

JOHN'S FIRST DOXOLOGY

NO. 1737

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BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT EXETER HALL.**

“Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”
Revelation 1:5, 6

JOHN had hardly begun to deliver his message to the seven Churches. He had hardly given his name and stated from whom the message came when he felt that he must lift up his heart in a joyful doxology! The very mention of the name of the Lord Jesus, “the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth,” fired his heart. He could not sit down coolly to write even what the Spirit of God dictated—he must rise; he must fall upon his knees—he must bless and magnify, and adore the Lord Jesus! This text is just the upward burst of a great geyser of devotion. John’s spirit had been quiet for a while, but all of a sudden the stream of his love to Jesus leaps forth like a fountain, rising so high that it would seem to bedew Heaven, itself, with its sparkling column of crystal love!

Look at the ascending flood as you read the words, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” Now, in the matter of this bursting out of devotion at unexpected times, John is one among the rest of the Apostles. Their love to their Divine Master was so intense that they had only to hear His footsteps and their pulse began to quicken. And if they heard His *voice*, they were they carried clean away—whether in the body or out of the body, they could not tell—but they were under constraint to magnify the Savior’s name! Whatever they were doing, they felt compelled to pause at once and to render direct and distinct homage unto the Lord Jesus by adoration and doxology.

Observe how Paul breaks forth into doxologies—“Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” Again—“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.” The same is true of Jude, who cries—“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” The Apostles overflowed with praise! This explains to me, I think, those texts which bid us “rejoice evermore,” “bless the Lord at all times,” and “pray without ceasing.”

But these do not mean that we are always to be engaged in devotional exercises, for that would cause a neglect of other duties. The very Apostle who bids us "pray without ceasing," did a great many other things beside praying, and we would certainly be very faulty if we shut ourselves up in our private chambers and there continued perpetually upon our knees. Life has other duties and necessary ones—and in attending to these we may render to our God the truest worship—to cease to work in our callings in order to spend all our time in prayer would be to offer to God one duty stained with the blood of many others! Yet we may "pray without ceasing," if our hearts are always in such a state that at every opportunity we are ready for prayer and praise. Better, still, if we are prepared to *make* opportunities! If we are instant in season and out of season and ready in a moment to adore and supplicate. If not always soaring, we may be as birds ready for instant flight—always with wings, if not always on the wing.

Our hearts should be like beacons made ready to be fired. When invasion was expected in the days of Queen Elizabeth, piles of wood and combustible material were laid ready on the tops of certain hills. Watchmen stood prepared to kindle the piles should there be notice given that the ships of the enemy were in the offing. Everything was in waiting. The heap was not made of damp wood, neither had they to go and seek kindling, but the fuel waited for the match. The watch fire was not always blazing, but it was always ready to shoot forth its flame. Have you ever read, "Praise waits for you, O God, in Sion"? So let our hearts be prepared to be fired with adoring praise by one glimpse of the Redeemer's eyes—to be all on a blaze with delightful worship with one touch from those dear, pierced hands. Anywhere, wherever we may be, may we be clad in the robes of reverence and be ready, at once, to enter upon the angelic work of magnifying the Lord our Savior. We cannot always be singing, but we may always be full of gratitude—this is the fabric of which true Psalms are made.

This spontaneous outburst of John's love is what I am going to preach upon this morning. First of all, I shall ask you to consider the condition of heart out of which such outbursts come. And then we will look more closely at the outburst itself, for my great desire is that you and I may often be thus transported into praise, carried off into ecstatic worship! I long that our hearts may be like harps through which each wind, as it sweeps on its way, makes charming music. As roses are ready to shed their perfume, so may we be eager to praise God—so much delighting in the blessed exercise of adoration that we shall plunge into it when colder hearts do not expect us to do so. I have read of Mr. Welch, a minister in Suffolk, that he was often seen to be weeping, and when asked why, he replied that he wept because he did not love Christ more. May not many of us weep that we do not *praise* Him more? Oh that our meditation may be used of the Holy Spirit to help us in that direction!

I. First, let us look at THE CONDITION OF THE HEART OUT OF WHICH BURSTS of adoration arise. Who was this man who, when he was beginning to address the Churches, must lay down his pen to praise the Savior? We will learn the character of the man from his own devout language. We shall see his inmost self here, for he is carried off his feet and

speaks out his very heart in the most unguarded manner. We shall now see him as he was and learn what manner of persons we must be if we are to be like he was. It would be easy to talk at great length about John from what we know of his history from other parts of Scripture, but this time I tie myself down to the words of the text, and I notice, first, that this man of doxologies, from whom praise flashes forth like light from the rising sun, is, first of all, a man who has realized the Person of His Lord.

The first words are, "Unto Him." And then he must, a second time before he has finished, say, "To Him be glory and dominion." His Lord is evidently before his eyes. He sees the actual Christ upon the Throne of God! The great fault of many professors is that Christ is to them a character upon paper—certainly more than a myth—but yet a Person of the dim past; an historical Person who lived many years ago and did most admirable deeds, by which we are saved—but who is far from being a living, present, bright reality. Many think of Jesus as gone away. They know not where and He is little more actual and present to them than Julius Caesar or any other remarkable personage of antiquity. We have a way, somehow, a very wicked way it is, of turning the facts of Scripture into romances, exchanging solidities for airy notions, regarding the august sublimities of faith as dreamy, misty fancies rather than substantial matters of fact.

It is a grand thing, personally, to know the Christ of God as a living existence; to speak into His ear; to look into His face and to understand that we live in Him and that He is always with us, even to the end of the world. Jesus was no abstraction to John! He loved Him too much for that. Love has a great vivifying power—it makes our impressions of those who are far away from us very lifelike and brings them very near. John's great, tender heart could not think of Christ as a cloudy conception. He remembered Him as that blessed One with whom he had spoken and on whose breast he had leaned. You see that is so, for his song rises at once to the Lord, beginning with, "Unto HIM."

He makes us see Jesus in every act of which he speaks in his doxology. It runs thus—"Unto Him that loved us." It is not, "Unto the love of God"—or an attribute, or an influence, or an emotion—it is, "Unto Him that loved us." I am very grateful for love, but more grateful to Him who gives the love. Somehow you may speak of love and eulogize it, but if you know it only in the abstract, what is it? It neither warms the heart nor inspires the spirit. When love comes to us from a known person, then we value it. David had not cared for the love of some unknown warrior, but how greatly he prized that of Jonathan, of which he sang, "Your love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women!" Sweet is it to sing of love, but sanctified hearts delight still more to sing, "Unto Him that loved us."

So, too, with the washing from sin. It is enough to make us sing of pardoning mercy forever and ever if we have been cleansed from sin—but the center of the joy is to adore Him "that washed us from our sins in His own blood." Observe that He cleansed us, not by some process outside of Himself, but by the shedding of *His own blood* of reconciliation. It brings the blood-washing into the highest estimation with the heart when we look into the wounds from where the Atonement flowed—when we gaze upon that dear visage so sadly marred, that brow so grievously scarred, and

even peer into the heart which was pierced by the spear for us to furnish a double cleansing for our sin. "Unto Him that washed us."

The disciples were bound to love the hands that took the basin and poured water on their feet; and the loins which were girt with the towel for their washing. And we, Brothers and Sisters, must do the same. But as for the washing with His own blood, how shall we ever praise Him enough? Well may we sing the new song, saying, "You are worthy, for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood." This puts body and weight into our praise when we have realized Him and understood how distinctly these precious deeds of love, as well as the love, itself, come from Him whose sacred heart is all our own! So, too, if we are "kings and priests," it is Jesus who has made us so—

***"Round the altar priests confess
If their robes are white as snow,
'Twas the Savior's righteousness
And His blood that made them so."***

Our royal dignity and our priestly sanctity are both derived from Him. Let us not only behold the streams, but also consider the source. Bow before the blessed and only Potentate who crowns and enthrones us! Extol the faithful High Priest who robes and anoints us! See the Divine Actor in the grand scene and remember that He always lives and, therefore, to Him should we render perpetual glory!

John worships the Lord Himself. His mind is not set upon His garments, His crowns, His offices, or His works, but upon Himself, His very Self. "I SAW HIM," says the beloved Apostle, and that vision almost blotted out the rest! His heart was all for Jesus. The censer must smoke unto Him; the song must rise unto Him—unto Himself, unto His very Self! I pray that every professor here may have a real Christ, for otherwise he will never be a real Christian. I want you to recognize, in this realization of Christ by John, this teaching—that we are to regard our holy faith as based on facts and realities. We have not followed cunningly devised fables! Do you believe in the Divine life of Christ? Do you also believe that He who is "very God of very God" actually became Incarnate and was born at Bethlehem? Do you put down the union of the Godhead with our humanity as an historical *fact* which has the most potent bearing upon all the history of mankind?

Do you believe that Jesus lived on earth and trod the blessed acres of Judea, toiling for our sake, and that He did actually and really *die* on the behalf of sinners? Do you believe that He was buried and, on the third day, rose again from the dead? Are these *stories* in a book, or *facts* in the life of a familiar Friend? To me it is the grandest fact in all history, that the Son of God died and rose again from the dead and always lives as my Representative! Many statements in history are well attested, but no fact in human records is one half as well attested as the certain resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead! This is no invention, no fable, no parable, but a literal fact—and on it all the confidence of the Believer leans. If Christ is not risen, then your faith is vain! But as He surely rose again and is now at the right hand of God, even the Father, and will shortly come to be our judge, your faith is justified and shall, in due season, have its reward!

Get a religion of facts and you will have a religion which will produce facts by operating upon your life and character! But a religion of fancies is but a fancied religion and nothing practical will come of it. To have a real *personal* Christ is to get a good anchor hold for love, faith and hope. Somehow men cannot love that which is not tangible. That which they cannot apprehend they do not love. When I was about to commence the Orphanage at Stockwell, a gentleman who was very experienced in an excellent orphanage said to me, "Begin by never expecting to receive the slightest gratitude from the parents of the children and you will not be disappointed. For," he said, "I have been connected with a certain orphanage," which he mentioned, "for a great many years, and except in the rarest case I have never seen any tokens of gratitude in any of the mothers whose children have been received."

Now, my experience is very different. I have had a great many grips of the hand which meant warm thanks. And I have often seen tears fall from the mothers' eyes. And many a grateful letter have I received because of help given to the orphan children. How do I explain the difference? Not that our Orphanage has done more than the other, but the other Orphanage is conducted by a Committee with no well-known head and, therefore, it is somewhat of an abstraction—the poor women do not know who is to be thanked and, consequently, thank nobody! In our own case the poor people say to themselves, "Here is Mr. Spurgeon and he took our children into the Orphanage." They recognize in me the outward and visible representative of the many generous hearts that help me! They know me, for they can see me and they say, "God bless you," because they have someone to say it to!

There is nothing particular about *me*, certainly, and there are others who deserve far more gratitude than that which comes to me—but it come to me, by God's Grace, because the poor people know the name and the man—and have not to look at a mere abstraction. Pardon the illustration, but it suits my purpose well. If you have a Christ whom you cannot realize, you will not love Him with that fervent affection which is so much to be desired! If you cannot reach the Lord in your *mind*, you will not embrace Him in your heart! But if you have realized the blessed Master. If He has become a true *existence* to you, One who has really loved you and washed you from your sins and made you a king and a priest—then your love must flow out towards Him. You cannot resist the impulse to love One who has so truly loved you and is so well known to you.

This also gives a foothold to faith. If you know the Lord Jesus, you feel that you can trust Him. "They that know Your name will put their trust in You." Those to whom Christ has become a well-known Friend do not find it difficult to trust Him in the time of their distress. An unknown Christ is untrusted. But when the Holy Spirit reveals Jesus, He also breeds faith. By the same means, your hope also becomes vivid, for you say, "Oh, yes, I know Jesus and I am sure that He will keep His Word. He has said, 'I will come again and receive you unto Myself,' and I am sure that He will come, for it is not like He to deceive His own chosen." Hope's eyes are brightened as she thinks of Jesus and, realizing that He loves to the end those who believe in Him, she rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory! To love,

to trust, to hope, are all easy in the Presence of a real living Christ, but if, like the disciples at midnight on the Galilean lake, we think Him to be a mere specter or apparition, we shall be afraid and cry out in fear! Nothing will suffice a real Christian but a real Christ!

Next, the Apostle John, in whom we note this outburst of devotion, was a man firmly assured of his possession of the blessings for which he praised the Lord. Doubt has no outbursts; its chill breath freezes all things. Nowadays we hear Christian people talk in this way—"Unto Him that we hope has loved us, and that we humbly trust has washed us, and that we sometimes believe has made us kings, unto Him be glory." Alas! The doxology is so feeble that it seems to imply as little glory as you like. The fact is, if you do not know that you have a blessing, you do not know whether you ought to be grateful for it or not! But when a man knows he has Covenant mercies, that Divine assurance which the Holy Spirit gives to Christians works in him a sacred enthusiasm of devotion to Jesus. He knows what he enjoys and he blesses Him from whom the enjoyment comes.

I would have you, Beloved, know beyond all doubt that Jesus is yours, so that you can say without hesitation, "He loved me and gave Himself for me." You will never say, "You know all things, You know that I love You," unless you are first established upon the point that Jesus loves *you*, for, "we love Him because He first loved us." John was certain that he was loved and he was, therefore, most clear that he was washed! And therefore he poured forth his soul in praise. Oh to know that you are washed from your sins in the blood of Jesus! Some professors seem half-afraid to say that they are cleansed, but oh, my Hearer, if you are a Believer in Jesus, the case is clear, for, "there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus"!

"He that believes in Him has everlasting life." "He that believes in Him is justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the Law of Moses." "You are clean," says Christ. "He that is washed needs not wash but his feet, but is clean every whit." And "You are clean."—

***"O how sweet to view the flowing
Of the Savior's precious blood!
With Divine assurance, knowing
He has made my peace with God."***

This well-grounded assurance will throw you into ecstasy and it will not be long before the deep of your heart will well up with fresh springs of adoring love! Then shall you also praise the Lord with some such words as these—"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

Once more. I think we have brought out two points which are clear enough. John had realized his Master and firmly grasped the blessings which his Master brought him. But he had also felt and was feeling very strongly his communion with all the saints. Notice the use of the plural pronoun. We would not have wondered if he had said, "Unto Him that loved *me*, and washed *me* from *my* sins in His own blood." Somehow there would have been a loss of sweetness had the doxology been so worded and it would have hardly sounded like John. John is the very mirror of love and he cannot live alone, or rejoice alone, in sacred benefits. John must

have all the brotherhood round about him and he must speak in their name, or he will be as one who benefits only half for himself.

Beloved, it is well for you and me to use this, "us," often. There are times when it is better to say, "me," but in general, let us get away to the, "us"—for has not our Lord taught us when we pray to say, *Our Father* which are in Heaven? Give *us* this day our daily bread forgive *us* our trespasses," and so on? Jesus does not bid us say, "My Father." We do say it and it is well to say it, but our usual prayers must run in the, "Our Father," style. And our usual praises must be, "Unto Him that loved *us*, and washed *us* from *our* sins." Let me ask you, beloved Brothers and Sisters, do you not love the Lord Jesus all the better and praise Him all the more heartily because His Grace and love are not given to you, alone? Why, that blessed love has embraced your children, your neighbors, your fellow Church members, myriads who have gone before you, multitudes that are round about you and an innumerable company who are coming after! And for this we ought to praise the gracious Lord with unbounded delight.

It seems so much more lovely—this salvation—when we think of it,, not as a cup of water of which one or two of us may drink, but as a well of water opened in the desert, always flowing, always giving life and deliverance and restoration to all who pass that way. "Unto Him that loved us." Oh, my Lord, I bless You for having loved me; but sometimes I think I could adore You for loving my wife, for loving my children and all these dear Friends around me, even if I had no personal share in Your salvation! Sometimes this seems the greater part of it, not that I should share in Your compassion, but that all these poor sheep should be gathered into Your fold and kept safe by You. The instinct of a Christian minister leads him to love Christ for loving the many—and I think the thought of every true worker for the Lord runs much in the same way.

