, when He shall be revealed from Heaven to those that look and are waiting for the coming of the Son of God—looking for Him with gladsome expectation! And this is the joy of the Church. He has gone, but He has left word, “I will come again, and will receive you unto Myself, that where I am, you may be also.” Remember the words that were spoken by the angels to the Church, “You men of Galilee, why stand you here, gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus who is gone up from you into Heaven shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go up into Heaven.” In *propria persona*—in very deed and truth, He shall come!—

**“These eyes shall see Him in that day,
The God that died for me!
And all my rising bones shall say,
Lord, who is like Thee?”**

Then shall come the adoption, the raising of the body, the reception of a glory to that body reunited to the soul, such as we have not dreamed of, for eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God has prepared for them who love Him! Though He has revealed them unto us by His Holy Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God, yet have our ears heard but little thereof, and we have not received the full discovery of the things that shall be hereafter. The Lord bless you! May you all be parts of His Church, have a share in His Glory and a share in the manifestation of that Glory at the last.

Dear Hearer, I would send you away with this one query in your ear—Is Christ your desire? Could you say, with David, “He is all my salvation and all my desire”? Could you gather up your feet in the bed, with dying Jacob, and say, “I have waited for Your will, O God”? By your desire shall you be known! The desire of the righteous shall be granted. Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desire of your heart!

But the desire of many is a groveling desire! It is a sinful desire! It is a disgraceful desire—a desire which, if it is attained, the attainment of it will afford very brief pleasure. Oh, Sinner, let your desires go after Christ! Remember if you would have Him, you have not to *earn* Him—not to fight

for Him—not to win Him—*He is to be had for the asking!* “Lay hold,” says the Apostle, “on eternal life.” As if it were ours, if we did but grip it! God give us Grace to lay hold on eternal life, for Jesus from the Cross is saying, “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all you ends of the earth!” And from His Throne of Glory He is still saying, “Come unto Me,” exalted on high, “to give repentance and remission of sin,” and He will give them both to those who seek Him. Seek Him, then, this night! God grant it for His Son’s sake. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
HAGGAI 1-2:1-9; HEBREWS 7:15-28.**

The subject is the building of the second Temple. The people had been busily employed in building their own houses—some of them had gone to great expense and much labor upon these houses, but they had not built the Temple of God. The Prophet Haggai was sent to incite them to holy labor.

Verses 1, 2. *In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the Prophet unto Zerrubbabel the son of Shealtiel, Governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying, Thus speaks the LORD of Hosts, saying, This people says, The time is not come, the time that the LORD’S house should be built.* A bad excuse is thought to be better than none. These people would not object to the building of the Lord’s house, but they were willing to postpone so expensive a matter. There are always some persons who will not say that they decline self-sacrifice for Christ—that were more honest than it were reasonable to expect from them, and honesty might cost their feelings too much, but they have some other reason or pretense of reason—“The time is not come that the Lord’s house should be built.” Men are generally quick enough for anything that is for their own interest. “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.” We must catch time by the forelock. Oh, if we had the same desire in the work and service of God—if we had the same desire—we should have the same promptitude to do our task. “The time is not come”—the time that the Lord’s house should be built.

3, 4. *Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the Prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O you, to dwell in your paneled houses, and this house to lie in waste?* They had wainscoted their houses with cedar and odoriferous wood, decorated them with carvings, whereas the plainest edifices would have sufficed. God will allow them to build their own house for necessary dwelling, but next to that should certainty come His house, before they took to decorating their own. “Is it time for you to do this?” And, indeed, it may well be said to many a wealthy man, “It does not appear to you to be time to aid foreign missions, but it does seem to you to be time to put another thousand pounds in bonds. It does not seem time for you to help the Bible Society, but it seems to be time to make another in-

vestment, and purchase another estate that adjoins your own.” “Is it time for you, oh, you, to dwell in your paneled houses?”

5, 6. *Now, therefore, thus says the LORD of Hosts, Consider your ways. You have sown much, and bring in little; you eat, but you have not enough; you drink, but you are not filled with drink; you clothe yourself, but there is none warm; and he that earns wages, earns wages to put it into a bag with holes.* Those people did not prosper—they were very prudent after a worldly sort, but somehow they did not get on. No, it is not what we do so much as God’s prospering us that will make us really succeed! It is vain to rise up early and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness. God must give us prosperity and He often withholds this where He sees it is not right. A man will not trust a bad steward, and though God has trusted many and many a bad steward for wise reasons, yet among His own people He often gives chastisements and deprives them of worldly comfort when they use not what they have for His service. I think I have heard some people say that ministers never ought to talk about money in the pulpit. The Prophet Haggai did, however, and it is because ministers say so little about the consecration of their substance to God’s cause that this most important part of true piety is often treated with levity—and with some even by disgust! No, Brothers and Sisters, we must speak often. The great sin of the Christian Church is withholding from God. Now is it the same sin as in the days of Haggai! “Thus says the Lord of Hosts, consider your ways.” If you considered your ways, you would see that you have been losers by your attempts to gain. Consider your ways practically by changing them!

7, 8. *Thus says the LORD of Hosts, Consider your ways. Go up to the mountains, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, says the LORD.* That should be the great objective that we should aim at in all we do—that God may be glorified—that God may take pleasure in it! It does not matter who we please if God is not pleased, nor who gets honor from what we give, if God is not glorified thereby.

9. *You looked for much, and, lo it came to little.* It vanished—the breeze was so strong that the unconsecrated substance went away like chaff.

9-11. *I did blow upon it. Why? says the LORD of Hosts. Because of My house that is waste, and you run, every man, unto his own house. Therefore the Heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground brings forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labor of the hands.* Men make an inventory—itemize so many cattle, itemize so much corn, itemize so much wine. God can itemize, too, and He can curse all our blessings, one by one! This catalog looks like it. If they have saved in all these, robbing God, God will take care that they shall get nothing by their doing!

12. *Then Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the Prophet, as the LORD*

their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the LORD. There is good bottom in those men who are led to duty when they are reminded of neglect—and it is blessed work preaching where there is a conscience quick to accede to the admonition. I do not suppose it was so with all the people of Jerusalem, but it was with some of them, and those the leading men. Where high priests and men of authority lead the way, others, if not so prompt, are often guided by the principle of imitation—and they follow the leader.

13. *Then spoke Haggai, the LORD’S messenger, the LORD’S message unto the people, saying. I am with you, says the LORD.* Here was the best cheer for them. They had engaged in God’s business and God would be with them!

14, 15. *And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work on the house of the LORD of Hosts their God. In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.* Notice that date—the 24th day of the sixth month.

HAGGAI 2:1-9.

Verse 1. *In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, the word of the Lord came by Haggai the Prophet, saying—* Not very long after.

2, 3. *Speak now to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying, Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? And how do you see it now? Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?* It appears that the spirit of idleness had broken out again. As the walls began to rise, the older men wept at the recollection of what an inferior structure it would be, compared with the former building of Solomon, and the idlers, ready enough to use any excuse, are ready enough to cease work. Therefore God’s Prophet is at it again! If the fire begins to die out, the bellows must be used again! The zeal of the Christian is very much like the zeal of these men of Jerusalem—very apt to flag—and the zeal of God’s messenger must come to stir them up again.

5, 6. *According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remains among you: fear you not. For thus says the LORD of Hosts, Once more, (it is a little while)—* Though as some read it, it is “but a little structure,” but our reading is, perhaps, better—it is a little while.

6-9. *And I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of Hosts. The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, says the LORD of Hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, says the LORD of Hosts: and in this place will I give peace, says the LORD of Hosts.* Clearly encouraging them to proceed with their work.

HEBREWS 7:15-28.

15-18. *And it is yet far more evident, if, in the likeness of Melchisedec, there arises another priest who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For He testifies, You are a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. The old Levitical Law is disannulled—it became weak and unprofitable—and now a higher and better dispensation is ushered in with a greater and undying priesthood.*

19. *For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by which we draw near unto God. That is all the Law did—it was a steppingstone towards something better. “By which we draw near unto God.” “The Lord has sworn and will not repent.”*

20-24. *And inasmuch as not without an oath He was made priest. (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by Him that said unto Him, the Lord swore and will not repent, You are a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec). By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better Testament. And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death. But this Man, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. I think they reckoned that there were 83 high priests in regular succession from Aaron to the death of Phineas, the last high priest at the siege of Jerusalem. One succeeded another, but this One goes on continually, He forever has an untransferable priesthood. That word, “untransferable,” is nearer to the meaning than this, “unchangeable.” If any of you have old Bibles with the margin, you will see, “has a priesthood which cannot be passed from one hand to another,” and the margin happens, in this case, to have the true rendering, “This Man has an untransferable priesthood.”*

25. *Therefore He is also able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He always lives to make intercession for them. We need just that High Priest who would live on forever throughout all the ages to sustain His people and do for them all they should need to have done for them, until time should be no more.*

26-28. *For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners and made higher than the heavens, who needs not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for His own sins, and then for the people’s: but this He did once, when He offered up Himself. For the law makes men high priests which have weaknesses; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, makes the Son, who is consecrated forevermore. There is our joy!*

—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.**

DEFILED AND DEFILING

NO. 2495

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY,
DECEMBER 13, 1896.**

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, APRIL 19, 1885.**

“Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touches any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean. Then answered Haggai, and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before Me, says the LORD; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean.”
Haggai 2:13, 14.

THE Prophet Haggai very wisely drew out from the priests a definite answer to certain questions which he put to them. Then, upon their authority, he could say to the people, “This is what your own priests say and this is what you, yourselves, believe.” This was taking them by a kind of sacred guile and it was a powerful means of forcing home the Truth of God to their heart and conscience.

According to the 12th verse, Haggai first put to the priests this question, “If one carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and with the edge he touches bread, or stew, or wine, or oil, or any food, will it become holy? And the priests answered, and said, No.” Here is a man who is holy—I mean, ceremonially holy—and he is carrying in the fold of his garments, part of a holy sacrifice. Now, if he touches anything, will he make it holy by that touch? The priests said, “No.” They could not say otherwise. So, if a man is, himself, holy, however holy he may be, can he make another man holy simply by touching him? If he speaks of good things, or does good actions, will it be *certain* that he will, thereby, affect others by his good words and good works? Oh, no! There does not seem to be that spreading power in holy things that there is in unholy things! At any rate, not in those that are merely ceremonially holy. Here, then, is a man who is, in a legal sense, clean before God and he is carrying a holy thing in the fold of his garment, but he does not, therefore, make that which he touches to be clean or holy.

Then the Spirit of God, having by the mouth of the Prophet put the Truth of God in that way, suggested to him to ask the priests another question. “Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touches any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean.” There is such a terrible contagion about uncleanness that he who is affected by it spreads it wherever he goes. Whatever he puts his foot upon, or touches with his hand, becomes thereby defiled. We cannot communicate holiness, but we can communicate unholiness! It will cause us labor and agony and anguish of spirit to impart to another even *one* right idea—and when it is imparted, it is not fully fixed in the hearer’s heart till the Spirit of God comes and works a

miracle of Grace! But it is easy enough to communicate evil. A lewd song may have but one hearer and yet never be forgotten! A wrong action may never be chronicled by the public press, yet some little eye that saw it shall have learned from the evil example something that shall never be unlearned! The horribly contagious and infectious power of sin, wherever it is displayed, is terrible.

But the thing to which I want especially to call your attention is this. See what a picture is before us. Here is an unclean man—he has touched a dead body and so become unclean—therefore whatever he touches *also* becomes unclean. There is a loaf of bread. He has cut a slice off it and all that loaf has become unclean! Here is a mess of stew on the table—he has taken a portion from it and so made it all unclean. There is a cup of wine. He has sipped it, or he may have only touched the cup that contains it—but the whole of the wine is unclean! Here is oil, which one would think would be medicinally useful without being at all harmful, but this unclean person has put his finger to it and it is unclean! Here is meat, or vegetable food of any kind—he has touched it, so it is all unclean. I should not like to be that man—to make unclean even a chair that I might touch! To pollute the very house in which I dwelt, to be unable to shake hands with a friend without making him defiled through contact with me because I was unclean! I say again that is a dreadful picture and you must bear with me when I tell you my fear that it is not only the portrait of the erring people in Haggai's day, but also a life-like representation of some who are now present—and of multitudes who pass for very good people in these, our days! It can still be said with utmost truthfulness, "So is this people, and so is this nation before Me, says the Lord; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean."

I. So this is my subject. **FIRST, THE TERRIBLE UNCLEANNESS.** And here I will keep to my text.

If you want to fully understand the text, or to have it put into New Testament language, you must look at Paul's Epistle to his son, Titus, for there, in the 15th verse of the first Chapter, you get this same picture in other colors—"Unto the pure all things are pure: but to them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled." They are themselves so impure that everything becomes impure to them. Every man whose heart is not renewed by Grace is in this sad and terrible condition!

Here note, first, that *common things are polluted by men of unclean nature.* The Apostle Paul, writing to the Romans, says, "I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself." Nothing that God has made and that sin has not marred, is common or unclean of *itself*, "for every creature of God is good." From that day when Peter, at Joppa, saw the great sheet let down to the earth, wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts, creeping things and fowls of the air, he was taught a lesson that he needed to learn—"What God has cleansed, that call not you common." In and of itself, there is nothing that God has made which ought to be described as common. To the pure heart, everything is pure—but unclean men may make unclean every common or everyday thing of life. They can not only make wine to be unclean, as,

alas, is all but universally the case, but even bread, stew, oil, meat, or anything that is, in itself, harmless, can be rendered impure when it comes to be touched by impure men and used wrongfully!

Perhaps someone asks, "How can that be?" Well, common things can be rendered unclean when you make gods of them. If the most important questions of your life are, "What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and with what shall we be clothed?"—if you seek, first of all, in this life merely these things—though they are not, in themselves, evil, they will become *idols* and so will be unclean, for every idol is a defiling thing to those who bow down before it. Anything which takes your attention away from your God is an idol—it is another god, a rival god—and so it is the most unclean thing possible! I mean just this, that, although your ordinary pursuits may be, in themselves, perfectly innocent and may be commendable if they are followed out to the Glory of God, yet if your first objective in life is yourself and what you can get out of the common things of this life, you defile them by putting them into the place which belongs alone to God!

Next, common things may be defiled by an excess in the use of them. This may be done by gluttony. What a defilement it is of bread, the staff of life, and of those comforts which God gives to us for food, when a man makes his own belly into a god—whose temple is his kitchen! I know not that the worst of the heathen can possibly degrade themselves more than epicures and drunks do when they make those things which, in themselves, are not evil, to become their gods and indulge in them until, by their excess, they sink below the level of the beasts that perish! You can go to this excess with all kinds of things. The most common and most apparent case is that of the man who indulges in strong drink. But all other common things are capable of being polluted in the same way—and they are continually being so polluted.

Others pollute common things by excess in the keeping of them. The miser's gold is cankered by his avarice. He who must always be getting more land, even if he has to banish everybody from the range of his windows, defiles his possessions. He who in trade is exacting towards those who labor for him, demanding more and giving less than is their due, defiles his trade. He makes a dunghill of his shop and turns his traffic into treason against God! I need not go into particulars because the thing is apparent to all men, and you can see how a defiled man, coming into a business which, in itself, is perfectly right, nevertheless defiles it by excess in the keeping of the goods which God has entrusted to him as a steward to use for the good of others.