No man will burst out into such joyful adoration as we have now before us unless he has a great heart within him which is full of love to all the brotherhood. And then, as he looks upon the multitude of the redeemed around about him, he will be prompted to cry with enthusiastic joy—

***"To Him that loved the souls of men,
And washed us in His blood,
To royal honors raised our head,
And made us priests to God.
To Him let every tongue be praise,
And every heart be love!
All grateful honors paid on earth,
And nobler songs above!"***

Thus much upon the condition of heart which suggests these doxologies.

II. Secondly, let us look at THE OUTBURST ITSELF. It is a doxology and, as such, does not stand alone—it is one of many. In the Book of Revelation doxologies are frequent. In the first few chapters they distinctly grow as the book advances. If you have your Bibles with you, as you ought to have, you will notice that in this first outburst only two things are ascribed to our Lord. "To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever." Now turn to the fourth chapter at the ninth verse and read, "Those living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him that sat on the throne." Here we have *three* words of honor. Run on to verse eleven, and read the

same. "Saying, you are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power." The doxology has grown from two to three in each of these verses.

Now turn to chapter 5:13. "And every creature which is in Heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." Here we have *four* notes of praise. Steadily but surely there is an advance. By the time we get to chapter 7:12, we have reached the number of perfection—and may not look for more. "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen." If you begin praising God you are bound to go on! The work engrosses the heart. It deepens and broadens like a rolling river.

Praise is somewhat like an avalanche, which may begin with a snowflake on the mountain moved by the wing of a bird, but that flake binds others to itself and becomes a rolling ball. This rolling ball gathers more snow about it till it is huge and immense—it crashes through a forest; it thunders down into the valley—it buries a village under its stupendous mass! Thus praise may begin with the tear of gratitude, but soon the bosom swells with love! Then thankfulness rises to a song and it breaks forth into a shout! And finally it mounts up to join the everlasting hallelujahs which surround the Throne of the Eternal! What a mercy it is that God, by His Spirit, will give us greater capacities, by-and-by, than we have here! For if we continue to learn more and more of the love of Christ which passes knowledge, we shall be driven to sore straits if confined within the narrow and drowsy framework of this mortal body! This poor apparatus of tongue and mouth is already inadequate for our zeal—

***"Words are but air and tongues and clay,
But His compassions are Divine."***

We need to get out of these fetters and rise into something better adapted to the emotions of our spirit! I cannot emulate the songsters of Immanuel's chorus though I would gladly do so. But as Berridge says—

***"Strip me of this house of clay,
And I will sing as loud as they."***

These doxologies occur again and again throughout this book as if to remind us to be frequent in praise. And they grow as they proceed, to hint to us that we, also, should increase in thankfulness. Now, this outburst carried within itself its own justification. Look at it closely and you perceive the reasons why, in this enthusiastic manner, John adores his Savior. The first is, "Unto Him that loved us." Time would fail me to speak long on this charming theme, so I will only notice briefly a few things. This love is in the *present* tense, for the passage may be read, "Unto Him that loves us." Our Lord, in Glory, still loves us as truly and as fervently as He did in the days of His flesh. He loved us before the world was! He loves us, now, with all His heart, and He will love us when sun and moon and stars have all expired like sparks that die when the fire is quenched upon the hearth and men go to their beds. "He loves us."

He is Himself the same yesterday, today and forever—and His love is like Himself. Dwell on the present character of it and be, at this moment, moved to holy praise. He loved us first *before* He washed us—"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us." Not, "Unto Him that washed us and loved

us.” This is one of the glories of Christ’s love—that it comes to us while we are defiled with sin—yes, DEAD in sin! Christ’s love does not only go out to us as washed, purified and cleansed, but it went out towards us while we were yet foul, vile and without anything in us that could be worthy of His love at all! He loved us and *then* washed us! Love is the fountainhead, the first source of blessing. Think of this as being a recognizable description of our Lord—“Unto Him that loved us.”

John wanted to point out the Lord Jesus Christ and all he said was, “Unto Him that loved us.” He was sure nobody would make any mistake as to who was intended, for no one can be said to love us in comparison with Jesus. It is interesting to note that as John is spoken of as, “that disciple whom Jesus loved,” so now the servant describes the Master in something like the same terms, “Unto Him that loved us.” No one fails to recognize John or the Lord Jesus under their several love names. When the Apostle mentioned, “Him that loved us,” there was no fear of men saying, “That is the man’s friend, or father, or brother.” No, there is no love like that of Jesus Christ! He bears the palm for love—yes, in the presence of His love all other love is eclipsed—even as the sun conceals the stars by his unrivalled brightness!

Again, the words, “Him that loved us,” seems as if it described all that Christ did for us, or, at least, it mentions, first, the grandest thing He ever did, in which all the rest is wrapped up. It is not, “Unto Him that took our nature; unto Him that set us a glorious example; unto Him that intercedes for us,” but, “Unto Him that loved us,” as if that *one* thing comprehended all, as indeed it does! He loves us—this is matter for admiration and amazement. Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, this is an abyss of wonder to me! I can understand that Jesus *pities* us. I can very well understand that He has *compassion* on us. But that the Lord of Glory *loves* us is a deep, great, heavenly thought which my finite mind can hardly hold. Come, Brothers and Sisters, and drink of this wine on the lees, well refined! Jesus loves you! Grasp that!

You know what the word means in some little degree according to human measurements, but the infinite Son of God loved you of old and He loves you now! His heart is knit with your heart and He cannot be happy unless you are happy. Remember He loves you with His own love according to His own Nature. Therefore He has for you an infinite love altogether immeasurable! It is also like Himself, immutable, and can never know a change. The emperor Augustus was noted for his faithfulness to his friends whom he was slow in choosing. He used to say, “Late before I have, long before I leave.” Our blessed Lord loved us *early*, but He never leaves us! Has He not said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you”? The love of Jesus is a pure, perfect and Divine—a love whose heights and depths none can measure!

Jesus’ Nature is eternal and undying, and such is His love. He could not love you more; He will never love you less. With all His heart and soul and mind and strength He loves you! Come, is not that a grand excuse, if excuse is needed, for often lifting up our hearts and voices in hearty song unto the Lord? Why should we not, seven times a day, exult before Him, saying, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own

blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen"? Oh for new crowns for His blessed brow! Oh for new songs for His love—new gifts to always praise Him! Praise Him, all earth and Heaven!

Then the Apostle passes on to the second reason why he should thus magnify the Lord Jesus by saying, "And washed us from our sins in His own blood." "Washed us." Then we were foul and He loved us though we were unclean! He washed us who had been more defiled than any. How could He condescend so far as to wash *us*? Would He have anything to do with such filthiness as ours? Would that sublime holiness of His come into contact with the abominable guilt of our nature and our practice? Yes, He loved us so much that He washed us from our sins, black as they were. He did it effectually, too. He didn't *try* to wash us, but He actually and completely washed us from our sins! The stains were deep and damnable; they seemed indelible, but He has "washed us from our sins." No spot remains, though we were black as midnight. "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow," has been realized by every Believer here!

But think of *how* He washed us—"with His own blood." Men are cautious of their own blood, for it is their life, but brave ones will pour it out for their country or for some worthy objective. But Jesus shed His blood for such unworthy ones as we are, that He might, by His Atonement, forever put away the iniquity of His people! At what a cost was this cleansing provided! Too great a cost I had almost said. Have you never felt at times as if, had you been there and seen the Lord of Glory about to bleed to death for you, you would have said, "No, my Lord, the price is too great to pay for such a one as I am"? But He has done it, Brothers and Sisters—His sin-atonement work is finished forever—Jesus has bled and He has washed us! And we are clean beyond fear of future defilement. Shall He not have glory for this? Will we not wish Him dominion for this?—

***"Worthy is He that once was slain,
The Prince of Peace that groaned and died;
Worthy to rise, and live, and reign
At His Almighty Father's side."***

Does not this doxology carry its justification in its own heart? Who can refuse to praise at the remembrance of such Grace as this? Nor is this all. The Lord that loved us would do nothing by halves and, therefore, when He washed us in His own blood, He, "made us kings." What? Are we *kings* this morning? We do not feel our crowns as yet, nor perhaps grasp our scepters as we might, but the Lord has made us a royal priesthood! We reign over ourselves and that is a dominion which is hard to gain! Indeed, it is impossible without Divine Grace! We walk like kings among the sons of men, honored before the Lord and His holy angels—the peerage of eternity! Our thoughts, our aims, our hopes and our longings are all of a nobler kind than those of the mere carnal man. Ours is a nature of a higher order than theirs, since we have been born, again, of the Spirit!

Men know us not because they know not our Lord, but we have a heritage they have not and we have prepared for us a crown of life which fades not away. The Lord has made us kings and endowed us with power before His Presence—yes, He has made us rich since all things are ours. We read of the peculiar treasures of kings and we have a choice wealth of Grace.

He has made us, even now, among the sons of men to possess the earth and to delight ourselves in the abundance of peace. Furthermore, our Lord has made us priests. Certain men impiously set up to be priests above the rest of the Lord's people. As Korah, Dathan and Abiram are they, and they had need fear lest they and their evil system should go down into the Pit. Whoever they may be, all the people of God are priests! Every man that believes in Jesus Christ is, from the moment he believes, a priest, though he is neither shaven nor shorn, nor bedecked in peculiar array. To the true Believer, his common garments are vestments; every meal is a sacrament, every act is a sacrifice.

If we live as we should live, our houses are temples, our hearts are altars, our lives are an oblation. The bells upon our horses are holiness unto the Lord and our common pots are as the bowls before the altar. It is the sanctification of the Holy Spirit which gives men a special character, so that they are the priesthood of the universe! The world is dumb and we must speak for it—the whole universe is as a great organ, but it is silent. We place our fingers on the keys and the music rises towards Heaven. We are to be priests for all mankind. Wherever we go we are to teach men and to intercede with God for them. In prayer and praise we are to offer up acceptable oblations—and we are to be living sacrifices, acceptable unto God by Jesus Christ our Lord. Oh, what dignity is this! How you and I are bound to serve God!

Peter Martyr told Queen Elizabeth, "Kings and queens are more bound to obey God than any other persons. First, as God's creatures, and secondly as His servants in office." This applies to us, also. If common men are bound to serve God, how much more those whom He has made kings and priests unto His name? What does the doxology say? "To Him be glory and dominion." First, "To Him be glory." Oh, give Him glory, my Beloved, this morning! Do I address any that have never accepted Christ's salvation? Accept it now! And thus give your Savior glory. Have you never trusted Jesus to save you? The best, the *only* thing you can do to give Him glory is to trust Him now, sinner as you are, that He may remove your transgressions. Are you saved? Then, dear Brothers and Sisters, give Him glory by speaking well of His name and by perpetual adoration. Glorify Him in your songs! Glorify Him in your lives! Behave yourselves as His disciples should do and may His Spirit help you.

But the doxology also ascribes dominion to Him. My heart longs for Jesus to have dominion! I wish He might get dominion over some poor heart this morning which has, up to now, been in rebellion against Him! Yield you rebel! Yield to your Sovereign and Savior! "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little." To Him be dominion over hearts that have never submitted to Him and assuredly to Him be fullest dominion over hearts that love Him! Reign my Lord! Reign in my bosom more and more! Cast out every enemy and every rival! Reign supreme and reign eternally! Set up Your Throne more and more conspicuously in the hearts and lives of all who call themselves Christians! O my Brothers and Sisters, ought it not to be so? Is it not clear to you that since He has loved and washed us, He should have dominion over us? Ah, let Him have dominion over the wide, wide world till

they that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him and His enemies shall lick the dust! Reign forever, King of kings and Lord of lords!

Then it is added, let Him have glory and dominion "forever and ever." I suppose we shall have some gentlemen coming up to prove that, "forever and ever," only means for a time. They tell us that everlasting punishment means only for a time and, of course, everlasting *life* must mean the same and this praise must also have a limit. I do not mean that and neither do you, Beloved! I pray that our Lord may have *endless* glory, *eternal* dominion. I pray that Christ's power and dominion may be over this generation, the next and the next until He comes—and then that it may be said—"The Lord shall reign forever and ever." Hallelujah! As long as there are wings of angels or songs of man; as long as God Himself shall live, may the Lord Jesus Christ that loved us and washed us have glory and dominion!

Now we have come to the last word of the text. It finishes up with, "Amen." "Forever and ever. Amen." Can you heartily say, "Amen," to this? Do you wish Christ to have glory and dominion forever and ever? If you know He loved you, I am sure you do! If you know He washed you, I am sure you do! Now let our beating hearts in solemn silence say, "Amen!" And when we have done that, do you think you could join in one voice with me and say it out aloud, like thunder? Now, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. "Amen." And, "Amen!" yet again. (Here the great congregation joined aloud with the preacher). The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, were ended when he came to that, and so may ours be, and so may this morning's service be. God bless you through His adorable Son. Amen and Amen!

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LOVED AND WASHED

NO. 2230

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY,
NOVEMBER 15, 1891,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 22, 1891.**

***“Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in
His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto
God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion
forever and ever. Amen.”
Revelation 1:5, 6.***

John was the beloved disciple, the choicest spirit of the twelve, the one nearest to the heart of Christ. Not only was he that disciple whom Jesus loved, but he was full of love to his Lord in return. John leaned his head on Christ's bosom. All his soul seemed to be aflame with affection towards Christ. “We love Him, because He first loved us,” are words which come with great power from such a heart—they were so wonderfully true in his own experience. But now, when he comes to sing a Psalm of praise to his Lord, he does not mention his love to his Master. He dwells not on that, for his confidence lies deeper than anything in himself, even in the love of the Son of God to him. Would you not wish to be like he? Then “keep yourselves in the love of God,” as, on the opposite page of your Bible, you read in the Epistle of Jude. Meditate much on your Master and on your Master's love—dwell with Christ—and whether you realize your love to Him or not, drink in daily the sweetness of His wondrous love to you. Live on that and often let your heart lift up a song of praise because of it. Then shall the blessing of Benjamin be yours—“The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between His shoulders.”

This verse seems to me to be fit to be the song of Heaven. It is indeed the epitome of all those choral symphonies with which redeemed spirits circle the Throne of our great Lord and King. John, in vision, had caught glimpses of the Glory Land and had heard the great multitude which no man can number raise their hallelujahs, as they cast their crowns before Him that sat upon the Throne of God. And, as the refrain of a song hums itself over and over, again, even after the singer has ceased, John, when he began to write this Book, seems to have remembered the chorus of those who “came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” I think that I hear them, now, while we are listening, and this is the grand *chorale* of the skies—“Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be

glory and dominion forever and ever.” We, in feebler strains, fervently add our, “Amen.”

Would you not wish to be in Heaven when your life on earth is over? The time will come when you must die—would you not desire to have a good hope of entering into the felicities of the perfected ones? I am sure you would! But if you are at last to be numbered among the redeemed host on high, you must learn their song *here!* You cannot be admitted into the choirs above without having practiced and rehearsed their music here below! Therefore you must think much and believe much concerning Christ’s love to His chosen and how He showed it in washing us from our sins in His own blood. He is coming again! The next verse tells us, “Behold, He comes with clouds.” When He shall come and earth shall rock and reel, and the skies shall shrivel up like worn-out parchment, and the stars shall fall like fig leaves from the trees—in that day you will wish to be found at the right hand of the King and to cry with rapture—“Welcome, welcome, Son of God!”

But you cannot be there unless you first know Him as the Christ who has loved you and washed you from your sins in His own blood. I pray, therefore, that while I talk feebly enough, myself, God’s Divine power may go with the word that you who know the Redeemer’s love may know it better and feel your hearts swell with glad emotion till you are ready to stand up and shout, “Glory and majesty, dominion and power be unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood!” I pray, too, that others who are strangers to the blood-washing and have never yet known the power of Christ’s atoning Sacrifice, may say, “By the Grace of God, we, also, will know something of that love, if it is to be known, and we will pray that in us, also, that wondrous washing may take place, that we, also, may be clean through Jesus’ blood and stand among the ransomed throng to shout His praises forever and ever!”

Notice very specially that the exile of Patmos, having known much of Christ and lived in His Presence for many years, sings of love as manifested in the *washing away of sins*. Some years before he had written, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, those marvelous Words, “God is love.” But now, as the end of his life approaches, all love seems for him to be summed up in the blood-washing. This is the climax and summit of the love of Christ! I delight to dwell on this glorious theme! They tell me of God in Nature and speak of the warbling of birds and the beauties of the summer as revelations of the love of God, as doubtless they are. I read of the matchless life of Christ and I am charmed with its beauties and its blessedness. But when I would speak of the fullness of His love, I can find nothing to express it but the blood which He shed on Calvary!

It is a wonderful work which that blood-shedding accomplishes in taking away our sins, for they are taken away at once and forever when we trust in the Crucified! This is a blessed Truth of God about which the Word of God leaves no manner of doubt. I do not know whether, “washed,” is the best word to express the meaning of the text. We need something more than the mere removal of outside sin. If, however, this idea is to be kept, I prefer the word, “laved,” which gives us a suitable expression of the thought and also carries us back to the laver used in the typical ordi-

nances of the Tabernacle and Temple of old. The text may be read, “Unto Him that loved us and *laved* us from our sins in His own blood.” If we prefer it, we may render our song as the Revised Version has it, with a deeper shade of meaning, “Unto Him that loves us and *loosed* us from our sins by His blood” and, with adoring hearts may add, “to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever.” In His great love He laves away the defilement of our sins and then looses us from the chains that those sins had thrown around our life—

***“Oh, for this love, let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break!
And all harmonious human tongues
The Savior’s praises speak.”***

I shall have only two things to talk about on this occasion. First, *let us think of the love of Jesus* in the particular way mentioned in the text, as shown in His washing us from our sins in His own blood. And secondly, when we have meditated on His love, *let us glorify Him for it*. I will not attempt to take the whole of verse six—that would be too much for one sermon.

I. First, LET US THINK OF THE LOVE OF JESUS and as we muse upon it, may the fire burn in our souls! May we be raised out of ourselves and be seated in the heavenlies, “because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us”! Our subject at this time is—The love of Christ as shown in His washing us from our sins in His own blood.

Upon which I remark, first, that *He loved us freely*. That is clear if you reflect that He did not love us because we had no sin. If that had been the case, He would not have needed to have washed us in His own blood. He did not love us because we were righteous, because we were obedient, because we had neither omitted any duty nor committed any offense. No, but He saw us foul with sin and yet He loved us! We are described in Scripture, sometimes, as crimson and, again, as scarlet with sin. These are glaring colors and sin is a glaring, staring thing that must be seen. God has seen it—God abhors it! But though He saw it, He loved us—“Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it.” What wondrous love it is that Christ should love a thief! Yet He did, and took a thief to be the first to enter His Kingdom with Him! What amazing condescension that Christ should love an outcast! Yet there was one who loved Him much, because she had been forgiven much! How marvelous that Christ should love a swearer! Yet He loved Peter, whose swearing was of the worst kind, for he denied his Master with an oath!

’Twas passing strange that Christ should love a persecutor! Yet He loved Saul of Tarsus, who was exceedingly mad against His people. Is not this the greatest marvel of all, that He should love *you* and that He should love *me*—that He has loved us though we have been utterly unworthy of His love, full of sin and keeping to the sin, persevering in it, refusing to turn from it when bid to repent? I ask, again, is not this an amazing marvel that He should love us while we were yet rejecting all His love and, year after year, continuing with a high hand to rebel against Him? Yet He loved us while we were dead in trespasses and sins, loved us out of free,

rich, Sovereign Grace—not because we were lovely, but because He is loving—not because we were gracious, but because He is full of Grace! You see, the text does not say that He washed us and loved us as if from some high sense of duty He took away our sin and then loved us when we were clean. No, it is not “washed and loved,” it is, “loved and washed.” The love is *first* and because He loved us *in* our sins and in spite of them, He cleanses them all away! Proclaim this glorious Gospel, all you who know the glad tidings! Let men and angels hear it again and again! He loved us while our sin was yet upon us and, therefore, He washed us and made us white through His own blood! It is love most freely given. When I think of it, I feel that I can join with the children and say—

**“Oh, if there’s only one song I can sing
When in His beauty I see the great King,
This shall my song in eternity be—
‘Oh, what a wonder that Jesus loves me!’”**

As I think of Christ’s love, I say, next, *He loved us condescendingly*. He loved us “and washed us.” Does God take to washing black sinners white? That He should *create*, I understand. That He should *destroy*, I also understand. But that He should wash and cleanse those who have made themselves foul with sin is marvelous! God is so full of power that if a thing is broken, it is never worth His while to mend it. It is the poverty of our resources that compels us to put up with defiled and broken things and make them better. But He could, with a word, or *without* a word, make another race of creatures and leave sinful men to die if He would! Yet He loved us so that He stooped to wash us from our defilement. Oh, when you see the Christ of God kneeling down, girding Himself with a towel, like a slave, and bringing forth the ewer and the basin. When you see Him pouring water on His disciples’ feet, then taking foot after foot with His own dear hands and washing them, you see a great sight of love!

But when He opens His own side. When He gives His hands and feet to be sacred fountains of blood and we are cleansed through His death and agony—this is compassion like a God! This is a sight the likes of which Heaven and earth have never seen! What love must He have to sinful men, that He should stoop so low as this? The Maker of Heaven and earth washing filthy hearts and sinful souls! It almost surpasses human thought, yet it is most certainly true! Glory be unto His name! Well may we sing praises “unto Him that loved us, and washed us.” It is amazing mercy that Christ should ever deal with sin except to punish it. That He should ever take it on *Himself*, that He might remove it from *us*, is a thing that we shall never fully understand even in Glory, itself! Condescending love, indeed, it was that loved us and washed us—

**“On such love, my Soul, still ponder,
Love so great, so rich, so free!
Say, while lost in holy wonder,
Why, O Lord, such love to me?
Hallelujah, Grace shall reign eternally.”**

But, next, *He loved us in a holy manner*. The love of Christ was as holy as everything else about Him. We do not read that He loved us and, therefore, winked at our sinfulness. Oh, no, that could never be! The love of Christ never becomes an unholy thing! It never panders to our lust, nor

does it cover up our iniquity so that it shall not be punished. He loved us, but *because* He loved us He must wash us! He could not take us to Heaven unwashed. A man cannot remain a sinner and be at peace with God. Even the Almighty could not make us happy and let us remain in sin. You cannot be at rest till you are right with God and you cannot be right with God till you give up evil! He is a holy God and the love of Christ, mighty as it is, cannot bless you without washing you. You drunks must give up the cup. You that are dishonest must become honest. You that are unchaste must be rendered pure. You that are selfish must become loving. You that are hot-tempered must be made meek and lowly. It must be done! There is no other way by which you can be saved. Even He that loves you can only bless you thus. You must be washed! Holiness requires it. Oh, what a love it is that will not leave us foul, but loves us out of our sins! Christ “loved us and washed us.” This, indeed, is holy love—

***“Love that condemns the sinner’s sin,
Yet, in condemning, pardon seals!
That saves from righteous wrath, and yet,
In saving, righteousness reveals!”***

Christ’s love is seen, next, in that *He loved us at a costly rate*. He has washed us from our sins “in His own blood.” Ah, Brothers and Sisters, I wish that I had a tongue that could speak of this wondrous work as it deserves to be spoken of, but human lips are slow and stammering when they approach this theme! Who can measure or express the love which proves itself by the outpoured blood of the Son of God? Yet this is the gift His love has bestowed upon us. By, “His own blood,” I understand not merely the actual blood of His body, but the whole of His griefs and woes and sacrificial death—His giving up Himself, instead of us, to bear the righteous wrath of God, justly our due. It means just that. There could be no washing for us except He should be in a bloody sweat. There was no washing us unless there was—

***“A fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins.”***

There was no making us clean, except by His coming into contact with human sin—and that meant to Him what the fire meant to the bull on the altar. It meant being burnt up with a Divine wrath on account of human sin—wrath most just, most true—for God cannot bear iniquity! It is not right that He should do otherwise than hate it with all the infinite hate of His righteous soul. Christ has washed us “in His own blood.”

The priests could only cleanse with blood of bulls and goats, but He has washed us from our sins “in His own blood.” Men are willing enough to shed the blood of others. How readily they will enter war! But Christ was willing to shed His own blood, to pour out His soul unto death that we might be saved! No language can ever fully set forth this marvelous mystery—and as the mighty master of painting threw a veil over a face that he could never depict, so would I leave unspoken the great marvel of Christ’s washing us with His own blood! But let us, who know it to be true in our own experience, lift a glad song in our hearts—

***“To Him that loved the souls of men,
And washed us in His blood.
To royal honors raised our head,***

And made us priests to God.”

We cannot meditate on the love of Christ without saying that *He loved us effectually*. The text says that Christ “loved us, and washed us from our sins,” or, “loosed us from our sins.” You that believe in Christ are washed from all your sins! There is no sin remaining upon you now in the matter of guilt before God. “Who is He that condemns? It is Christ that died.” You are justified, through Christ, from every sin! You are clean every whit if you have believed in Him. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” But we can go further than this and join with the saints in Heaven in saying—“He has loosed us from our sins”—that is, from the *dominion* of sin. When Christ pardons sin He kills it, He crucifies it—and crucifixion, you know, means death. But it is a *lingering* death and a crucified man lives in pain, without power to work or act—he suffers and lingers.

So is it with sin in the Believer. It is nailed up, crucified with Christ. You cannot do now what your evil nature suggests to you. A respectable man whom I know said that the other night he was driving along with his old horse. Another man came through the fog and their horses touched each other. “But,” he said, “we passed very civilly.” But there came along one who looked like a gentleman, driving rather fast. He drove into the poor man’s cart and, instead of making any apology, he cut him across the face with his whip. My friend is a decided Christian, yet he said, “I felt that the old man was in me, and I wanted to give him a cut of my whip in return, but I did not. When I got home I said, ‘The old man is not dead.’ If he had been dead, I should not have felt even a momentary passion. I kept him down, but I felt very angry, and I said to myself, ‘Ah, though you have been a Christian a great many years, the old man is still alive.’”

So he is in every one of us. He lies like a sneak in the corner, but the day shall come when there shall be no remains of the evil, no trace of sin left in us, and in Heaven we shall sing, “He has loosed us from our sins in His own blood. He has taken the last relic of sin away—every tendency to evil, every possibility of evil,” for it is written, “They are without fault before the Throne of God,” and no sin shall ever come into their hearts again! Glory be to His name that such a sanctification as this is possible and that we shall yet have to sing of it as perfected! Praise to His holy name for the love which ends in such bliss! Hallelujah! He looses us from the chains of sin that He may bind us with the bonds of love! This is royal liberty.”—

***“Drawn by such cords, we onward move,
Till round Your Throne we meet,
And, captives in the chains of love,
Embrace our Conqueror’s feet.”***

Once more, this love of Christ is perpetual—*He loves us still*. Turning to the Revised Version we do not read, “Unto Him that *loved us*,” but, “unto Him that *loves us*.” I like that. Jesus loves me still! He did not finish His love by His death. He loves you still! When He was poor on earth and despised and rejected of men, He loved you. And now that a royal diadem adorns His blessed brow and all angels fall down and worship Him, He loves you still and He will always love you. You who believe in Him are His pride, His Hephzibah, His delight is in you. You can hardly love yourself,

can you? When you see your own face in the glass of God's Law, is there any beauty there? Did you ever stand and spiritually admire yourself? If you did, you were a fool! If you truly know your own heart, you cannot find, there, anything to delight in. You blush. You hide your face for shame. But Christ loves you. "I am black," said the spouse. She felt that she was very black, but when she looked to her Beloved and saw what He thought of her, she added, "but comely."

And we can appropriate her language. In myself, "as the tents of Kedar, smoke-dried by the Bedouin, yet am I by Grace as the curtains of Solomon, bedight with gold lace and all the embroidery of the workman's needle! I am both—to myself a thing undone, but in Him washed and saved! Unlovely, but by Him, beloved." Oh, it makes my heart race within me! I feel as if I could leap into Heaven when I think, "He loves me! He loves me! He loved me when He died for me. He lives for me and He loves me still."—

***"Now though He reigns exalted high,
His love is still as great.
Well He remembers Calvary,
Nor let His saints forget."***

If you feel as I do, you will go with me into the other part of the subject—"To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

II. So, in the second place, LET US GLORIFY THIS LOVING, LIVING SAVIOR. If we were to do it fitly, we should need to have music such as Handel wrote. And when we would sing of it, if we all of us had perfect voices, we should go home and say, "Ah, it was poor praise compared with what He deserves." So we will not try any singing, but will talk about something practical.

If we are to glorify Christ, *we must gladly confess His name.* If you have never acknowledged Him and confessed Him, begin now, and say, "Unto Him that loved me, and washed me from my sins in His own blood; to Him be glory." If you really mean that, you are bound to come out and acknowledge that you are His disciple. You cannot say, "To Him be glory," and then hide yourself away and never seek to bring glory to His name by openly declaring that He is your Lord and Master. Some of you are very much like a mouse behind the wall. You are in the Lord's house, but you are not known as one of the family—sometimes you give a little squeak in your hiding place—and sometimes come out at night, as the mouse does, to pick up a crumb or two, without being seen. Is this worthy of yourself? Is it worthy of your Lord and Master?

You are a Christian, you say, but you do not want to be known to be a Christian. A soldier in the Lord's army, but you never put on your uniform! You like to always be in civilian clothes. You are afraid lest anybody should know that you are a soldier! If a man behaved like that in the British army, they would drum him out of the regiment! What would be the good of such a fellow? If he is ashamed of Her Majesty's uniform, let him be gone. He is not loyal to his sovereign. I am not going to condemn you who have never come out and acknowledged yourselves followers of Christ—I wish that you would hold a little court and condemn yourself—and then, instead of my drumming you out, you would drum yourself out and say, "I will not stay any longer in a position where I can be talked to

like that. Glory be to Him who has loved me and washed me in His own blood! I will openly confess Him. I will unite myself with His people. I will say, 'I am His and He is mine.'"

Remember that there is no salvation promised to an unconfessed faith. I boldly put it according to the Word of God. "If you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved." There is no question that *confession* is here required. And again it is clearly stated, "He that believes and is *baptized*"—which is the *confession* that Christ requires—"shall be saved." And though confession with the mouth and baptism cannot save, yet the *faith* to which the promise is made is a faith that dares to confess and come out!