I am sure that we can also defile the common mercies of this life by ingratitude in the enjoyment of them. Are there not many who eat and drink, yet never bless God for what they have? Or who abound in riches and yet out of all their wealth there never comes from their hearts any thanksgiving to God? They are, as good old Rowland Hill used to say, like the hogs under the oak which eat the acorns that fall on the ground, but never lift up their thoughts to the tree from which the acorns come. These ungrateful people are willing to receive all the good things which God may give them and they are greedy to get more—but the Lord never receives from them even the peppercorn rent of a word of thanksgiving!

Their hearts are set upon the gifts of God and they care nothing for the gracious Giver. O Sirs, when you sit down without thanksgiving to your food and to your drink, your tables are defiled, your platters and your cups are defiled, and every mouthful that goes down your throats is defiled because you do not eat and drink to the glory of God!

See, then, in how many ways common things may be polluted by men of unclean nature.

But, even worse than that, *holy things are polluted by men of unclean nature*. It is a very sad thing to see how the most sacred things can be spoiled by the touch of unholy hands. You have all heard of Voltaire and you know something of the character of the man. I should think that nobody ever excelled Voltaire in a clever kind of blasphemy, yet I find him writing to a lady—a lady of whose character the less said, the better—“My friends say everywhere that I am not a Christian. I have just given them the lie direct by performing my Easter devotions (*mes paques*) publicly, thus proving to all my lively desire to terminate my long career in the religion in which I was born.” Only fancy a man like Voltaire, after blasphemously saying of Christ that he would “crush the wretch,” then going to eat “the sacrament,” as some call it! And I am afraid that every Easter there are many people of that sort, who have no respect for the Lord’s Day, but because their “priests” choose to call the day, “Good Friday,” they have great respect for *that* day, and they will come, then, to the Communion Table, though all the year long they have never had a thought concerning Him whose death they profess to celebrate! It is a terrible thing that the innermost mysteries of the Church of Christ are often polluted by a godless, thoughtless man who, nevertheless, for some hypocritical or formalistic reason, will come even to the Table of the Lord, not hesitating to break through that guard of fire—“he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks condemnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.”

Brothers and Sisters, it is not merely the Lord’s Table that an unclean man defiles, but he pollutes the Gospel by using it as an excuse for sin! Listen to him. He says, “the preacher proclaimed the mercy of God, so I am going to live in sin.” Brute beast are you to talk like that! Another says, “the minister told us that salvation is all of Grace and that a great sinner glorifies God when he is converted, so why should I not be a great sinner?” O horrible wretch, you are accursed, indeed, when you can turn the very Grace of God into an excuse for your wantonness and sin?” Oh, but,” says a third, “you say that salvation is all of the Sovereignty of God, therefore I cannot do anything in the matter.” I know you, Sir, you are, in your own heart, so defiled that you use the blessed Gospel, itself, as the instrument of your rebellion against God! Such people are, alas, all too common—they touch with defiled hands the holiest thing and so pollute it.

But what happens if these defiled people pray? Oh, how many prayers there are which only insult the Most High God! If you sit down, or stand up, or kneel and you are, “a miserable sinner,” when you neither believe that you are a sinner, nor suffer any misery because of your sin, what are you doing but provoking the Lord to anger by virtually lying in His Presence? Is not much so-called praying just of that sort? It is an awful

thing to repeat a form of prayer when your heart does not mean it. What is it but a direct insult to the Lord? Yet how can men who are defiled pray such a prayer as God will accept? They must be first cleansed before their prayers can be accepted. There is nothing so holy, in earth or in Heaven, but a man of defiled heart and conscience will pollute it if he can but lay his hand upon it.

Further, *even good works are polluted when they come from evil men.* See what it says in the text—"So is this people, and so is this nation before Me, says the Lord; and so is every work of their hands." Here is a charitable man—he has been giving away a great deal of money, yet look how he has defiled his liberality! He sounded a trumpet before him. He was ostentatious, he desired to be thought very generous and thus, every penny that he has given to the poor has been defiled! "Take heed," says our Lord, "that you do not give your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise you have no reward from your Father which is in Heaven. Therefore when you give your alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say to you, They have their reward." There is no reward reserved for them at the resurrection of the just, for they have had their reward already!

Here is another man and though he is not renewed and regenerate, he is, in his own way, a very religious man. But why is he religious? Partly, out of fear! But still more, from custom! Possibly just to please his friends, or to stand well with his neighbors. Is not all that simply defiling religion?

I have also known some men appear very humble just to gain their own ends and when an unrenewed man puts on humility merely as a cloak—I was going to say that he is devilish, for the very humble man who aims at making some gain by it—the Uriah Heep of the novelist—is one of the most despicable of all people beneath the sky! When even that precious Grace of humility is touched by his hand, does he not defile it till it appears loathsome in the eyes of men?

I have seen that same man become sternly righteous in order to get revenge on his enemy. "I must do the right thing," he says, and he speaks as if it was most painful to him to have to do it. But all the while there is somebody whom he hates and he is determined to crush him! He will have his pound of flesh, or the uttermost farthing of his debt, and he tries to excuse his malice by saying, "You know, we must, sometimes, make an example of wrong-doers." Yes, other people have been very foolishly charitable and have passed by wrongs done to them—but he is going to be a defender of everything that is upright—yet he does it merely to gratify his desire for vengeance! Is he not defiling holy things and good works by touching them? Yet is not this often the case with bad men? They defile to the last degree even things that appear to be good!

And, dear Friends, the text adds that *even sacrifices are polluted when offered by unclean men*—"that which they offer there is unclean." Their lamb, their bulls, their fine flour, their oil that they pour out at the foot of God's altar—all becomes defiled! There is what professes to be a public thanksgiving to God, but it is turned into a show to the glory of men! Whenever the unregenerate world brings anything to God as a sacrifice,

what a wretched mess it makes of it! It becomes only another occasion for sinning against the Most High. Supposing a heathen should come in, on Christmas night, when professedly Christian people are supposed to be celebrating the birth of Christ, but all their cups are full of wine and they can scarcely stand for staggering? What would he think the Christ must be whose birthday they are celebrating? An unrenewed man cannot touch anything without spoiling it! Wherever he goes, he is a spoiler. The sea has often been strewn with wrecks which have been occasioned by the stupidity of merchants—and the world is full of the tombs of men who have been hurried to their graves by other men. Truly did the poet sing—

**“Every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile.”**

It is a mercy that unrenewed men cannot enter Heaven! If they could, Heaven would not last as Heaven for even five minutes. There would be another Hell created if unrenewed men could walk among the palms and harps of the glorified. You may do what you like with a man, but as long as he is unclean, he communicates his defilement wherever he may lay his hand.

That is a picture of every man who has not been born again! It is not a pretty picture, is it? Did you come here expecting me to say pretty things to you? I have not learned the art of doing that, but in the name of God I assure you that this is true, and I pray His Spirit to convince every unregenerate person that it is true! In your present condition you cannot do any good works, you cannot serve God—what have you to do to declare His statutes? You cannot do anything but what will displease Him until you are born again. “Except a man is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God”—he cannot even see it! —And further, “Except a man is born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.” He will have to stand shivering outside its walls, but of that Kingdom he cannot be a subject until he has passed from death to life—and has been made a new creature in Christ Jesus, and so has been cleansed from his sinful defilement.