"Then, I should have to bear a lot of ridicule," says one. And are you afraid to follow your Master for fear of ridicule? Remember what, for love of you, He bore! Think what scorn from the Pharisees and hatred and malice from the rulers of the Jews, Christ cheerfully accepted that He might save you! He shirked not the heavy Cross for you—will you not take that little cross for Him? He shed His blood to cleanse you, but it is not likely that you will *ever* be called to shed your blood for Him—yet many have done this and counted it all gladness! Oh, by the martyrs who dared to die for Jesus—three of them on this very spot where we are now meeting, many of them across the water in Smithfield—I beseech you, if you love Him that loved you and washed you from your sins in His own blood, to give Him at least the glory which would come of a *confession* that you are saved by Him—

***"It passes telling, that dear love of Yours,
My Jesus, Savior. Yet these lips of mine
Would gladly proclaim to sinners, far and near,
A love which can remove all guilty fear,
And love beget."***

Next, if we really do wish to glorify Him, *we must shun all sin*. A man cannot say, "Unto Him that loved me, and washed me from my sins be glory," and then go off to the ale-bench and drink with the drunkard. You dare not say, "Unto Him be glory," and then, as a professed Christian, go and do a dishonest deed, or speak a lie, or do that which would be discreditable to yourself and would bring dishonor to His dear name! If He washed me from my sin with His blood, I must *hate* sin. It murdered my Lord. It cost Him His life to save me from it. How, then, can I—how *dare* I—toy with it? How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? How shall we that are washed in His blood, go and stain our garments, again, and play with iniquity and trifle with transgression? Remember that you are "loosed" from sin. It no longer holds you captive—the chains are dissolved by the blood of Atonement. Why, then, should you go about as if you were in bondage? We shall never have done with sin while we are *here*, but that is no reason why we should be defiled by it, for the Fountain wherein we were first washed is always open! As the spring of love never ceases to flow, so the efficacy of the blood is never lost. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." Since death has no more dominion over Christ, sin need have no more dominion over us. "It is written, Be you holy, for I am holy," and I beseech you to obey the exhor-

tation, for then, and then only, will you bring glory to Him who washed you from your sins in His own blood—

***“Blest be your love, dear Lord,
That taught us this sweet way,
Only to love You for Yourself,
And for that love obey.”***

Again, if we truly say, “To Him be glory and dominion,” then *we must give Him dominion over ourselves*. Each man is a little empire of three kingdoms—body, soul and spirit—and it should be a united kingdom. Make Christ King of it all! Do not allow any branch of those three kingdoms to set up for itself a distinct rule—put them all under the sway of your one King. My eyes must not look on vanity; my tongue must not talk uncleanness; my hands must not minister to evil; my feet must not carry me where I should not go; my heart must not wander; my thoughts must not go astray; my imagination must not find pleasure in evil. Every faculty of my nature ought to be given “unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins.” Every ability and possibility, every growth and progress made in knowledge and learning, must be laid at Jesus’ feet. Say, “To Him be glory and dominion,” and then make a full surrender of yourself to His sway.

So many in these days seem only to want the salvation of Christ without the Christ who gives the salvation. Both go together. He must be Lord of the forgiven soul. He only washes those who will enter His Kingdom and come under His government. Are we not glad to proclaim Him King? Reign, blessed Jesus, reign! Reign over my body, soul and spirit—completely reign. Bring every thought into captivity to Your holy love! Is not that what you are now saying, you that have been washed in His blood?—

***“Lord, You have won. At last I yield!
My heart, by mighty Grace compelled,
Surrenders all to You.
Against Your terrors long I strove,
But who can stand against Your love?
Love conquers even me.”***

And then, next, if we say, “To Him be glory and dominion,” *we must seek to bring others under His sway*. There is some way in which every one of us can do it. Dear Brothers and Sisters, if you have yielded yourselves to Christ, do not be satisfied till you see your children saved! Begin at home! Do not be content till the boys and girls all belong to Christ. Then look after your neighbors. You that are large employers, care for the men who work for you. Do not treat them as “hands”—look at them as souls and regard them as beings made in God’s image and for His praise. Not only talk, but act! When they are in need, help them. Succor them that you may, by any means, draw them to think of their souls and to desire and pray that they, also, may be washed from their sins in Christ’s own blood. O Beloved, if He is to have dominion, let us, each one, win a little bit for Him! You cannot convert idolatrous China, or heathen India, or the dark continent of Africa. These big things are too much for any one of us, but there is a little kingdom for each one of us to win for Christ, a little bit

committed to us, that we may go and conquer it and fulfill the desire expressed in the text—"To Him be glory and dominion."

Watch for souls. Be on the lookout for new ways of serving the Master. As African travelers now seem very eager to be the first to make a treaty with certain chieftains, that their territory may be annexed to this kingdom or that, so seek to win new conquests for Christ and attach people to His cause before they are hopelessly lost to the devil! Perhaps the friend sitting next to you at this service does not yet know the Lord. Could you not have a word with that person before you leave the building? Perhaps, through your message, that heart will be won for Christ!

If we really wish that Christ should have glory and dominion because He has washed us from our sins in His blood, *we must do nothing to dishonor Him*—and we shall do *anything* sooner than see His blessed Gospel and His holy name dishonored by others. Oh, I would sooner be accounted as the offscouring of all things than have any part with those who reject or dim the Gospel of my Lord and Master! I would sooner be accounted the greatest bigot on earth, or the most stupid fool that ever breathed, than enter into any partnership or brotherhood with those who keep back the Cross of Christ, or cast a slur upon the Inspiration of holy Scripture! Shall I, who am washed from my sin in the blood of Christ, have any fellowship with those who speak of this highest exhibition of my Lord's love as "the doctrine of the shambles"? Or with one who "has counted the Blood of the Covenant, with which he was sanctified, an unholy thing"? This were a poor return for the love that bled and died to save me—any dishonor is better than that.

When Queen Elizabeth came to a miry place in one of her progresses, you remember how Sir Walter Raleigh, without a moment's thought, took off his new cloak, which had cost him much, and spread it in the way, so that Her Majesty might walk over it. Have I any honor? Have I any reputation? Have I any name? I will throw it down! Let it go on the miry place that my Lord may tread on it and no mire may come on Him! May we all, who know that we are loosed from our sins, get into just that spirit which, whenever men are finding fault with the Gospel, will say, "Here, find fault with *me!* Turn all your attention to me—only spare my Lord." Christ is set in the pillory and men are pelting Him. He is the true lover of Christ who comes up to the pillory and stands in front of Him, ready to take the blows aimed at his Lord.

He is the true lover of Christ who drinks in so much of the Character of Christ that he can truly use that language which is first employed with reference to the zeal of Christ, Himself—"The reproaches of them that reproached you are fallen upon Me." He is not honored whom men honor. He is honored who is made a laughingstock for Christ's sake. "Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in Heaven." Get this spirit into you—"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins, be glory and dominion."

"There," said a dying man, who was in a ditch when the great Emperor Napoleon rode by and he heard a shout of victory, "let me die—the Emperor has conquered." And oh, may not you and I be well content to be

blotted out and forgotten, so long as Christ the King shall come to His own, again? He soon shall triumph! With the ear of faith you may almost hear His chariot wheels. He comes! He comes quickly and happy shall he be in that day who now has been despised lest Christ should be dishonored! With what joy shall we meet our Lord when He takes to Himself His great power and reigns! With what rapture shall we fall at His feet if we have been true to Him and to His Truth! For His love is founded on His Truth and triumphs through it.

I am done when I have added this one thing more. Unto Him that loved and washed us, let us give all glory and dominion. But if we would do that, *we must not be cold and indifferent about holy things*. You know what kind of hearers some people are. You may say what you will to them, but they are never moved. I believe that if a half-hundred-weight of dynamite were put under the seat, it would hardly move them. They are so solid, so cold. Can I hear of that dear name, and never catch the sacred fire? Can I think of Calvary and still my heart remain cold and chill? Can I behold that marred face, that, “sacred head once wounded,” and my soul not thrill with gratitude? Can I see those cruel nails and that terrible crown of thorns—can I taste the vinegar and handle the sponge—and yet never feel one warm affection within my spirit? God forbid! Oh, my Savior, let my heart rejoice or ache, but let it not be hard and cold! Let me adore You with every power of my redeemed manhood all aglow with holy fervor.”—

***“But ah, how faint our praises rise!
Sure, ‘tis the wonder of the skies
That we, who share His richest love,
So cold and unconcerned should prove.”***

Surely, if “we have known and believed the love that God has to us,” we shall find some answering spark of affection to Him in our hearts! If we mean to give Him the glory and dominion, we must give Him our love and devotion. Our love must always be as the echo to His. It cannot be that we can receive such abounding, overflowing bounty, and remain indifferent to the Giver! His interests must surely be our chief concern. We must be moved to seek first the things which concern Him who has bestowed on us such wonderful Grace. Wake up, dear Brothers and Sisters, if you are getting into a cold state!

Some religion seems to be altogether a matter of the drum—that will not do. But there are occasions when the drum may rightly be used. There are seasons when the cornet, harp, dulcimer and all kinds of music ought to be heard. There are times for the holy dance and the joyous song. There are periods when enthusiasm must rule the hour, when the spirit must feel that she is all wings, that she mounts and soars—and whether in the body or out of the body, she cannot tell. May such a moment as that be yours just now! Blessed be the name of the Lord forever! To Him be glory and dominion! Hallelujah! Let us all say it. Let us all feel it. Let us all live it. Amen, and Amen!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Isaiah 53.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—410, 411, 416.**

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON:

BELOVED READERS OF SPURGEON'S SERMONS—I desire my hearty love to you all. You are the outer ring of my congregation and are far more numerous than those to whom I speak with my voice. With many of you I feel well acquainted, for you have cheered me by letter and by your practical help to my many institutions—and I owe more than I can tell to your prayers. Thank you much. To you all I send sincere good wishes, desiring that the sermons may be spiritually profitable to you and that the best blessing of the Triune God may be your heritage.

I am far away in body, but not in spirit. I am a sick man, physically, but in heart I am strong in the Lord. A great waste of life-force still weakens me, but it is not so great as it was, and HE who has spared my life, will in His own right time spare me this weakening of my strength by the way. It is a great trial to be unable to preach in the pulpit, but it is no small comfort to be able to preach through the press. By the aid of friends, the sermons which I delivered in former times have been piloted through the press in a masterly manner and could continue to be forthcoming for several years even if I were taken Home to God, for hundreds of manuscripts are in my publishers' stores. This is a happy reflection to me, for it is my life to proclaim the everlasting Gospel of the Grace of God and so I shall live and speak long after I am dead.

[Brother Spurgeon went Home to his Master on January 31, 1892, and, in fact, 26 more volumes of his sermons were published, one volume a year, through the year 1917.—EOD]

Will each kind reader do me the great service of increasing my congregation by increasing the circulation of the sermons? The loan of a copy, or a kindly word, may win me another reader, to whom the message may be life, or light, or liberty. I earnestly desire a still wider audience. If I could not, myself, preach, I think that the next best thing would be to spread the sermons of one whose words were useful to my own heart. Please do not *think* of fulfilling my desire, but DO IT.

It has been so many years since these sermons began to be issued (nearly 37 years) that I cannot but look back with gratitude and forward with hope. Better days may yet come. It may be we shall live to see a reaction in favor of the old Gospel. If not, we will, many of us, die contending for it! "O Lord, plead Your own cause!" I am, dear Readers, your fellow servant in Gospel work!

Mentone, November 7, 1891,

C. H. SPURGEON.

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

“HE COMES WITH CLOUDS”

NO. 1989

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

“Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.”
Revelation 1:7.

IN reading the chapter we observed how the beloved John saluted the seven Churches in Asia with, “Grace and peace be unto you.” Blessed men scatter blessings. When the *benediction* of God rests on us, we pour out benedictions upon others.

From benediction, John’s gracious heart rose into *adoration* of the great King of Saints. As our hymn puts it, “The holy to the holiest leads.” They that are good at blessing men will be quick at blessing God.

It is a wonderful doxology which John has given us—“Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” I like the Revised Version for its alliteration in this case, although I cannot prefer it for other reasons. It runs thus: “Unto Him that *loves* us, and *loosed* us from our sins by His blood.” Truly our Redeemer has loosed us from sin, but the mention of His blood suggests *washing* rather than loosing. We can keep the alliteration and yet retain the meaning of cleansing if we read the passage, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us.” *Loved* us and *washed* us—carry those two words home with you—let them lie upon your tongue to sweeten your breath for prayer and praise. “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us, be glory and dominion forever and ever.”

Then John tells of the dignity which the Lord has put upon us in making us kings and priests. And from this he ascribes royalty and dominion unto the Lord, Himself. John had been extolling the Great King, whom he calls, “The Prince of the kings of the earth.” Such, indeed, He was and is and is to be! When John had touched upon that royalty which is natural to our Divine Lord and that dominion which has come to Him by conquest—and by the gift of the Father as the reward of all His travail—he then went on to note that He has “made us kings.” Our Lord’s royalty He diffuses among His redeemed! We praise Him because He is, in Himself, a King and next, because He is a king-maker, the fountain of honor and majesty! He has not only enough of royalty for Himself, but He hands a measure of His dignity to His people. He makes kings out of such common stuff as He finds in us poor sinners! Shall we not adore Him for this? Shall we not cast our crowns at His feet? He gave our crowns to us—shall we

not give them to Him? “To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

King by Your Divine Nature! King by filial right! King-maker, lifting up the beggar from the dunghill to set him among princes! King of kings by the unanimous love of all Your crowned ones! You are He whom Your brethren shall praise! Reign forever and ever! Unto You be hosannas of welcome and hallelujahs of praise! Lord of the earth and Heaven, let all things that are, or ever shall be, render unto You all glory in the highest degree! Brothers and Sisters, do not your souls take fire as you think of the praises of Immanuel? Gladly would I fill the universe with His praise! Oh for a thousand tongues to sing the glories of the Lord Jesus! If the Spirit who dictated the words of John has taken possession of our spirits, we shall find adoration to be our highest delight. Never are we so near to Heaven as when we are absorbed in the worship of Jesus, our Lord and God! Oh, that I could now adore Him as I shall do when, delivered from this encumbering body, my soul shall behold Him in the fullness of His Glory!

It would seem from the chapter that the adoration of John was increased by his *expectation* of the Lord’s Second Coming, for He cries, “Behold, He comes with clouds!” His adoration awoke his expectation, which all the while was lying in his soul as an element of that vehement heat of reverent love which he poured forth in his doxology. “Behold, He comes,” he said, and thus he revealed one source of his reverence. “Behold, He comes,” he said, and this exclamation was the result of his reverence. He adored until his faith *realized* his Lord and became a second and nobler sight!

I think, too, that his reverence was deepened and his adoration was rendered more fervent by his conviction of the speediness of his Lord’s coming. “Behold, He comes,” or *is coming*—he means to assert that He is even now on His way! As workmen are moved to be more diligent in service when they hear their master’s steps, so, doubtless, saints are quickened in their devotion when they are conscious that He whom they worship is drawing near. He has gone away to the Father for a while and so He has left us alone in this world—but He has said, “I will come again and receive you unto Myself”—and we are confident that He will keep His word! Sweet is the remembrance of that loving promise. That assurance is pouring its savor into John’s heart while he is adoring and it becomes inevitable, as well as most meet and proper, that his doxology should, at its close, introduce him to the Lord, Himself, and cause him to cry out, “Behold, He comes!” Having worshipped among the pure in heart, he sees the Lord. Having adored the King, he sees Him assume the Judgement Seat and appear in the clouds of Heaven! When once we enter upon heavenly things, we know not how far we can go, nor how high we can climb! John, who began with blessing the Churches, now beholds His Lord!

May the Holy Spirit help us reverently to think of the wondrous coming of our blessed Lord, when He shall appear to the delight of His people and the dismay of the ungodly!

There are three things in the text. They will seem commonplace to some of you and, indeed, they are the common-place of our divine faith—and yet *nothing* can be of greater importance! The first is, *our Lord Jesus comes*—"Behold He comes with clouds." The second is, *our Lord Jesus Christ's coming will be seen of all*—"Every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him." And, in the third place, *this coming will cause great sorrow*—"All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him."

I. May the Holy Spirit help us while, in the first place, we remember that OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST COMES!

This announcement is thought worthy of a note of admiration. As the Latins would say, there is an "*Ecce*" placed here—"Behold, He comes!" As in the old books, the printers put hands in the margin pointing to special passages, such is this, "behold!" It is a *Nota Bene* calling upon us to note well what we are reading. Here is something which we are to *hold* and *behold*. We now hear a voice crying, "Come and see!" The Holy Spirit never uses superfluous words, nor redundant notes of exclamation—when He cries, "Behold!"—it is because there is reason for deep and lasting attention. Will you turn away when He bids you pause and ponder, linger and look? Oh, you that have been beholding vanity, come and behold the fact that Jesus comes! You that have been beholding this and beholding that—and thinking of nothing worthy of your thoughts, forget these passing sights and spectacles—and, for once, behold a scene which has no parallel!