II. Thus I have kept to my text, but now I am going to run right away from it to speak upon THE ALL-SUFFICIENT REMEDY.

Where can we find a better type and figure of that remedy than in the chapter which I read to you just now from the Book of Numbers? [Exposition at end of sermon—was always read *before* sermon—EOD.] In Numbers 19 we have a type of the great remedy and a striking account of the uncleanness which it removed. I shall not attempt a full exposition of the rites used for purifying the unclean, but I would have you notice that, first of all, in order to the removal of uncleanness, *there was a sacrifice*. There was a red heifer, without spot, which had to be slain. There could be no sort of purification except through death, and there can be no cleansing of your defilement, my Brothers and Sisters, except through the Sacrifice of the Son of God. The red heifer and the lambs and the bulls under the Old Covenant died to teach people that the punishment of sin was the forfeiture of life—and these creatures died in the place of the offender that he might live. They were all types pointing to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God who, in the fullness of time, came and took upon

Himself His people's sin and stood in His people's place—that He might die—"the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God."

There is no hope of your ever being made clean except through the blood of Him whom God has set forth to be the Propitiation for sin. Kick not at this doctrine, I pray you, for why should Jesus die at all if you could be saved without His death? And if there is not everything in that death that is necessary for your cleansing, what do you propose to add to it? It seems to me to be sheer blasphemy to think that anything you can feel, or do, or give, can be worthy to be added to the great Sacrifice of Christ! I wish you would say, "If this is the way of salvation, by a Sacrifice offered in my place to be accepted by me, I will gladly and joyfully accept it." This is the great Truth of God—"The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin." There is no other cleansing and there is no need of any other! Listen to this text and believe what it says—"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." Is not that enough for you?

Turning again to this Book of Numbers, you will notice that *there was a burning*, for this heifer, after being killed, was burned outside the camp. This burning signified that sin was very hateful to God, that He could not bear to have it where His people lived. Sin must be put outside the camp and then, as a dead thing, it must be burned with fire and the heifer which was supposed to bear that sin must suffer that doom. Jesus also, when He took our sin, suffered outside the gate. I want you, dear Friends, to feel that sin is a hateful thing—you can never be purged from it while you love it. Shut it out from your heart as much as possible! Shut it out from your thoughts! Since it put Christ outside the camp, you must put it outside the camp. There is no cleansing a man from sin while he lives in sin and there is no possibility of forgiveness while sin is indulged in and delighted in! You must stop it—it must be burned as offal, over the wall there among the filth and refuse of the city—and be put away altogether from you. In type of which you see your Lord thus slain upon the Cross, as if He, too, had been a felon, "made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree."

Looking again at the type, you will see that *there was a water of separation*. The ashes of this red heifer were to be put into running water—not stagnant, but lively, running water—and a mixture being made with it. It was to be sprinkled upon the people as a water of separation, or purification. And, dear Friends, you and I must have the Holy Spirit pouring in upon us the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ to make us clean. There is no purification for you, my Friend, except by the Holy Spirit. There must be the water as well as the blood—they must both come to purge the conscience from dead works that we may be clean, like the priests of old, and go into the Holy Place to present acceptable sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. You must have the blood to take away the guilt of sin and you must also have the water to wash you from the pollution of sin, that you may be sanctified and set apart to the living God!

You will notice, too, that *there was an application of all this with hyssop*. Hence David says, "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean."

Faith is, as it were, that little bunch of hyssop. Hyssop was a small plant, as I suppose, insignificant enough in itself and of no use except for use in sprinkling. It was dipped into the blood and then the guilty one was sprinkled—or into the water with the ashes—and with it the unclean one was sprinkled and made clean. You must have this faith if you would be saved! The blood of the Paschal Lamb would not have saved the Israelites in Egypt if it had not been smeared on the lintel and the two side posts. The scarlet line would not have saved Rahab if she had not fastened it in the window, to be the mark that her house, with its inhabitants, was to be spared. “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” It is all you have to do—and this *He enables you to do*. Just simply believe that Christ is able to save you and repose yourself on that dear heart which was pierced for you!

Put yourself into those blessed hands that were fastened to the Cross and you are saved! The moment you believe in Jesus, your sins are gone—all of them, for there is no halving sin! There is a solidarity in sin—it is one great mass! So that the moment a sinner believes in Christ, all his sins—past, present and to come—are gone, and gone forever. “To come,” you say, “how can that be before they are committed?” Did not Christ die, not only *before* we committed any sin, but before we had any existence? And yet even then, in His death, He put away the sin of His people. If you believe, your transgression is forgiven—you are “accepted in the Beloved!” And, as surely as you live, you shall one day stand before yon burning Throne of God, “without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing,” and you shall have no fear—

**“Bold shall I stand in that great day,
For who anything to my charge shall lay?
While through Your blood absolved I am
From sin’s tremendous curse and shame.”**

See, Beloved, how simple is this deliverance from impurity? If the impurity was terrible, yet the remedy is so perfect, so complete, so available, that my heart dances while I talk of it to you!

Finally, this remedy must be applied to our whole nature. Remember that 19th verse that we read—“And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at evening.” If you, dear Friend, would be clean in God’s sight, you must be washed from head to foot—not merely with the washing of water, but with the washing of the Holy Spirit. “What is holiness?” said a clergyman to a poor Irish boy. “Please, Your Reverence,” he said, “it is having a clean inside.” And so it is—and you have to be washed that way—washed inside, washed in your very nature! The fountain of your being has to be cleansed, the source of all the pollution is to be made white! And how can this be done by any man for himself? This great purification can only be worked by a wonderful work of Grace, by the power of the Holy Spirit! But then the Holy Spirit is pledged to do this to everyone who believes in Jesus. It is a part of the Covenant—“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.”

“Oh!” says one, “that would be delightful, but I am afraid that I should fall away, after all.” That you shall *not*, for here is another Covenant promise—“I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me.” O glorious promise! That crowns it all! I want you, dear Friends, to have a faith that can believe God and say, “I have given myself over to Christ to save me to the end, and He will do it. And I commit to Him my soul, not for this next year, only, but for all years and all times. And I give myself up never to have any claim to myself, again—to be His forever and ever.” What does He say to that? He answers, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give to them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them to Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand.” You see the *double picture*—Christ has His people in His hand, and then His Father comes and puts His hand over the top of Christ’s! And all who believe in Christ are in that double hand of the Son and of the Father—and who shall pluck them from there? We defy earth, Heaven and Hell to ever tear away any soul that is once in the grip of the Lord Jesus Christ! Who would not have such a glorious salvation as this?

O you defiled ones, come to Him who alone can cleanse you! And when He has once cleansed you, remember that you will have need to daily wash your feet and you shall find Him waiting to wash them! But you shall never need such a complete cleansing as He gave you at the first. There shall never be a repetition of that, for, “he that is bathed, needs not but to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.” May the Lord give you that cleansing if you have not had it and, if you have had it, rejoice in it with all your hearts! Amen and Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
NUMBERS 19; PSALM 51.**

Numbers 19:1. *And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying.—* This ordinance was not given to Moses on Mount Sinai, but in the wilderness of Paran, after the people had broken their Covenant with God and were condemned to die. You know that the 90th Psalm—that dolorous dirge which we read at funerals—called “a prayer of Moses the man of God.” Well might he write that Psalm, for he lived among a generation of people who were all doomed to die within a short time, and to die in the wilderness. This ordinance was especially appointed to meet the cases of those who were rendered unclean by the frequent deaths which occurred. There was to be a simple and easy way of purification for them—and the teaching of this chapter to us is that inasmuch as we dwell in a sinful world, there needs to be some simple and ready method of cleansing us, that we may be able to draw near to God.

2, 3. *This is the ordinance of the Law which the LORD has commanded, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring you a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke: and you shall give her to Eleazar the priest, that he may bring her forth outside the camp, and one shall slay her before his face.* This was not a usual sacrifice, for the beasts offered were, as a rule, males—but this

was to be a special sacrifice. It was not to be killed by the priest, as other sacrificial offerings were, but the Lord said, “One shall slay her before his face.”

4. *And Eleazar the priest shall take of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle of her blood directly before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times.* This makes it a sacrifice. Otherwise it scarcely deserves the name.

5, 6. *And one shall burn the heifer in his sight; her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall he burn: and the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer.* All was to be burned and then the ashes, the essence and product of it, were to be preserved to make the water of purification needed to remove those constant defilements which fell upon the people of the camp. So the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, which are the very essence of Him, are perpetually preserved for the removal of our daily pollution. There was also the essence of cedar wood, that is, the emblem of fragrant immortality, for cedar was an unrotting wood. “And hyssop and scarlet.” There must be the humble hyssop used, yet there must be some degree of royalty about the sacrifice, as the scarlet color implied—and all this is mixed with the blood and the flesh and the skin of the creature, to make the ashes of purification.

7. *Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp, and the priest shall be unclean until the evening.* What a strange sacrifice was this, for even when it was offered it seemed to make unclean all those who had anything to do with it!

8, 9. *And he that burns her shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and shall be unclean until the evening. And a man that is clean.* Now we come to the merit of Christ, for who is clean except Christ?

9. *Shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up outside the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation: it is a purification for sin.* This ceremony does not represent the putting away of sin—that is typified in the slaying of the victims—but it represents that daily cleansing which the children of God need, the perpetual efficacy of the merit of Christ, for this red heifer was probably killed only once in the wilderness. According to Jewish tradition there never have been more than six killed. I cannot tell whether that is true or not, but certainly the ashes of one single beast would last for a long time if they were only to be mixed with water and then the water to be sprinkled upon the unclean. So this ordinance is meant to represent the standing merit, the perpetual purifying of Believers by the Sacrifice of Christ enabling them to come to the worship of God, and to mingle with holy men, and even with holy angels, without defiling them! In the fullest sense, it may be said of our Lord’s atoning Sacrifice, “It is a purification for sin.”

10. *And he that gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the evening: and it shall be to the children of Israel, and to the stranger that sojourns among them, for a statute forever.* That

was the remedy ordained by the Lord for purifying the defiled. Now notice what made this remedy so necessary.

11, 12. *He that touches the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days. He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean; but if he purifies not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean.* I wonder whether that is a revelation of our being justified through the resurrection of Christ, which took place on the third day after his death, and then our being brought into perfect rest, which represents the seventh day, through the wondrous purifying of our great Sacrifice, the Lamb of God?

13, 14. *Whoever touches the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifies not himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet upon him. This is the Law, when a man dies in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days.* Think, dear Friends, what a solemn and yet what an irksome ordinance this must have been! Why, according to this regulation, Joseph could not have gone to see his father Jacob, and to be present at his death, without being defiled! You could not have watched over your consumptive child, or have nursed your dying mother without becoming defiled, if you had been subject to this Law of God! And everything that was in the tent, or in the house, became defiled, too.

15-16. *And every open vessel, which has no covering bound upon it, is unclean. And whoever touches one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days.* This Law was, indeed, a yoke of bondage which our fathers were not able to bear! It was meant to teach us how easily we can be defiled. Anywhere they went, these people might touch a bone or touch a grave, and then they were defiled, and you and I, watch as carefully as we may, will find ourselves touching some of the dead works of sin and becoming defiled! It is a happy circumstance for us that there is the means of purification always at hand! We may always go to the precious blood of Jesus and may once again be washed clean—and be made fit to go up to the house of the Lord!

17-22. *And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burned heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel and a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave: and the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself and wash his clothes and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at evening. But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation because he has defiled the sanctuary of the LORD: the water of separation has not been sprinkled upon him; he is unclean. And it shall be a perpetual statute to them, that he that sprinkles the water of separation shall wash his clothes and he that touches the water of separation shall be unclean until evening. And whatever the unclean person touches shall be unclean; and*

the soul that touches it shall be unclean until evening. This ordinance was partly sanitary. The Egyptians were accustomed to keep their dead in their houses, preserved as mummies. No Jew could do that, for he would be defiled. Other nations were accustomed to bury their dead, as we once did, within the city walls, or round their own places of worship, as if to bring death as near as they could to themselves. No Jew could do this, for he was defiled if he even passed over a grave! So they were driven to what God intended they should have—that is, extramural interments, and to keep the graveyard as far as they could away from the abodes of the living. The spiritual meaning of this regulation is that we must watch with great care against every occasion for sin and, inasmuch as there will be these occasions and we shall be defiled, we must constantly go to the Lord with a prayer like that of David in the 51st Psalm, which we will now read.

Psalm 51:1. *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness according to the multitude of Your tender mercies blot out my transgressions.* There may be some people who think themselves so holy that they cannot join in this Psalm. *I can*, for one, and I believe that there are many of you who can join with me. Just let us, for the time being, forget all others and let us come, each one for himself or herself, with David's language on our lips or in our hearts so far as it applies to our individual case.

2-19. *Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned and done this evil in Your sight that You might be justified when You speak and be clear when You judge. Behold, I was shaped in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness that the bones which you have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your Presence; and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation; and uphold me with Your gracious Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors Your ways; and sinners shall be converted to You. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall show forth Your praise. For You desire not sacrifice; otherwise would I give it: You delight not in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion: build the walls of Jerusalem. Then shall You be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings, then shall they offer bullocks upon Your altar.*

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

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

THRICE HAPPY DAY!
(THE NEW YEAR, THE FIRST SABBATH AND THE TIME OF BLESSING)
NO. 3073

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 2, 1908.

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

“From this day will I bless you.”
Haggai 2:19.

I THINK as soon as ever I read that promise, your heart would leap towards it and you would spontaneously say, “Lord, be this the day—the first day of the year, and that day the Lord’s Day—make this the day from which You will begin to bless me in a very special manner!” God’s blessing is the richest gift which His creatures can receive. To be deprived of it is their greatest calamity! What is Hell? It is the place where God’s blessing cannot come. What is Heaven? It is the place where God’s blessing is constantly enjoyed without admixture. My God, were there a choice between Your blessing and Heaven, I would sooner choose Your blessing and be out of Heaven, than be in Heaven, if such a thing were possible, unblessed of my God. The highest happiness of a creature is to be blessed by its Creator—and the very highest felicity of the child of God is to have his Father’s blessing on his head and in his heart!

In a certain sense, dear Friends, we cannot tell the time when God began to bless His people. If you go back to the day before all days, when there was no day but the Ancient of Days. If you get back to the time when there was no time, when only eternity existed, you find, in the council chambers of Divinity, that God was blessing His people. If I might suppose a day in eternity, I might say of it, “From *this* day will Jehovah bless His people.” When Jesus Christ appeared in human flesh, though you and I were not born, yet were we written in the Book in which all the members of Christ are written—and from that day when He bowed His head and said, “It is finished,” and yielded up the ghost, a channel was opened for those mighty streams of Divine Grace which sprang from the Divine Decree! And it might be peculiarly said that from that day God began to bless us. When you and I were born, from the first moment that our face received the air and our eyes were opened to the light, mercies were waiting for us. A tender mother received us on her bosom. A kind father provided for the needs of our weakness and infancy. I may say that from the cradle, the Lord has said, “From this day will I bless you.” But to some of us there has been a second birthday, a day in which we passed from death unto life, from darkness into light. Happy day! We can never forget it! Next is it in happiness to that day in which we shall see

the face of Christ without a veil between! The happiest day of our existence was that when we saw Christ hanging on the tree to bear the punishment of our sins. Truly may I say, as I stand at the foot of the Cross and remember the day when Jesus first met with me there, that He then said to me, "From this day will I bless you."