It is not a monarch in her jubilee, but the King of kings in His Glory! That same Jesus who went up from Olivet into Heaven is coming, again, to earth in like manner as His disciples saw Him go up into Heaven! Come and behold this great sight! If ever there was a thing in the world worth looking at, it is this. Behold and see if there was ever Glory like His Glory! Harken to the midnight cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom comes!" It has practically to do with you. "Go you forth to meet Him." This voice is to you, O sons of men! Do not carelessly turn aside, for the Lord God, Himself, demands your attention—He *commands* you to "Behold!" Will you be blind when God bids you behold? Will you shut your eyes when your Savior cries, "Behold"? When the finger of Inspiration points the way, will not your eyes follow where it directs you? "Behold, He comes!" O my Hearers, look here, I beseech you!

If we read the words of our text carefully, this, "Behold," shows us, first, that *this coming is to be vividly realized*. I think I see John. He is in the spirit, but all of a sudden he seems startled into a keener and more solemn attention. His mind is more awake than usual, though he was always a man of bright eyes that saw afar. We always liken him to the eagle for the height of his flight and the keenness of his vision. Yet all of a sudden, even he seems startled with a more astounding vision! He cries out, "Behold! Behold!" He has caught sight of His Lord! He says not, "He will come by-and-by," but, "I can see Him! He is coming!" He has evidently realized the Second Advent. He has so conceived of the Second Coming of the Lord that it has become a matter of fact to Him—a matter to be spoken of and even to be written down! "Behold, He comes!"

Have you and I ever realized the coming of Christ so fully as this? Perhaps we believe that He will come. I should hope that we all do *that*. If we believe that the Lord Jesus has come the first time, we believe also that He will come the second time, but are these equally assured Truths of God to us? Perhaps we have vividly realized the first appearing—from Bethlehem to Golgotha and from Calvary to Olivet we have traced the Lord, understanding that blessed cry, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" Yes, the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His Glory, the Glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and truth. But have we, with equal firmness, grasped the thought that He comes, again, without a sin-offering unto salvation? Do we now say to each other, as we meet in happy fellowship, "Yes, our Lord comes"? It should be to us not only a prophecy assuredly believed among us, but a scene pictured in our souls and anticipated in our hearts!

My imagination has often set forth that dread scene—but better still, my faith has realized it! I have heard the chariot wheels of the Lord's approach and I have endeavored to set my house in order for His reception. I have felt the shadow of that great cloud which shall attend Him, dampening the ardor of my worldliness. I hear, even now, in spirit, the sound of the last trumpet, whose tremendous blast startles my soul to serious action and puts force into my life. Would God that I lived more completely under the influence of that august event!

Brothers and Sisters, to this realization I invite you. I wish that we could go together in this until, as we went out of the house we said to one another, "Behold, He comes!" One said to his companion, after the Lord had risen, "The Lord has risen, indeed." I want you, tonight, to feel just as certain that the Lord is coming, indeed, and I would have you say as much to one another! We are sure that He will come and that He is on the way, but the benefit of a more vivid realization would be incalculable.

This coming is to be zealously proclaimed, for John does not merely calmly say, "He comes," but he vigorously cries, "Behold, He comes!" Just as the herald of a king prefaces his message by a trumpet blast that calls attention, so John cries, "Behold!" As the old town crier was known to say, "O yes! O yes! O yes!" or to use some other striking formula by which he called upon men to note his announcement, so John stands in the midst of us and cries, "Behold, He comes!" He calls attention by that emphatic word, "Behold!" It is no ordinary message that he brings and he would not have us treat his word as a commonplace saying. He throws his heart into the announcement! He proclaims it loudly. He proclaims it solemnly and He proclaims it with authority—"Behold, He comes!"

Brethren, no Truth of God ought to be more frequently proclaimed, next to the First Coming of the Lord, than His Second Coming—and you cannot thoroughly set forth all the ends and bearings of the First Advent if you forget the Second. At the Lord's Supper, there is no discerning the Lord's body unless you discern His First Coming—but there is no drinking of His cup to its fullness, unless you hear Him say, "Until I come." You must look forward as well as backward! So must it be with all our ministries—they must look to Him on the Cross and on the Throne. We must

vividly realize that He, who has once come, is coming again, or else our testimony will be marred and one-sided. We shall make lame work of preaching and teaching if we leave out either advent.

And next, *it is to be unquestionably asserted*. "Behold, He comes!" It is not, "Perhaps He will come," nor, "Perhaps He may yet appear." "Behold, He comes," should be dogmatically asserted as an absolute certainty which has been realized by the heart of the man who proclaims it. "Behold, He comes!" All the Prophets say that He will come. From Enoch down to the last that spoke by Inspiration, they declare, "The Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints." You shall not find one who has spoken by the authority of God who does not, either directly or by implication, assert the coming of the Son of Man when the multitudes born of woman shall be summoned to His bar to receive the recompense of their deeds! All the promises are travailing with this prognostication, "Behold, He comes!" We have His own word for it and this makes assurance doubly sure. He has told us that He will come again. He often assured His disciples that if He went away from them, He would come again to them—and He left us the Lord's Supper as a parting token to be observed until He comes. As often as we break bread, we are reminded of the fact that though it is a most blessed ordinance, yet it is a *temporary* one and will cease to be celebrated when our absent Lord is once again present with us!

What, dear Brothers and Sisters, is there to hinder Christ from coming? When I have studied and thought over this word, "Behold, He comes," yes, I have said to myself, indeed, He does—who shall hold Him back? His heart is with His Church on earth. In the place where He fought the battle, He desires to celebrate the victory! His delights are with the sons of men! All His saints are waiting for the day of His appearing and He is waiting, also. The very earth in her sorrow and her groaning travails for His coming which is to be her redemption! The creation is made subject to vanity for a little while, but when the Lord shall come again, the creation, itself, shall also be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God!

We might question whether He would come a second time if He had not already come the first time, but if He came to Bethlehem, be assured that His feet shall yet stand upon Olivet! If He came to die, doubt not that He will come to reign! If He came to be despised and rejected of men, why should we doubt that He will come to be admired in all them that believe? His sure coming is to be unquestionably asserted.

Dear Friends, this fact that He will come again *is to be taught as demanding our immediate interest*. "Behold, He comes with clouds." Behold, look at it! Meditate on it. It is worth thinking of. It concerns yourself. Study it again and again. "He comes!" He will so soon be here that it is put in the present tense—"He comes!" That shaking of the earth; that blotting out of sun and moon; that fleeing of Heaven and earth before His face—all these are so nearly here that John describes them as accomplished! "Behold, He comes!"

There is this sense lying in the background—that *He is already on the way*. All that He is doing in Providence and Grace is a preparation for His coming. All the events of human history; all the great decisions of His august majesty whereby He rules all things—all these are tending towards the day of His appearing! Do not think that He delays His coming and then, all of a sudden, He will rush here in hot haste. He has arranged for it to take place as soon as Wisdom allows. We know not what may make the present delay imperative, but the Lord knows and that suffices. You grow uneasy because nearly 2,000 years have passed since His Ascension and Jesus has not yet come. But you do not know what had to be arranged and how far the lapse of time was absolutely necessary for the Lord's designs. Those are no little matters which have filled up the great pause—the intervening centuries have teemed with wonders! A thousand things may have been necessary in Heaven, itself, before the consummation of all things could be arrived at.

When our Lord comes, it shall be seen that He came as quickly as He could, speaking after the manner of His Infinite Wisdom for He cannot behave Himself otherwise than wisely, perfectly, divinely. He cannot be moved by fear or passion so as to act hastily as you and I too often do. He dwells in the leisure of eternity and in the serenity of Omnipotence. He has not to measure out days, months and years—or to accomplish so much in such a space or else leave His lifework undone. But according to the power of an endless life, He proceeds steadily on and to Him a thousand years are but as one day! Therefore be assured that the Lord is even now coming! He is making everything tend that way. All things are working towards that grand climax. At this moment and every moment since He went away, the Lord Jesus has been coming back. "Behold, He comes!" He is on the way! He is nearer every hour!

And we are told that *His coming will be attended by a peculiar sign*. "Behold, He comes *with clouds*." We shall have no need to question whether it is the Son of Man who has come, or whether He is, indeed, come. This is to be no secret matter—His coming will be as manifest as yonder clouds! In the wilderness, the Presence of Jehovah was known by a visible pillar of cloud by day and an equally visible pillar of fire by night. That pillar of cloud was the sure token that the Lord was in His Holy Place, dwelling between the cherubim. Such is the token of the coming of the Lord Christ—

***"Every eye the cloud shall scan,
Ensign of the Son of Man."***

So it is written, "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory." I cannot quote, at this time, all those many passages of Scripture in which it is indicated that our Lord will come either sitting upon a cloud, or, "with the clouds," or, "with the clouds of Heaven," but such expressions are abundant.

Is it not to show that His coming will be majestic? He makes the clouds His chariots. He comes with hosts of attendants and these of a nobler sort

than earthly monarchs can summon to do them homage. With clouds of angels, cherubim and seraphim and all the armies of Heaven He comes! With all the forces of nature, thundercloud and blackness of tempest, the Lord of All makes His triumphant entrance to judge the world! The clouds are the dust of His feet in that dread day of battle when He shall ease Him of His adversaries, shaking them out of the earth with His thunder and consuming them with the devouring flame of His lightning! All Heaven shall gather with its utmost pomp to the great appearing of the Lord and all the terrible grandeur of nature shall then be seen at its fullest. Not as the Man of Sorrows, despised and rejected of men, shall Jesus come, but as Jehovah came upon Sinai in the midst of thick clouds and a terrible darkness, so shall He come, whose coming shall be the Final Judgment!

The clouds are meant to set forth the *might*, as well as the majesty, of His coming. "Ascribe you strength unto God: His excellency is over Israel, and His strength is in the clouds." This was the royal token given by Daniel, the Prophet, in his seventh chapter, at the 13th verse, "I saw in the night visions and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of Heaven." Not less than Divine is the Glory of the Son of God who once had not where to lay His head! The most sublime objects in nature shall most fitly minister to the manifest Glory of the returning King of men! "Behold, He comes," not with the swaddling bands of His Infancy, the weariness of His Manhood, the shame of His death, but with all the glorious tapestry of Heaven's high chambers! The hanging of the Divine Throne Room shall aid His state.

The clouds, also, denote *the terror of His coming to the ungodly*. His saints shall be caught up together with Him in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. But to those that shall remain on earth, the clouds shall turn their blackness and horror of darkness. Then shall the impenitent behold this dread vision—the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven. The clouds shall fill them with dread and the dread shall be abundantly justified, for those clouds are big with vengeance and shall burst in judgment on their heads! His Great White Throne, though it is bright and lustrous with hope to His people, will, with its very brightness and whiteness of immaculate justice, strike dead the hopes of all those who trusted that they might live in sin and yet go unpunished! "Behold, He comes! He comes with clouds."

I am in happy circumstances, tonight, because my subject requires no effort of imagination from me. To indulge fancy on such a theme would be a wretched profanation of so sublime a subject which, in its own simplicity, should come home to all hearts. Think clearly for a moment, till the meaning becomes real to you. Jesus Christ is coming, coming in unknown splendor! When He comes, He will be enthroned far above the attacks of His enemies, the persecutions of the godless and the sneers of skeptics. He is coming in the clouds of Heaven and we shall be among the witnesses of His appearing! Let us dwell upon this Truth of God!

II. Our second observation is this—OUR LORD'S COMING WILL BE SEEN BY ALL. "Behold, He comes with clouds, *and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him.*"

I gather from this expression, first, that *it will be a literal appearing and an actual sight*. If the Second Advent were to be a *spiritual* manifestation, to be perceived by the *minds* of men, the phraseology would be, “Every *mind* shall perceive Him.” But it is not so—we read, “Every *eye* shall see Him.” Now, the mind can behold the spiritual, but the eye can only see that which is distinctly material and visible. The Lord Jesus Christ will not come spiritually, for in that sense He is always here—He will come really and substantially, for every eye shall see Him—even those unspiritual eyes which gazed on Him with hate and pierced Him! Go not away and dream and say to yourself, “Oh, there is some spiritual meaning about all this.” Do not destroy the teaching of the Holy Spirit by the idea that there will be a spiritual manifestation of the Christ of God and that a literal appearing is out of the question! That would be altering the record. The Lord Jesus shall come to earth a second time as literally as He has come a first time! The same Christ who ate a piece of a broiled fish and of a honeycomb after He had risen from the dead—the same who said—“Handle Me and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see I have”—this same Jesus, with a material body, is to come in the clouds of Heaven! In the same manner as He went up, He shall come down! He shall be literally seen. The words cannot be honestly read in any other way.

“Every eye shall see Him.” Yes, I do *literally* expect to see my Lord Jesus with these eyes of mine, even as that saint expected who long ago fell asleep, believing that though the worms devoured his body, yet in his *flesh* he would see God, whom his eyes should see for himself and not another! There will be a real resurrection of the body, though the moderns doubt it—such a resurrection that we shall see Jesus with our own eyes! We shall not find ourselves in a shadowy, dreamy land of floating fictions where we may perceive, but cannot see. We shall not be airy nothings—mysterious, vague, impalpable—but we shall *literally* see our glorious Lord, whose appearing will be no phantom show, or shadow dance! Never day more real than the Day of Judgement! Never sight more true than the Son of Man upon the Throne of His Glory! Will you take this statement home, that you may feel the force of it? We are getting too far away from facts, nowadays, and too much into the realm of myths and notions. “Every eye shall see Him”—in this there shall be no delusion!

Note well that *He is to be seen of all kinds of living men*. Every eye shall see Him—the king and the peasant, the most learned and the most ignorant. Those that were blind, before, shall see when He appears. I remember a man born blind who loved our Lord most intensely and he was known to glory in this, that his eyes had been reserved for his Lord. He said, “The first whom I shall ever see will be the Lord Jesus Christ! The first sight that greets my newly-opened eyes will be the Son of Man in His Glory!” There is great comfort in this to all who are now unable to behold the sun. Since “every eye shall see Him,” you, also, shall see the King in His beauty!

Small pleasure is this to eyes that are full of filthiness and pride—you care not for this sight—and yet you must see it whether you please or do not please! You have up to now shut your eyes to good things, but when

Jesus comes you *will* see Him! All that dwell upon the face of the earth, if not at the same moment, yet with the same certainty, shall behold the once crucified Lord! They will not be able to hide themselves, nor to hide Him from their eyes! They will dread the sight, but it will come upon them, even as the sun shines on the thief who delights in the darkness. They will be obliged to acknowledge in dismay that they behold the Son of Man—they will be so overwhelmed with the sight that there will be no denying it!

He will be seen of those who have been long since dead. What a sight that will be for Judas and for Pilate—and for Caiaphas and for Herod! What a sight it will be for those who, in their lifetime, said that there was no Savior and no need of one—or that Jesus was a mere man and that His blood was not a propitiation for sin! Those that scoffed and reviled Him have long since died, but they shall all rise again—and rise to this heritage among the rest—that they shall see Him, whom they blasphemed, sitting in the clouds of Heaven! Prisoners are troubled at the sight of the judge. The trumpet of assize brings no music to the ears of criminals. But you must hear it, O impenitent Sinner! Even in your grave, you must hear the voice of the Son of God—and live and come forth from the tomb to receive the things done in your body—whether they were good or bad! Death cannot hide you, nor the vault conceal you, nor rottenness and corruption deliver you. You are bound to see, in your body, the Lord who will judge both you and your companions!

It is mentioned here that *He will especially be seen by those that pierced Him*. In this is included all the company that nailed Him to the tree, with those that took the spear and made the gash in His side. Indeed, all that had a hand in His cruel Crucifixion. It includes all of these, but it comprehends many more. "They also who pierced Him" are by no means a few. Who have pierced Him? Why those who once professed to love Him and have gone back to the world! Those who once ran well, "What hindered them?" And now they use their tongues to speak against the Christ whom once they professed to love! They, also, have pierced Him whose inconsistent lives have brought dishonor upon the sacred name of Jesus. They, also, have pierced Him who refused His love, stifled their consciences and refused His rebukes. Alas, that so many of you should be piercing Him, now, by your base neglect of His salvation!