Passing, however, over all the times and seasons upon which we might well be tempted to linger, I shall use my text, first, *for seeking souls*. The time is come, even tonight, when God will bless them! Then I shall use it *for individual Christians*. May the same be their case! Then I shall apply it *to this Church as a whole*. May this Church realize the blessedness of the promise!

I. First, I shall use the text FOR SEEKING SOULS.

I remember well when my heart was seeking after God with intense earnestness. My never-ceasing desire and my daily cry was, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him!" And I would ask the Lord, "How long shall I cry unto You and You will not hear me? How long shall I seek the face of Christ in vain?" This gives me sympathy with others in a like condition. You have been for a long time seeking rest and finding none. You are weary and heavy laden—and you are saying, tonight, "When will God bless me? When shall I be privileged to see my Father's face in Christ Jesus and to know that my sins are forgiven?" My Beloved Brothers and Sisters, there is a period known to God when He will show His face to His people. That period, when it does arrive, will certainly bring you comfort. It is written concerning Christ, "He must needs go through Samaria" and there is a similar necessity that, to every chosen sinner, a day of Grace should come so that he may see Christ and be saved through Him! That fixed and delightful time shall yet arrive to you. I pray that it may arrive tonight!

If you want to know when it is likely to arrive, let me give you some signs by which you may foresee it.

You are likely to have the whisper of God's love in your heart *when you have given up all confidence in the flesh*. It may be that you have some indistinct reliance, at the present moment, upon your own prayers. You are not so foolish as to trust in your Baptism, or your Confirmation, or your Church attendance, or Chapel attendance—but there lurks within you the traitorous thought that there is some efficacy, some usefulness in your Bible reading, in your tears and repentance—or something else that comes from you. Now, remember, you will never know the fullness of Christ until you know the emptiness of everything else but Christ! All that was ever woven by man God shall unravel. All the sticks and stones that human energy can build in the matter of eternal salvation must be plucked down by Jehovah's hand, for it is Christ alone who must build that house! Unless He shall do so, they will labor in vain that build it. I say that this may be only an indistinct matter, but I pray you to cast out every particle of this old leaven—for Christ and your soul can never be agreed until you are willing to take Him to be your sole and only reliance. And if you have a shadow of a

dependence anywhere else, Christ can never be a Savior to you. See to that matter.

The time to bless you is probably come *when there is a clean divorce between you and all your sins*. That it is which keeps so many poor sinners in trouble, because though they have given up many sins, there is one favorite sin which they still hold. But, Sinner, you cannot love Christ and your sins too! I know you are quite content to give up all the outward sins of the flesh, but there may be some worldliness, some covetousness, some little sin which you are loath to part with. But you must slay every one of these, in the purpose of your heart, or you can never be reconciled to your Father and your God. One unrepented sin. One sin indulged in and delighted in will as effectually stop the gates of Heaven against your soul as if you were living in fornication, adultery, or murder! Your heart must hate all sin and your heart must love all holiness. When this comes to pass, from that day God will bless you.

There are some who have never obtained peace through Christ *because they have not sought it in earnest*. "I have prayed," you say, "in earnest. I have groaned, cried, and wrestled." Yes, I know you have done so at times, but your earnestness has been of the spasmodic order. The gates of Heaven open to all who are really believing in Christ, but they must know how to knock and to knock again and again. When your soul has come to the point when you can say—

***"I can no denial take,
For I plead for Jesus' sake"—***

then you shall have no denial! O Soul, think of the Hell from which you would escape! Will not that quicken your slumbering spirit? Then think of the Heaven of which you would be a partaker! Will not this fire your sluggish soul? Come, I pray you, and meditate for a little while upon your state and condition, upon time, eternity, death, Heaven, Hell—and let your soul begin to bestir herself. If you are cold and love not prayer, God will not bless you. But when your soul comes to a devout enthusiasm—from that day will God bless you.

I think you are quite sure to get a blessing *when you are willing to have it in God's way*. Some of you do not intend to believe in Christ unless you feel very deep conviction. If God will condescend to alarm you with dreams, you will then go to Him. If you have made up your mind that you are to be saved in a certain stereotyped fashion and you will never believe in Jesus unless He shall be pleased to manifest Himself in that particular way—the day of your blessing will tarry a long time before it comes. But when your soul says, "If I can but look to Jesus, I will not ask for this experience nor for that. Only save me, Lord! Do but take me into the Ark and let me escape from the destruction that is coming upon all who are outside—and my soul will lay aside her whims, her wishes, her proud will—and bless Your name for what Your Grace has done." When your heart lies before God as the wax under the seal, ready to take any impression that the Divine Hand chooses to put upon it, then will God say, "From this day will I bless you."

To sum up everything in one—if there is a sinner here who says in his soul, “Truly, I will take Christ tonight and rest upon Him. I see clearly that I have nowhere else to fly and I, therefore, fly to the cleft in the Rock of Ages and find a shelter there”—from this night God will bless you! If your faith is built on Christ, and Christ only, go your way—your sins, which are many, are forgiven you and you are an accepted soul! And neither death nor Hell shall ever divide you from your Father’s love. Rejoice with unspeakable joy, for a long train of mercies shall be yours, world without end! I think I have said enough on that point. Pray, you who understand the power of prayer, that God may bless these simple, feeble sentences to the comforting of some captives—and to the loosening of their bonds!

II. And now I shall turn TO GOD’S PEOPLE and address a few words to them.

Present in this assembly, tonight, are many saints who know their blessedness in Christ Jesus, but they are pining after a higher state of spiritual life. They need more communion with Christ, a greater conformity to His image, and so on. Dear Friends, you are wanting to know when you may expect this choice favor, when you may dare to walk in the light of your Father’s face. Let me answer you. *When your spirit is entirely resigned to the Divine will*, then, from that day, God will bless you! It is very hard to bring down Lord Will-be-Will to be a contented servant of the King of kings. It is an easy thing to stand up here and sing—

***“If You should call me to resign
What most I prize—it never was mine!
I only yield to You what was Yours—
‘Your will be done!’”***

But it is not so easy to say that when you are looking into the face of a dead child, or have to follow to the grave some dearly-beloved wife or husband, or some brother or sister upon whom your soul was set! To stand to our surrenders, then, is hard work. We say, “Your will be done.” But when God’s will is being done, we do not always use Job’s language and say, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!” When you see a Christian in the furnace, you cannot expect that he will get out by asking, “When will this flame abate?” But the fire will soon be over when a man, in such circumstances, can say, “The Lord’s will be done.” It is a sign that the metal has been properly fused and that the dross has gone when you can see the image of the Refiner in it—when the heart reflects the face of God and says, “Not as I will, but as You will.”

Beloved, depend upon it, our miseries grow at the root of our selfishness! Where selfishness begins, sorrow begins. And where selfishness is dead, grief is dead. Have I made myself clear? If our souls had wholly given up everything to Jehovah’s will, we would never lose anything, for we would already have given it up! We would never murmur if we could say, as the old Puritan said, “I always have my own will because God has helped me to make His will my own will.” It proved the

good state of the beggar's heart when someone said to him, "I wish you a good day," and he replied, "I thank you for your wish, but I always have good days. I do not know that one day is better than another when God is with me." "Well," said the one who was speaking to him, "surely there are some days that you like better than others." "No," he said, "there are not—all days please God—and what pleases God pleases me." "If," said one, to an aged Christian woman, "you had your choice whether you would live or die, what would you choose?" She replied, "I would not choose at all." "But suppose you were forced to choose?" "I would then ask God to be good enough to choose for me." Still, you see, she would avoid the choice and leave it to the Lord! When your heart becomes like that—then from that day will God bless you!