They that went every Sunday to hear of Him and that remained hearers, only, destroying their own souls rather than yield to His infinite love—these pierced His tender heart. Dear Hearers, I wish I could plead effectually with you, tonight, so that you would not continue any longer among the number of those that pierced Him! If you will look at Jesus, now, and mourn for your sin, He will put your sin away—and then you will not be ashamed to see Him in that day! Even though you pierced Him, you will be able to sing, "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood." But, remember, if you persevere in piercing Him and fighting against Him, you will still have to see Him in that day—to your terror and despair! He will be seen by you and by me, however evil we may behave. And what horror will that sight cost us!

I felt unfit to preach to you tonight, but last Lord’s Day I said that I would preach tonight if I could possibly manage it. It seemed barely possible, but I could not do less than keep my word—and I also longed to be with you, for your sakes—for perhaps there may not remain many more occasions on which I shall be permitted to preach the Gospel among you. I am often ill—who knows how soon I shall come to my end? I would use all that remains to me of physical strength and Providential opportunity. We never know how soon we may be cut off and then we are gone forever from the opportunity of benefiting our fellow men. It were a pity to be taken away with one opportunity of doing good unused. So would I earnestly plead with you under the shadow of this great Truth of God—I would urge you to make ready since we shall both behold the Lord in the day of His appearing!

Yes, I shall stand in that great throng. You, also, will be there. How will you feel? You are not accustomed, perhaps, to attend a place of worship, but you will be there and the spot will be very solemn to you. You may absent yourself from the assemblies of the saints, but you will not be able to absent yourself from the gathering of that day! You will be there, one in that great multitude, and you will see Jesus the Lord as truly as if you were the only person before Him and He will look upon you as certainly as if you were the only one that was summoned to His bar!

Will you kindly think of all this as I close this second head? Silently repeat to yourself the words, “Every eye shall see Him, and they also that pierced Him.”

III. And now I must close with the third head which is a painful one, but needs to be enlarged upon—HIS COMING WILL CAUSE GREAT SORROW. What does the text say about His coming?

“All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.” “All kindreds of the earth.” Then *this sorrow will be very general*. You thought, perhaps, that when Christ came, He would come to a glad world, welcoming Him with song and music. You thought that there might be a few ungodly persons who would be destroyed with the breath of His mouth, but that the bulk of mankind would receive Him with delight. See how different—“All kindreds of the earth,” that is, all sorts of men that belong to the earth! All earth-born men. Men out of all nations and kindreds and tongues shall weep and wail and gnash their teeth at His coming! O Sirs, this is a sad outlook! We have no smooth things to prophesy. What do you think of this?

And, next, *this sorrow will be very great*. They shall “wail.” I cannot put into English the full meaning of that most expressive word. Sound it at length and it conveys its own meaning. It is as when men wring their hands and burst out into a loud cry. Or as when Eastern women, in their anguish, tear their garments and lift up their voices with the most mournful notes. All the kindreds of the earth shall wail—wail as a mother laments over her dead child—wail as a man might wail who found himself hopelessly imprisoned and doomed to die! Such will be the hopeless grief of all the kindreds of the earth at the sight of Christ in the clouds! If they remain impenitent, they shall not be able to be silent—they shall not be

able to repress or conceal their anguish. They shall wail or openly give vent to their horror! What a sound that will be which will go up before high Heaven when Jesus sits upon the cloud and, in the fullness of His power, summons them to judgment! Then “they shall wail because of Him.”

Will your voice be heard in that wailing? Will your heart be breaking in that general dismay? How will you escape? If you are one of the kindreds of the earth and remain impenitent, you will wail with the rest of them! Unless you now fly to Christ and hide yourself in Him and so become one of the kindred of *Heaven*—one of His chosen and blood-washed ones who shall praise His name for washing them from their sins—unless you do this, there will be wailing at the Judgment Seat of Christ and *you* will be in it!

Then it is quite clear that men will not be universally converted when Christ comes because, if they were so, they would not wail. Then they would lift up the cry, “Welcome, welcome, Son of God!” The coming of Christ would be as the hymn puts it—

***“Hark, those bursts of acclamation!
Hark, those loud triumphant chords!
Jesus takes the highest station
Oh, what joy the sight affords!”***

These acclamations come from His people. But according to the text, the multitude of mankind will weep and wail and, therefore, they will *not* be among His people. Do not, therefore, look for salvation to some coming day, but believe in Jesus *now* and find in Him your Savior at once! If you joy in Him, now, you shall much more rejoice in Him in that day, but if you will have cause to wail at His coming, it will be well to wail at once.

Note one more Truth of God. It is quite certain that when Jesus comes in those latter days, *men will not be expecting great things of Him*. You know the talk they have, nowadays, about “a larger hope.” Today they deceive the people with the idle dream of repentance and restoration *after* death—a fiction unsupported by the least tittle of Scripture. If these kindreds of the earth expected that when Christ would come they would all die out and cease to be, they would rejoice that, thereby, they escaped the wrath of God! Would not each unbeliever say, “It were a consummation devoutly to be wished”? If they thought that at His coming there would be a universal restoration and a general jail delivery of souls long shut up in prison, would they wail? If Jesus could be supposed to come to proclaim a general restoration, they would not wail, but shout for joy!

Ah, no! It is because His coming to the impenitent is black with blank despair that they will wail because of Him! If His First Coming does not give you eternal life, His Second Coming will not! If you do not hide in His wounds when He comes as your Savior, there will be no hiding place for you when He comes as your Judge! They will weep and wail because, having rejected the Lord Jesus, they have turned their backs on the last possibility of hope!

Why do they wail *because of Him*? Will it not be because they will see Him in His Glory and they will recollect that they slighted and despised Him? They will see Him come to judge them and they will remember that

once He stood at their door with mercy in His hands and said, "Open to Me," but they would not admit Him. They refused His blood! They refused His righteousness! They trifled with His sacred name and now they must give an account for this wickedness. They put Him away in scorn and now, when He comes, they find that they can trifle with Him no longer. The days of child's play and of foolish delays are over—and now they have solemnly to give in their life's account. See, the books are opened! They are covered with dismay as they remember their sins and know that they are written down by a faithful pen. They must give an account—and unwashed and unforgiven they cannot render that account without knowing that the sentence will be, "Depart, you cursed." This is why they weep and wail because of Him!

O Souls, my natural love of ease makes me wish that I could preach pleasant things to you, but they are not in my commission. I need scarcely wish, however, to preach a soft gospel, for so many are already doing it to your cost! As I love your immortal souls, I dare not flatter you. As I shall have to answer for it in the Last Great Day, I must tell you the truth—

***"You sinners seek His face
Whose wrath you cannot bear."***

Seek the mercy of God tonight! I have come here in pain to implore you to be reconciled to God! "Kiss the Son lest He be angry and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

But if you will not have my Lord Jesus, He comes all the same for that. He is on the road, now, and when He comes you will wail because of Him! Oh that you would make Him your Friend and then meet Him with joy! Why will you die? He gives life to all those who trust Him. Believe and live!

God save your souls tonight and He shall have the Glory. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Revelation 1.*
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK" —360, 346, 364.**

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THE CHRIST OF PATMOS

NO. 357

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 27, 1861,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.**

“And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot and girt about the chest with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shines in His strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the First and the Last.”
Revelation 1:12-17.

THE Lord Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. Having neither beginning of days, nor end of years, He is a priest forever after the order of Melchisedek. But the views which His people have of Him are extremely varied. According to our progress in grace, will be the standpoint from which we view the Savior. And according to the position from which we look at Him, will be what we see of Him. Christ is the same, but believers do not all see Him in the same clear light, nor do they all approach to the same nearness of fellowship.

Some only know His offices. Others only admire His character. Far fewer commune with His Person. But there are some who have advanced still further—who have come to feel the unity of all the Church with the Person of Christ Jesus their Lord. Under the Old Testament the lesson to be taught was the same but the capacity of the learners differed and hence the mode of teaching the lesson differed also. A poor man, under the Jewish dispensation, was the type of an uninstructed Christian. The rich man was the picture of the well-taught Believer.

Now the poor Jew brought a turtle dove or two young pigeons (Lev. 1:4-11). The necks of these were wrung and they were offered. The poor man in that was only taught this lesson—that it was only by death and blood that his sin could be put away. The richer Israelite who had it within his power brought a bullock (Lev. 1:3-9). This bullock was not only slain but it had to be cut in pieces. The legs, the fat, the innards were washed in water and all these were laid in special order upon the altar. This was to teach him even as Christ now teaches the intelligent and instructed Believer that there is within the mere act of shedding blood an order and a fullness of wisdom which only advanced Believers can perceive.

The scapegoat taught one truth, the paschal lamb another. The showbread set forth one lesson, the lighting of the lamps another. All the types were intended to teach the one great mystery of Christ manifest in the flesh and seen of angels. But they taught it in different ways, because

men in those times, as now, had different capacities and could only learn a little at a time. As it was under the Old Testament, it is under the New. All Christians know Christ, but they do not all know Him to the same degree and in the same way. There are some Believers who view Christ as *Simeon* did. Simeon saw Him as a babe. He took Him up in his arms and was so overjoyed, that he said, "Lord, now let You Your servant depart in peace according to Your word."

You know how, in the Church of England, that Song of Simeon is chanted every Sabbath-Day, as if it were true that many of the worshippers had never gotten further than that—to know Christ as a babe—a Savior whom they could take up in their arms, whom they could apprehend by faith and call their own. There is an advance, however, upon that experience when not only can we take Christ up but we can see Christ taking *us* up. When we can see not only how we apprehend Him by faith, but how *He* apprehended us of old in the Everlasting Covenant and took up the seed of Abraham and was made in their likeness, that He might redeem their souls.

It is a great joy to know Christ, though it is but only the infant consolation of Israel. It is a happy privilege to be permitted with the Easterns to bring our gold, frankincense and myrrh and worship Christ, the newborn King. This, however, is but a lesson for *beginners*. It is one of the first syllables of the schoolbook of grace. To take Christ up in our arms is the sure pledge of salvation but at the same time it is but the dawn of heavenly light in experience.

But, my dear Brethren, the *disciples* of Jesus knew Christ in a higher degree than Simeon—for they regarded Him not simply as the Incarnate One—but as their Prophet and Teacher. They sat at His feet. They heard His words. They knew that never man spoke like that man. Under His teaching they were led on to high degrees of knowledge. He gave to them the Divine texts from which, when the Spirit had descended, they drew sacred lessons which they taught the multitude. They knew more, I say, of Christ than Simeon—Simeon knew Him as one whom he could take hold of by faith and who would make glad his eyes. But the disciples knew Him as one who taught them—not merely saved them—but *instructed* them.

There are hundreds of Believers who have got as far as this. Christ is to them the great teacher of doctrine. He is the great expositor of God's will and Law and they look up to Him with reverence as the Rabbi of their faith. Yes! But there was one of the disciples at least who knew Jesus Christ even better than this. There was one chosen out of the twelve, as the twelve had been chosen out of the rest, who knew Christ as a dear Companion and as a sweet Friend. There was one who knew His bosom as affording a pillow for his weary head. One who had felt His heart beat close to his cheek—one who had been with Him on the mountain of Transfiguration and had enjoyed fellowship with the Father through His Son Jesus Christ.

Now I fear that those who advance as far as John did are not very many. They are doctrinal Christians and thus they have made an advance upon those who are only trusting Christians and not more. But John had taken a wonderful stride before his fellow men, when he could claim Chr-

ist as being dear to him, the Companion of his life, the Friend of his days. May the Lord teach each of us more and more how to walk with Jesus and to know His love!

But, Brethren, there was one who comprehended Christ Jesus fully as well as the Beloved disciple. 'Twas *Mary*. She knew Him as one that had been born in her and born of her. Blessed is that Christian who can say that Christ is formed in him the hope of glory and who has come to look not at Christ as only on the Cross, but as Christ in his own soul., who knows that he himself as truly bears the Savior within him as ever did his Virgin Mother—who feels that in him, too, by the Holy Spirit, Christ is conceived. That in him the nature of Christ, that holy thing which is born of the Holy Spirit, is ripening and maturing till it shall destroy the old man and in perfect manhood shall be born into eternal life. This, I say, even eclipses John's knowledge, but it is not perhaps the highest of all! Further than this we will not venture this morning. At some other time, when our eyes are more enlightened, we may take a glimpse of a yet more excellent glory.

Dear Friends, you who love the Savior wish for nothing so much as to see more and more of Him. Your desire is that you may see Him as He is, yet I can well conceive, if you might indulge your wishes, you would wish that you had seen Him as He was *transfigured*. Do you not look back almost with envy upon those three favored ones who went up to the top of Tabor and were there overshadowed when His garment became whiter than any fuller could make it and there appeared unto Him Moses and Elisa talking with Him? You need not envy, for you know how they were overpowered with the sight and “were heavy with sleep.” You, too, would sleep if you had but the same strength as they and had to gaze upon the same surpassing glory.

I know, too, you have wished that you could have seen Him in the garden of *Gethsemane*. Oh, to have seen that agony, to have heard those groans. To have marked that bloody sweat as it fell in clots to the frozen ground! Well might you envy those who were chosen to keep the sacred vigil and to have watched with Him one hour. But you will remember that they slept. “He found them sleeping for sorrow.” With your powers of endurance—if you had no more than they—you, too, would sleep. As in the transfiguration so in that agony and bloody sweat there was a sight which eye can never see—because there was a glory and a shame which man can never comprehend.

But perhaps some of you have longed and wished that you had seen Him on the Cross. Oh, to have beheld Him there, to have seen those hands nailed “to fix the world's salvation fast.” And those feet nailed to the wood as though He tried to be gracious, though the world waited long in coming. Oh, to have seen that mangled naked body and that pierced side! John, you who did see and bear witness, we might well envy you!

But, oh, my Brethren, why should we? Why should we? For have we not seen by faith all of Christ, without that horror which must have passed over the beholders and which did pass over His mother when a sword pierced through her own heart also, because she saw her son bleeding on the tree?

Oh, how delightful it must have been to have beheld the Savior on the morning of the resurrection!—to have seen Him as He rose with new life from the chambers of the dead, to have beheld Him when He stood in the midst of the disciples, the doors being shut and said, “Peace be unto you!” How pleasant to have gone to the top of the mountain with Him and to have seen Him as He ascended, blessing His disciples, a cloud receiving Him out of their sight!

Surely we might well desire to spend an eternity in visions like these. But permit me to say that I think the picture of our text is preferable to any and if you have desires after those I have already mentioned, you ought to have far more intense longings to see Christ as John did in this vision. This is, perhaps, the most complete, most blest, most wonderful and at the same time, most important manifestation of Christ that was ever seen by human eye.

There will be two things which will take our attention this morning. The first briefly, *the importance of this vision to us*. And then, secondly, *the meaning of the vision*.

I. THE VALUE OF THIS VISION TO US.

Some may be inclined to say, “The preacher has selected a very curious passage of Scripture. One that may tickle our fancy but that can be of no spiritual benefit to us.” My Friends, you labor under a very great mistake and I trust I may convince you of that in a minute or two. Remember that this representation, this symbolic picture of Christ is a representation of *the same Christ who suffered for our sins*. “Strangely diverse as it may seem to be, yet here we have the very same Christ. John calls Him the Son of Man, that sweet and humble name by which Jesus was so wont to describe Himself.

That He was the same identical Person is very clear, because John speaks of Him at once as being *like* unto the Son of Man and I think he means that he perceived in His majesty a likeness to Him whom he had known in His shame. There was not the crown of thorns. But he knew the brow. There was not the mark of the wounds. Perhaps the seven stars had taken the position of the prints of the nails, but he knew the hands for all that. As in our new bodies, when we rise from the tomb, we shall no doubt know each other—though the body which shall rise will have but faint resemblance to that which is sown in the tomb. It will be a miraculous and marvelous development in flower of the poor withered thing that is but the buried seed. But I doubt not that I shall be able to recognize your visage in Heaven because I knew your countenance on earth. So did John discover, despite the glories of Christ, the identical Person whom he had seen in abasement and woe.