As Christians, we may expect great blessing *when it is no longer a matter of talk with us that we will give our all for the service of God, but when we really do so*. Then, from that day, God will bless us. I need not say, probably, that there is no giving so acceptable to God as that which is most costly to us. The widow's mite was precious not because it was a mite, but because it was all that she had. The old proverb says that "the liberal man gives until his hand sweats." There are not many of that sort. True liberality begins when the hand begins to feel when some sacrifice is caused by what we have given to the Lord our God. Do I feel, tonight, that all I am and all I have belongs to my Master? Can I truly say that if a life of pain and poverty would glorify Him, I would desire to live in pain and poverty? And if my death would more honor Him, I would be willing to leave health and comfort at once and to bear the stroke of the sword of death? Do you feel that—

***"There's not a lamb among the flock
I would disdain to feed.
There's not a foe before whose face
I'd fear His cause to plead"?***

Can you make again, tonight, that solemn declaration of allegiance to your God that you made when first you came to Christ—

***"'Tis done! The great transaction's done!
I am my Lord's, and He is mine—
He drew me, and I followed on.
Charmed to confess the voice Divine"?***

If so, then from this day God will bless you.

There are some particular days on which God is pleased to grant a new lease of blessing to His people. Sometimes it is *when they have been especially engaged in prayer*. I suppose you have all some landmark, if I may so call it, in your life, to which you can refer as being the starting point of your spiritual career, and also seasons of peculiar spiritual enjoyment. On such a day, for instance, one of you can say, "I had sweet communion with Christ. My soul was ravished with the glance of His eyes." Well, dating back from that, you feel that there was a period of peculiar enjoyment. Now, I hope that, tonight, at the Communion Table, we shall be favored with such a season and equally so tomorrow in private prayer. A certain Highlander began to entertain doubts as to his

salvation. He could not, however, rest in doubt, but went to the top of a high mountain and continued there all night wrestling in prayer. And he was so taken up in devotion that he remained there the whole of the next day! But, from that time forth, he was never vexed with doubts again! His mighty struggle with Satan upon the top of the mountain seemed to end forever the period of his doubts and fears—from that time a clear shining set in upon him until he was taken Home. It were well if we were to have some seasons set apart for seeking communion with Christ, for at such times He would bless us.

I believe, too, that *many Christians have dated new spiritual life from some particular act in their history*. I do not like to tell my own secrets, but there has been such a day with me from which I have had to date a sort of new life. Our friends know little of it, perhaps, but I recollect one Sabbath evening when, for some weeks, the collections in support of the College had not amounted to more than £2 or £3, and there were some 20 or 30 young men to maintain—and all that I had, had been spent—there was no money that I knew of to pay for another week. That evening I learned to walk by faith in God in temporal things—a lesson that I had not so fully learned before. That very night I went out from here and said to one of my Brothers who is sitting behind me, “Now my bank is exhausted.” “No,” he said, “your Banker is the eternal God and He can never be exhausted.” “Well, at any rate,” I said, “I have nothing in hand.” “Still,” he said, “cannot you trust your God?” We opened a letter that was then lying on the table, totally unknown to him or to me, and found in it £200 sent by some donor whose name I never heard of and probably never shall hear of until the Day of Judgment! From that moment to this I have trusted God in that matter and, mark my words, though I have found funds to be lacking for this or that, there has never been any real need of money, for, whenever it is needed, God sends it! I have considered that from that very night, my heavenly Father took that work into His own hands and He said, “From this time will I bless you.”

Some of you may have had a comfortable income and you got on very well, but it was all taken from you and you seemed to be cast adrift. But then, for the first time, you began to live by faith—and though, as men call it, it is only a hand-to-mouth way of living—yet you have had greater blessedness in it than you ever had before! And, though you may not be as rich as before, yet you have had such inward comfort and such peace of conscience, that you have felt that God from that day has blessed you. If there are any Christians here who are dallying midway between faith and sense, I advise you to snap the chain! Worldly people will say to you, “Let well enough alone,” and so on, but the best prudence in the world is to be a child—and the highest wisdom is that which the world thinks folly! “He who runs straightforward makes the best runner,” was the saying of a German when he was resting upon his God in one of his works of piety, and very true is it. Do not go roundabout, here and there, and ask, “Is this or that true?” but go straight to your God in the simple

path of duty, in the holy way of faith. Take that course and “from this day,” says the Lord, “will I bless you.”

III. And now, to close. I think there is a time when EVERY CHURCH may hear the voice of God saying, “From this day will I bless you.”

I believe it will hear that voice as soon as ever it is bent upon getting a blessing. It is a difficult thing, however, to get a church into that state. I know some country churches where the minister’s efforts are almost certain to be fruitless, not so much because of the congregation as because of the church. My Brothers in the ministry sometimes say to me, “I tried to get a Prayer Meeting, but they would not come. I wanted to have some special meetings, but an old deacon said, ‘We never had such a thing and we ain’t going to have any now.’ I wanted to get them to do something by way of evangelizing the neighborhood, but they said they could not afford it—they had as much as they could do to keep up their own cause—and they would not do it.” Now, such churches never can expect a blessing. But I believe that in this church we have only one mind and that one mind is this—we mean to plead before God until He opens the windows of Heaven and pours us out a blessing! We feel, every one of us, upon this subject, that we will wrestle with the Covenant Angel until He gives us our heart’s desire! And we feel, too, that Christ will never be satisfied till many more jewels are put into His sparkling crown. Well, I believe that if this is true, from this very night God will bless us!

God is sure to bless His people *when everyone feels that he has something to do and means to do it*. Do not say, “My brother ought to do such-and-such and my minister ought to do this and that.” Of course you can speak like that if you wish to do so, but that is *not* the way to get a blessing! The main business of each Christian should lie in his own personal responsibility. I have heard of a man who, as he went by the plate one collection Sunday, said, when he was asked what he gave, “What I give is nothing to anybody.” Somebody said he thought that was exactly what he did give! Now there are some people who, in what they do, come up to the same standard—they do no good to anybody. They live for themselves. And when they die, their existence will have been purely a selfish one. Such people bring a curse, rather than a blessing, to the Church. But if you feel, Brothers and Sisters, tonight, that each one of you has a niche to fill, and resolve that you will try to fill it. If you realize that there is something to be done and, in God’s name you mean, each of you, to do it, then, from this time God will bless you!

And there is sure to be a blessing *when there is a strong current of prayer*. And there is that current in this church right now. There will be that current, I hope, tomorrow evening when we meet together especially for prayer. I hope that everyone may come up with a heart like a censor full of sweet incense smoking with holy prayer! Brothers and Sisters, we must pray more in private! Here, perhaps, we fail. We must be instant in season and out of season in prayer, if prayer can ever be out of season. And then, when we come together at our Prayer Meetings, there must be wrestling times—times in which the blessing must surely be won from

God by holy wrestling. When love and concord reign. When each member assists each other member. When the whole united church seeks nothing but the Glory of God in the conversion of souls, *then* will the blessing come! I am not a Prophet, nor the son of a Prophet, but I do venture to foretell a great blessing upon this church in the year which has so happily commenced! We ended the last year by wrapping it up in a shroud of prayer—we will give this year the wings of praise, but we will still continue to pray for a visitation of the Spirit! And we shall surely have it—and the Lord's name shall be glorified!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
HAGGAI 1; 2.**

Haggai 1:1, 2. *In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the Prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying, Thus speaks the LORD of Hosts, saying, This people says, The time is not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built.* God keeps an almanac and the date on which He speaks is always important. There is a set time for each of His messages to come to men—and God would have them give heed to every message as soon as it is delivered to them. If they do not, He keeps count of the days of their delay and, therefore, He is particular in causing His servants to record the exact date when His message was delivered—“In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the Prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest.” Oh that God would make this very day notable in our history by speaking to the hearts of many here!

Notice, too, that God also takes care to direct His messages to those for whom they are intended. The word of the Lord came by Haggai the Prophet unto Zerubbabel and to Joshua. God knows to whom His message is especially addressed, today, and He will not let it miss its mark. Oh that someone here would cry unto Him, and say, “Lord, speak to me as You did to Zerubbabel! And not to me, only, but to such-and-such another, as You did to Joshua.”

“Thus speaks the Lord of Hosts, saying, This people says.” So that the Lord notes what people say and, in due time, He reminds them of what they have said. Sometimes He makes men eat their own words but, if not, He at least recalls them to their remembrance—“This people says, The time is not come, the time that Jehovah's house should be built.” Delay has always been one of the strongest of Satan's temptations even with God's own people. They far too often say, even concerning His work which they know ought to be done, “The time is not come.” How much more would be done for God if we would all do at once what ought to be done! We could then go on to something else and make our lives still

more useful and fruitful. But we delay the carrying out of one good purpose so long that there remains no opportunity for another. If any of you Christian people are tempted to put off some service for God which lies upon your heart, I pray you to remember your Lord's words and to imitate His prompt action, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night comes, when no man can work."

3, 4. *Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the Prophet, saying, Is it time for you, yourselves, to dwell in your paneled houses, and this house lie waste?* "There seems to be time enough for you to enjoy the luxuries of life, but not time for you to rebuild the Temple of the Lord—time enough for you to get rich, but not time for you to serve God—time enough for you to spend your labor upon anything for yourself, but not upon the house of your God!" What a rebuke was this to those who professed to be the Lord's people!

5. *Now therefore thus says the LORD of Hosts; consider your ways.* "Just look back a little and see what has already been the consequences of looking to yourselves, and not to your God. Have you gained anything by so acting?"

6. *You have sown much, and bring in little.* "You have sown much to yourselves, but little to God—what has your sowing brought in to you?"

6. *You eat, but you have not enough.* "Those of you who do seem to prosper are not content with what you have. Peace of mind does not come with it. You are not happy."

6. *You drink, but you are not filled with drink.* "You are as thirsty as ever after all your drinking from the earthly cistern, yet you still crave for more of that drink which can never quench your soul's thirst."

6. *You clothe yourselves, but there is none warm; and he that earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes.* How often does this happen! Yet what folly it is for a man to work hard and earn wages—and then put the money into a bag with holes and so lose it all!

7-9. *Thus says the LORD of Hosts; Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house, and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, says the LORD. You looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when you brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why?* *says the LORD of Hosts. Because of My house that is waste, and you run every man unto his own house.* Again I beg you to note what a stern rebuke this was, yet how richly was it deserved! God had done great things for His people—He had brought them back from Babylon to Jerusalem! And their first concern should have been to rebuild the Temple which had been destroyed. But every man was more concerned for his own house than for the house of the Lord and, therefore, no good could come of whatever they did, or whatever they had. "I did blow upon it," said the Lord. And when God blows upon whatever a man has, or upon whatever a man does, He soon blows it away, as the marginal reading says.

10, 11. *Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and*

upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground brings forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labor of the hands. We are dependent upon God for everything! And sometimes He makes use of the ordinary laws of Nature to be a chastisement to those who forget Him. If we will not be reminded of Him by His mercies, we shall be reminded by His judgments! And if, as stewards, we do not make a proper use of that which He entrusts to us, He can easily take it all away.

12. *Then Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua, the son of Josedech the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the word of Haggai the Prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the LORD.* What a blessing it is when faithful testimony is thus received! Sometimes it happens that people get angry and hate the preacher who too plainly rebukes them for their sins. But when the Spirit of God works within them, they take heed to what is said and receive the preacher's message as from God Himself.

13. *Then Haggai, the LORD'S messenger, spoke the LORD'S message unto the people, saying, I am with you, says the LORD.* Haggai was the Lord's messenger, so he did not utter his own words, but he "spoke the Lord's message unto the people, saying, I am with you, says Jehovah." He was with them, so they were with Him—and it is the same with us if we are true Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, for He says to us, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." And if we have the Presence of God, we have all that we need.

14, 15. *And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua, the son of Josedech the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of Hosts, their God, in the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.* God takes note of the time when His people work for Him! He records, in His almanac, the day, the month, the year, for He loves to see His people actively engaged in His service.

Haggai 2:1. *In the eleventh month, in the twenty-first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by the Prophet Haggai, saying.* God's people need to be spoken to very often. And every time God speaks to them, He takes account of it. Let us do the same. Let us not think it is such an unimportant matter for us to hear a Gospel sermon that we need not take note when we hear it. Oh, that the Word of the Lord were more precious to us in these days! Let us praise God for it and not reckon it to be so common a thing that we take no more notice of it than we do of eating our breakfast or sitting down to our supper.

2, 3. *Speak now to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying, Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? And how do you see it now? Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? There could not have been many persons left who had seen*

Solomon's Temple. If any such were still living at that time, they must have been extremely aged persons. Yet there were many there whose fathers had seen it and who had heard from their fathers, when they sat upon their knees as children, what a glorious place the House of God had been in Solomon's day!

4. *Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, says the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of the land, says the LORD, and work: for I am with you, says the LORD of Hosts.* This is the second time that Haggai was sent with this message. It was so rich, so full, so Divinely encouraging that the Lord might well repeat it—"I am with you, says the Lord of Hosts."

5-7. *According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remains among you: fear you not. For thus says the LORD of Hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with Glory, says the LORD of Hosts.* So it happened, that to the second Temple, the Babe of Bethlehem was brought, that glorious "Desire of all nations" whom we worship! And thus it came to pass that the Glory of the second house was, after all, far greater than the Glory of the first!

8. *The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the LORD of Hosts.* The released captives had not much of it with which to build the second Temple, but God had all that was needed and He was willing to supply them with enough for all the needs of the great work which they had undertaken in His name.

9. *The Glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, says the LORD of Hosts: and in this place will I give peace, says the LORD of Hosts.* The Prince of Peace gave peace to many in that second Temple!

10. *In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the Prophet, saying.* Here is another message from the Lord—and the date of its delivery is as carefully noted as the dates of those that had preceded it.

11-14. *Thus says the LORD of Hosts, Ask now the priests concerning the Law, saying, If one bears holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt touches bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No. Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touches any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean. Then answered Haggai, and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before Me, says the LORD, and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean.* [See Sermon #2495, Volume 42, **DEFILED AND DEFILING**—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] That which is ceremonially holy cannot communicate its holiness to that which is unclean. But that which is unclean in the eyes of the Law of God can communicate its uncleanness to anything that touches it. These people, being themselves defiled with

sin, could not bring to God either acceptable service or acceptable offerings!

15-17. *And now, I pray you, consider from this day forward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the Temple of the LORD: since those days were, when one came to an heap of twenty measures, there were but ten: when one came to the heap for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty. I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labors of your hands; yet you turned not to Me, says the LORD.* How often, in these two chapters, the word, "Consider," occurs! And this subject of the Lord's chastisement was well worthy of His people's earnest and solemn consideration, yet they were not brought to repentance by all that they suffered!

18, 19. *Consider now from this day forward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the LORD's Temple was laid, consider it. Is the seed yet in the barn? Yes, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not brought forth: from this day will I bless you.* That was, indeed, a memorable day in their history! I trust that many of us can also remember such a notable day in our life when the Lord said to us, "From this day will I bless you."

20-23. *And again the word of the LORD came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month, saying, Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them, and the horses and their riders shall come down, everyone by the sword of his brother. In that day, says the LORD of Hosts, will I take you, O Zerubbabel, My servant, the son of Shealtiel, says the LORD, and I will make you as a signet: for I have chosen you, says the LORD of Hosts.*

—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.**