Christian, look with reverence there. There is your Lord, the Christ of the manger, the Christ of the wilderness, the Christ of Capernaum and Bethsaida, the Christ of Gethsemane. The Christ of Golgotha is there and it cannot be unimportant for you to turn aside to see this great sight.

Further, this picture represents to us *what Christ is now* and hence its extreme value. What He was when He was here on earth is all-important to me, but what He is now is quite as much a matter of vital consequence. Some set exceeding great store by what He *shall be* when He comes to

judge the earth in righteousness and so do we. But we really think that Christ in the future is not to be preferred to a knowledge of Christ in the present. For we want to know today, in the midst of present strife and present pain and present conflict what Jesus Christ is now. And this becomes all the more cheering because we know that what He is now *we* shall be—for we shall be like He is when we shall see Him as He is.

And yet a third consideration lends importance to the topic of our text, namely that Christ in the text is represented as *what He is to the Churches*. You will perceive He is portrayed as standing in the midst of the golden candlesticks, by which we understand the Churches. We love to know what He is to the nations, what He is to His peculiar people, the Jews, what He will be to His enemies. But it is best for us, as members of Christian Churches, to know what He is in the Churches so that every deacon, elder and church member here should give earnest heed to this passage—for he has here pictured to him that Christ to whom the Church looks up as her great Lord and hope—that Messiah whom every day she serves and adores.

And I might add yet once more—I think the subject of our text is valuable when we consider *what an effect it would have upon us if we really felt and understood it*. We would fall at His feet as dead. Blessed position! Does the death alarm you? We are never so much alive as when we are dead at His feet. We are never so truly living as when the creature dies away in the presence of the All-Glorious King. I know this, that the death of all that is sinful in me is my soul's highest ambition—and the death of all that is carnal and all that savors of the old Adam. Would that it would die. And where can it die but at the feet of Him who has the new life and who by manifesting Himself in all His glory is to purge away our dross and sin? I only would that this morning I had enough of the Spirit's might so to set forth my Master that I might contribute even in a humble measure to make you fall at His feet as dead, that He might be in us our All in All.

II. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS VISION? “Put off your shoes from off your feet for the place whereon you stand is holy ground.” If God manifest in a bush commands solemnity what shall we say of God manifest in Christ and manifest, too, after the most marvelous manner? The words of our text are *symbols*—they are not to be understood literally. Christ does not appear in Heaven under this literal form, but this is the appearance under which He was set forth to the intellect of John.

John was not so benighted as to understand any of this literally. He knew that the candlesticks were not meant for candlesticks, but for the seven light-giving Churches. He knew that the stars were not stars, but ministers and he understood right well that all the whole description through, it was the *symbol* and the spirit of the vision he was to look to and not to the literal words.

But to begin—“*And in the midst of the seven candlesticks, One like unto the Son of Man clothed with a garment down to the foot and girt about the chest with a golden girdle.*” We have, first, in Christ as He is today, a picture of His official dignity and of His royal honors. *Clothed with a garment down to the feet*. This was the robe constantly worn by kings—the garment which descended and left only the feet apparent. This was also the

peculiar dress of the priest. A priest of the Jewish dispensation had the long flowing white robe which reached down to the ground and covered him entirely.

Christ, then, in being thus clothed, asserts His kingship and His eternal priesthood. It may indicate the fact, too, that He has clothed Himself with righteousness. Though He was once naked—when He was the Substitute for naked sinners who had cast away the robe of their righteousness—He is naked no more. He wears that garment dipped in His own blood, woven from the top throughout by His own hands—He wears Himself that garment which He casts over the whole Church, which is His body.

However, the main idea here is that of official dignity and position and when you read of the golden girdle which was about the chest it is a representation of how the high priest was girt. He was girt with a girdle that had gold in it. The girdles of the other priests were not of gold. That of the high priest's was mainly made of that precious metal and it was girt about the chest—not at the waist—but across the breast as if to show that the love of Christ, or the place where His loving heart beat most, was just the spot where He bound firmly about Himself the garments of His official dignity. As if His love were the faithful girdle of His loins. As if the affection of His heart ever kept Him fast and firm to the carrying out of all the offices which He had undertaken for us.

The picture is not difficult to imagine before your eyes. I only want the Christian mind to stop a minute and consider it. Come, Believer, you have a Lord to worship who is clothed today with supreme office. Come before Him. He can govern for you—He is King. He can plead for you—He is Priest. Come, worship HIM, HE is adored in Heaven. Come, trust Him—lo, at that golden girdle hang the keys of Heaven and death and Hell. No more despised and rejected of men, no more naked to His shame, no more homeless, or friendless. His royal dignity ensures the obedience of angels and His priestly merit wins the acceptance of His Father—

***“Give Him, my soul, your cause to plead,
Nor doubt the Father’s grace.”***

Let His garment and His robe compel your faith to trust your soul, yes and your temporal affairs, too, wholly and entirely in His prevailing hands. You will perceive that there is no crown upon the head as yet—that crown is reserved for His advent. He comes soon to reign. Even now He is King—but He is a king rather with the girdle about His loins than with the crown upon His head. Soon He shall come in the clouds of Heaven and His people shall go forth to meet Him and then shall we see Him “with the crown wherewith His mother crowned Him in the day of His espousals and in the day of the gladness of His heart.” Our soul longs and watches for the day when the many crowns shall be upon His head. Even now is He King of kings and Lord of lords. Even now is He the High Priest of our profession and as such we adore and trust Him.

“His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow.” When the Church described Him in the Canticles, she said “His locks are bushy and black as a raven’s.” How are we to understand this apparent discrepancy? My Brethren, the Church in the Canticles looked *forward*—she looked forward to days and ages that were to come—and she perceived His

perpetual youth. She pictured Him as one who would never grow old, whose hair would ever have the blackness of youth. And do we not bless God that her view of Him was true? We can say of Jesus, "You have the dew of Your youth." But the Church of today looks *backward* to His work as complete. We see Him now as the Ancient of Eternal Days. We believe that He is not the Christ of 1800 years ago merely, but, before the daystar knew its place, He was One with the Eternal Father. When we see in the picture His head and His hair white as snow, we understand the antiquity of His reign. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God."

When all these things were not, when the old mountains had not lifted their hoary heads into the clouds, when the yet more hoary sea had never roared in tempest—before the lamps of Heaven had been lit. When God dwelt alone in His immensity and the un navigated waves of ether, if there were such, had never been fanned by the wings of the seraph and the solemnity of silence had never been startled by the song of cherubim, Jesus was of old in eternity with God. We know how He was despised and rejected of men, but we understand, too, what He meant when He said, "Before Abraham was, I AM." We know how He who died when but a little more than thirty years of age was verily the Father of the everlasting ages, having neither beginning of days nor end of years.

No doubt there is here coupled with the idea of antiquity, that of reverence. Men rise up before the hoary head and pay it homage. And do not angels, principalities and powers bow before Him? Though He was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, yet is He not crowned with glory and honor? Do they not all delight to obey His behests and lay their borrowed dignities at His feet? O Christian! Rejoice that you serve One so venerable, so worthy to be praised. Let your soul join now in the song which rolls upward to His Throne, "Unto Him that is and that was and that is to come, the Alpha and the Omega, unto Him be glory and honor and dominion and power, forever and ever. Amen."

"*His eyes were as a flame of fire.*" This represents Christ's oversight of His Church. As He is in the Church the Ancient of Eternal Days, her Everlasting Father and her Head to be revered, so is He in the Church, the Universal Overseer, the great Bishop and Shepherd of souls. And what eyes He has! How penetrating! "Like flames of fire." How discriminating! "Like flames of fire," which melt the dross and only leave the real metal. "Like flames of fire," He sees—not by light without—but His own eyes supply the light with which He sees. His knowledge of the Church is not derived from the prayers of the Churches, nor from her experience of her wants, nor from her verbal statements, He sees by no borrowed light of the sun, or of the moon—His eyes are lamps unto themselves.

In the Church's thick darkness, when she is trampled down, when no light shines upon her, He sees her—for His eyes are "like flames of fire." Oh, what sweet consolation this must be to a child of God! If you cannot tell your Lord where you are, He can see you and though you cannot tell what you really want, or how to pray, yet He can not only see, but He can see with such discrimination that He can tell precisely what your true wants are and what are only fancies of an unsanctified desire. "His eyes

were as a flame of fire.” Why you are in darkness and you see no light—but He *is* the light that lights every man that comes into the world and He sees by the light of His own Person all that goes on in you.

I love that doctrine of Christ’s universal oversight of all His Church. You know there is an idea sometimes held out that the Church ought to have a *visible* head so that all matters may come by degrees through a hierarchy to some one man. Then one man knowing all things may be able to guide the Church aright. An absurd and impossible idea! What *man* could possibly say, “I keep the Church. I water it, I watch it every moment.” No, no, it must be this—“I the Lord do keep it. I will water it every moment lest any hurt it. I will keep it night and day.” There is never a trial to the Church, there is never a pang she feels but those eyes of fire discern.

Oh, think not you would rather view the eyes that once were fountains of tears, that wept for your sins! Those sins are put away. It is better for you now that you should have One whose eyes are like flames of fire—not to perceive your sins—but to burn them up. Not merely to see your wants, but forever to fulfill your desires. Bow before Him, lay bare your heart, hope not to conceal anything. Think it not needful that you should explain anything. He sees and He knows for His eyes are like flame of fire.

“*And His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace.*” The head, you see, is reverent. The feet are blazing. The countenance is like the sun for glory. The feet like burning brass for trial. I think we may understand by this the Church of God *on earth*—those saints united to Christ who are the last of the body. The lower part who are in these times still treading the earth. Christ is in Heaven, His head is like “the sun that shines in His strength.” Christ is on earth in the midst of His Church and where His feet walk among the golden candlesticks, they walk in fire. They are like brass that burns in a furnace.

Now, we think that wherever Christ is there will be the fire of trial to His Church. I would never believe that we were on the Lord’s side if all men were on our side. If the words we speak were not constantly misrepresented we could not imagine we spoke the Words of God. If we were always understood we should think that we spoke not those things which the carnal mind cannot receive. No, Brethren, no—expect not ease! Expect not that you shall attain to the crown without *suffering*. The feet of Christ burn in the furnace and you belong to His body—you do not belong to His head—for you are not in Heaven. You do not belong to His loins—for you wear not the golden girdle—but you belong to His feet and you must burn in the furnace.

What a wondrous picture is this of Christ! Can you conceive it? You know that the robe came down even to the feet. Perhaps it covered them but yet the glowing heat was such that through the robe might be seen the burning of the feet of brass. They were fine brass, too. They were metal that could not be consumed, a metal that would not yield to the heat. And so is Christ’s Church. The old motto of the early Protestants was an anvil, because “the Church” said they, “is an anvil that has broken many hammers.” The Evil One smites her—she does not reply except by suffering and in that—enduring with patience is her kingdom.

In that suffering is her victory. In the patient possessing of her soul, in her glowing in the furnace and not yielding to the fire, in her shining and being purified by its heat and not giving way and being molten by its fury. In that is as greatly the triumph of Christ, as in that bright countenance which is as “the sun shining in His strength.” I rejoice in this part of my text. It comforts one’s soul when cast down and deeply tried. “His feet were like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace.” Let us say to our souls—

**“Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease;
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas?
No, I must fight if I would reign;
Increase my courage, Lord!
I’ll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by Your Word.”**

But I must pass on having no time this morning to dwell long on any one of these points. *His voice as the sound of many waters.*” And what is the voice of Christ? It is a voice which is heard in Heaven. You angels, bow before Him! They hear the command—“And at the name of Jesus every knee does bow of things in Heaven.” It is a voice that is heard in Hell. You fiends, be still! “Vex not My anointed. Do My Prophets no harm.” And there those Hell hounds tug at their chains, longing to escape from their imprisonment. It is a voice that is heard on earth, too. Wherever Christ is preached, wherever His Cross is lifted up, there is there a voice that speaks better things than the blood of Abel.

Sometimes we are apt to think that Christ’s voice is not heard. We His ministers are such feeble creatures. If we have some few thousands to listen to our voice, yet how many forget! Amidst the storm of the battle cry, amidst political clamors who can hope that the still small voice of the ministry should be heard? But it *is* heard. Across the Alleghenies the voice of God’s minister echoes. No evil thing shall in the end stand against the protests of God’s servants. That which has made slavery tremble to its very soul has been the constant protest of Christian ministers in England.

And though the lying prophets of the Southern States have sought to undo the good, yet must they fall before the force of Truth. There is not a humble village pastor standing in his pulpit to edify his feeble flock, who is not thereby exerting an influence on all generations yet to come. The minister of Christ stands in the midst of the telegraphic system of the universe and works it according to Jehovah’s will. All society is but a tremulous mass of jelly yielding to the influence of Christ’s Gospel. I say not, Sirs, that there is any power in *us*. But there is power in Christ’s Word when it peals through us in trumpet tones.

There is power in Christ’s Word to waken the dry bones that lie in many a valley. China shall hear. Hindustan must listen, the gods of though they hear not, yet tremble. And feeble though we are in ourselves, yet does God make us mighty to the pulling down of strongholds and He shall make us conquerors through His grace. If you could stand upon some exceeding high mountain and could be gifted with enlarged ponders of vision it would be a wonderful thing to be able to see the Atlantic and Pacific, the Indian ocean and all the seas of the world at once.

Suppose we are standing on the loftiest summit while a tremendous storm sweeps o'er the whole. The sea roars and the fullness thereof—yes, all the seas roar at once—the Atlantic echoes to the Pacific. The Pacific passes on the strain to the great Indian ocean, the Mediterranean cries to the Red Sea, the Red Sea shouts aloud to the Arctic and the Arctic to the Antarctic. They clap their hands and all at once there is a voice of many waters. Such is the voice of Christ's ministry on earth. It may seem to be feeble but it never is. There may be but a handful of men—they may be in the glens of Piedmont. They may be found upon the hills of Switzerland and they may be dying for Christ—but their tramp is the tramp of heroes—their voice shakes the ages and eternity itself trembles before it. Oh, how consolatory to the heir of Heaven and to the minister of Christ is the fact that *His* voice is as “the sound of many waters.”

“*And He had in His right hand seven stars.*” The Church should always see Christ as holding up her ministers. Ministers are very much in danger. Stars, or those things that seem to be stars, may be but shooting stars. They may be but meteors and flash awhile right soon to melt away—but the ministers of Christ, though they are in danger, yet, if they are Christ's ministers—are perfectly safe. He keeps the seven stars. The celestial Pleiades of the Gospel are always in Christ's hand. And who can pluck them From there? Church of God! Be it ever your prayer that Christ would keep His ministers wherever they are—commend them to Him and remember you have this as a kind of promise on which to ground your prayer.

Brethren, pray for us! We are but like twinkling stars at least and He is as the sun that shines in His strength. Ask Him to give us light. Ask Him to keep us ever burning. Ask Him that we may be as the pole-star guiding the slave to liberty. Ask Him that we may be as the stars that make the southern cross—that when the mariner sees us, stars of Christ—he may see not each star individually but Christ manifested in beauteous form in the shining of all combined.

This shall be my portion today. “The seven stars were in His right hand.” How many would like to quench the light of God's ministers! Many criticize. Some abuse, more still misrepresent. I can scarcely say a sentence in which I am not misconstrued and I do aver that I have often taken Cobbett's rule to speak not only so that I could be understood, but so that I thought I could not be *misunderstood*. And yet I am. But what does it matter? What does it signify? Still if the stars make not glad the eyes of men, if they are in the Lord's hand they ought to be satisfied. They should rest content and not trouble themselves. Loud let the waves roar and let the envious sea send up her boisterous billows to quench the heavenly fires.

Aha, O sea! Upon your tranquil couches sleep the stars. They look down upon your boisterous waves. And when you shall subside in calm and the clouds that have risen from your vapor have passed away, be it the lone star or one of a constellation, it shall sluice out yet again and smile on your placid waters. And continue till you, O ocean, shall mirror the image of that star and you shall know that there is an influence—even in that envied spark which you have sought to quench—to lead your

floods and make them ebb and make them flow so that you shall be servant to One whom you thought to put out forever.

The seven stars are in Christ's right hand. I shall not detain you much longer, but we must finish this wonderful description. "*Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword.*" I have looked at one or two old pictures in which the artists of the olden times have tried to sketch this vision. I think it a most ridiculous thing to attempt. I conceive that this was never meant to be painted by any human being. Nor can it be. But one old artist seems to have caught the very idea. He represents the breath of Christ in vapor, assuming the form of a two-edged sword very mighty and strong to cut in pieces His adversary. Now, as the Gospel of Christ must be *heard* because it is "the voice of many waters," so it must be felt, for it is "a two-edged sword."

And it is surprising how the Gospel really is felt, too. It is felt by those who hate it! They writhe under it. They cannot sleep after it, they feel indignant, they are horrified, they are disgusted and all that. But still there is a something within which does not let them remain quiet. That two-edged sword gets at the marrow of their bones. They wish they had never heard the Word though they can never heal themselves of the wound they have gotten by it. And to those who are blessed under the Word—what a two-edged sword it is to them! How it kills their self-righteousness! How it cuts the throat of their sins! How it lays their lusts dead at the feet of Jesus! How all-subduing is it in the Son! No sword of Gideon was ever so potent against a horde of Midianites as the sword that comes out of Jesus' lips against the hosts of our sins. When the Spirit of God comes in all His power into our souls, what death He works and yet what life!—what death to sin and yet what new life in righteousness! O holy sword! O breath of Christ! Enter into our hearts and kill our sins.

It is delightful to see each day how the preaching of the Word is really the sword of God. I do sometimes retire from the pulpit sorrowing exceedingly because I cannot preach as I would and I think that surely the Master's message has had no effect among you. But it is perfectly marvelous how many here have been called by grace. I am each day more and more astonished when I see high and low, rich and poor, nobles and peasants, moral and immoral alike subdued before this conquering sword of Christ. I must tell it to the Master's honor, to the Master's glory, "His own right hand has gotten Him the victory." Here the slain of the Lord have been many! Here has He glorified Himself in the conversion of multitudes of souls!

But to conclude. "*His countenance was as the sun that shines in His strength.*" How can I picture this? Go abroad and fix your eye upon the sun if you can. Select the day of the year in which he is most in the zenith and then fix your steady gaze upon him. Does he not blind you? Are you not overwhelmed? But mark—when you can gaze at that sun with undimmed eye you shall even then have no power to look upon the countenance of Christ. What glory, what majesty, what light, what spotlessness, what strength!—"His countenance is as the sun that shines in His strength." Well may the angels veil their faces with their wings. Well may the elders offer vials full of sweet odors, that the smoke of their incense

may be a medium through which they may see *His* face. And well may you and I feel and say—

***“The more His glories strike our eyes
The humbler we must lie.”***

But, Jesus, turn Your face and look on us. It is midnight, but if You turn Your face it must be noon, for Your face is as the sun! Thick darkness and long nights have overwhelmed our spirits and we have said, “I am shut out from the Lord forever!” Jesus! Turn Your face and we are troubled no more. Sea of love where all our passions rest! You circle, where all our joys revolve! You center of our souls—shine and make us glad! This Sun, if we look at Him curiously to understand His glory, may blind us—but if we look at Him humbly, that we may receive His light, He will make our eyes stronger than they were and shed sunlight into the thickest darkness of our despair.

Oh, Church of God! What do you say to Him who is your Husband! Will you not forsake your own kindred and your Father’s house? Will you not long to know Him more and more and shall it not be your cry today, “Mount Your chariot, Jesus! Mount Your chariot! Ride forth conquering and to conquer! Show Your face and the darkness of superstition must melt before Your countenance. Open Your mouth and let the two-edged sword of Your Spirit slay Your foes! Come forth, Jesus. Bear the seven stars and let them shine where light was never been before! Speak, Jesus, speak! And men will hear You for Your voice is as the sound of many waters.

Come, Jesus come, even though You bring the burning heat with You. And we as Your feet glow in the furnace! Come look on us and burn up all our sins with those eyes of fire! Come show Yourself and we will adore You, for Your head and Your hair are white like wool! Come manifest Yourself and we will trust You with Your garment, Your priestly garment. We will reverence You and with Your golden girdle we will adore You, King of kings and Lord of lords!

Come then, that we may see You. That You may put the crown upon Your head and the shout may be heard—Hallelujah! Hallelujah! the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!

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

WITH GOLDEN BAND GIRDED NO. 3555

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 15, 1917.

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

***“He was girded about the chest with a golden band.”
Revelation 1:13***

[The original title of this sermon was WITH GOLDEN GIRDLE GIRT.]

BE assured, my Brothers and Sisters, the more real Jesus Christ is to us, the more power there will be in our religion. Those men whose religion lies in believing certain doctrines and contending for certain modes of expression, may be strong enough in bigotry, but they often fail entirely in developing the spirit of true Christianity. There may be minds so constituted that they can live under the power of an idea and they might possibly be able to die for it. But these, I think, must be comparatively few. To draw out enthusiasm among men, there must generally be a man as leader and commander in whom the people can implicitly trust, to whom they will voluntarily tender obedience. *Individual men* have worked wonders. The thoughts which they incarnated may have been, in themselves, strong, yet their strength was never so forcible as when the men who represented those thoughts were present to give them currency. Then the blood of the many was stirred and every man's heart beat high. The presence of Oliver Cromwell in a regiment was equal to any ten thousand men. He had only to appear and all his soldiers felt so sure of victory, they would dash upon the cavaliers as some mighty tornado, driving them like chaff before the wind! The presence of Napoleon at any moment in a battle was almost always sufficient to turn the scale. Let but “the little corporal” appear and wave his sword, and men seemed to lose all sense of their own personal danger and rushed into the very mouth of death to gain the victory! In those old days of the Huguenots when they were warring for their liberties, what shouts there were, what beating of hearts, what a glamour of trumpets, what exultation, when Henry of Navarre came riding down the ranks! Then each man felt he had a giant's arm and, as he rode to battle, struck home for God and for the truth as he gave out his watchword, “Remember St. Bartholomew!”

Now the force of the religion of Jesus, under God the Holy Spirit, it seems to me, is never fully brought out except when our faith greets the Lord Jesus Christ as a Person and holds to Him as a personal Leader and Commander, loving Him and devoting ourselves to Him as an ever-living, ever-gracious Friend. It is not by believing a set of ideas and trying

to be enthusiastic over *them*, that our courage rises or our prowess succeeds. Rather let us feel His Presence, though we cannot see His face, and remembering that there is such an One as Jesus of Nazareth, who became a Baby in Bethlehem for us—who lived, and toiled, and suffered for us—then laid bare His chest to the spear and gave up His life for us. We grow strong when we thus think of Him as our Savior, when His thorn-crowned head rises before our mind's eye, when we look into that face so marred with shame, and pain, and cruelty, till we are compelled to cry out, "Oh, my Savior, I love You, and for the love I bear Your name would gladly learn what I can do to honor You, and I will do it! Point out to me how much of my substance I should place upon Your altar, and I will be glad to place it there! Put me into the place of suffering, if necessary, and I will account it a place of honor, for if You are there, I can look into Your dear face and think that I am suffering for You—fire shall be then like a bed of roses to me—and death, itself, seem far sweeter than life!"

We need to have more open testimony concerning the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ! I am persuaded of that and we have need, private Christians, to live more in fellowship with Him, the Son of God, the Man, Christ Jesus, who has redeemed us from wrath, and through whose life we live! To Him now—to Him exclusively let all your thoughts be turned. Oh, that you may discern the Image which stood on that Lord's Day clearly before the view of John, the eyes of your understanding being opened, and your whole soul being attentive to the Revelation! It is but one part of John's description of our Lord Jesus Christ in Heaven to which I propose to direct your attention. "He was girded about the chest with a golden band." What did this golden band signify? And what are the golden lessons to be gathered from it?

I. THE GOLDEN BAND.

What did it mean? It was designed, first, *to set forth our Lord's excellence in all His offices*. He is a Prophet. The Prophets of old were often girded about with leather bands, but our Savior wears a golden band, for He, above all other Prophets, is vested with authority! What He declares and testifies is true. Yes, it is the pure Truth of God, unalloyed with tradition or superstition. He makes no mistakes. There is no treachery to taint His teaching. Sitting at His feet, you may accept every word He utters as Infallible. You need not raise a question about it. The band of golden truth is round about Him. He is also a Priest. The high priest of old wore a band of many colors for glory and for beauty. Our Lord Jesus Christ wears a band superior to this. It is of the pure gold, for among the priests He has no peer. Of all the sons of Aaron, none could vie with Him. They must first offer a sacrifice for their own sins. They needed to wash their feet in the laver, and to be touched with the cleansing blood. But Jesus Christ is without spot, or blemish, or any such thing—

***"Their priesthood ran through several bands
For mortal was their race."***

But Jesus is Immortal and about Him, He wears the golden band to show that He excels all the priests of Aaron's line. As for those persons who, in modern times, pretend to be priests, our Lord Jesus Christ is not to be mentioned in the same day with them. They are all deceivers! If they knew the Truth of God, they would understand that there is no class of priests now. All caste of priesthood is forever abolished! Every man that fears God, and every woman, too, is a priest according to the Word of God which is written, "He has made us kings and priests unto God." The priesthood is common to all the saints—not confined to some! But He wears a golden band among them. Their priesthood would be nothing without His. He has made them priests. They derive their priesthood entirely from Him, neither could they be acceptable before God if they were not accepted in the Beloved. He is a King as well as a Prophet and a Priest, and that band, being made of gold, signifies His supremacy over all other kings! He is mightier far than they—"the Lord mighty in battle." "King of Kings" is His name, and the burden of the music of Heaven is this, "King of kings, and Lord of lords." The day shall come when He shall grasp His scepter and break the kingdoms of earth like a potters' vessels with His rod of iron! He is this day King of the Jews, but He shall openly be so proclaimed. In that day kings shall bow down before Him and He shall gather up sheaves of scepters, while many crowns shall be upon His glorious brow! There is no kingdom like the Kingdom of Christ. Other kingdoms come and go like the hoar-frost of the morning, or the sheen upon the midnight waves, but His Kingdom stands forever and ever! It shall endure from everlasting to everlasting! As Prophet, Priest and King, He wears a band of gold to show His supremacy in office above all others!

The golden band, moreover, bears witness to His power and authority. Men were often girded with bands when they received office. The Prophet Isaiah said of Eliakim that he received a band of power and dominion. Keys were hung upon the band. The housewife's band with her keys signified her authority over her servants. The keys at the band of great men signified their power in their various offices, and when we sometimes sing—

***"Lo, in His hand the sovereign keys
Of Heaven, and death, and Hell,"***

we recognize this meaning of Christ's golden band, that all power given unto Him in Heaven and in earth. He is the universal Lord. Up in Heaven He enjoys an authority that is undisputed. Angels bow before Him—and on the sea of glass they cast down their crowns and cry, "Hallelujah!" Here on earth all Providence is ruled by the Man whose hands were pierced. All this dispensation is an economy of mediatorial government, over which Jesus Christ presides. He puts down one and sets up another. He makes the wheels of Providence revolve. Everything occurs according to His decree and purpose. In all things He rules and He overrules them for the good of His Church, even as Joseph governed Egypt for the good of the seed of Abraham! What a comfort it is, Beloved, for us to

think of the authority and the power of our Lord Jesus Christ! He who had not where to lay His head. He who was despised and rejected of men. He who was a working Man—the carpenter's Son. He who felt the pangs of hunger, endured the pains of weariness, was neglected, condemned, opposed and cast out by His countrymen and His kinsmen—it is He who is now undisputed Master and unrivalled Lord everywhere! No name is as famous as that one once branded with infamy—the name of Jesus—whom sinful men rejected, holy angels now adore! On earth He was condemned and crucified. In Heaven He is hailed with highest honor. Look up to that golden band! See how He descended, step by step, into the meanest depths of humiliation. Then mark how He ascended with rapid flight to the towering heights of exaltation! Follow Him. With Him take your lot. Be willing to be made of no repute in this day of reproach that you may be a partaker of His Glory in the day of His appearing!

Girded thus about with a golden band, we have a vivid representation of *His activity*. The band was used by the Easterns to bind up their long flowing robes. The Hebrew did not usually wear a band indoors. It was only when on a journey, or when engaged in some manual labor that he thus adjusted his attire. So our Lord's having a golden band signifies that He is still ready to serve His servants, to engage on their behalf. You remember how He once took a towel and girded Himself. That was with kind intent to wash their feet. Now it is no more with a linen towel, but with a band of gold that He prepares Himself to work on the behalf of His beloved! He stands not in Heaven with flowing garments, as though all work were done, but He stands there girded about the chest that He may be still ready and show Himself strong on behalf of His people. Be this your comfort—Jesus has not forgotten to plead for you before His Father's Throne. He never holds His peace, and never will. As long as you have a cause to plead, Christ will be your intercessor! Whatever you need, He is waiting to supply. As long as you have a sin to confess, Christ will be your Advocate with the Father to purge your guilt and purify your souls. As long as you are persecuted on earth, there will be a Christ to represent you in Heaven. As long as you are in this vale of tears, He, girded with a golden band, will be the Angel of God's Presence to succor and to save you! In all your afflictions He was afflicted, and He will still bear and carry you as in the days of old.

Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, how people do sometimes talk about the Christian Church, as if Jesus Christ, who died for us, were still dead! What gloomy forebodings I have read during the last few months! Not that I have believed a word, or taken dreams for disasters. I have not even credited their sadness with too much sincerity! I rather thought they wrote for a party purpose, with motives of policy. Were we to believe half we read, Protestantism, in a few years, would become no more! We might have the Pope preaching in St. Paul's Cathedral! Not a few would be doomed to burn in Smithfield, and we know not what pains and penalties we shall be subject to! Evidently the Church of Christ is quite un-

able to take care of herself. Unless she is provided with so many hundreds or thousands of pounds, she must go to the dogs—for money, the love of which used to be the root of all evil—somehow or other, is now found out to be the root of all good! As for the good men who have prayed earnestly and worked so zealously, they are all going to leave off praying and preaching, too, when the State pay is stopped! So all the piety towards God and all the good will towards men will come to an end! Well, I suppose this *would be very likely if Jesus Christ were dead*, but as long as He is alive, I think He is quite able to take care of the golden candle-ticks Himself! And the Church of God will probably be no worse in the next few years than it has been in the years that have passed. No, I will venture to prophesy that the less help she seeks from the world, and the more she leans upon her God, the brighter will be her future! Should the very foundations of society be shaken and the worst calamities befall us—such as we hope will never come—yet over the ashes of all earthly renown and government patronage, the supernal splendor of the immortal Church of God would glow forth with clearer brilliance and brighter glory! She has Long been like a ship tossed in the tempest and not comforted. She has plowed her way, and the spray that has broken over her has been blood-red with martyr's gore—but she has still kept on her course towards her desired haven! He that is with her is greater than all they that are against her! So shall it be till the world's end!

Look, then, Beloved, to the golden band of our Lord Jesus Christ, and as you perceive that He is still active to maintain His own cause, to deliver His people and to prosper His Church, you need not be afraid! And does not the golden band imply His enduring love? The heart was, in old times, and still is among ourselves, supposed to be the dwelling place of the affections. What, do you think, is the ruling passion in the heart of Christ? What is it that inflames the bosom of Him who was once the Man of Sorrows, but now is King of kings and Lord of Lords? He is girded about the chest with a band of gold. He never ceases to love His people. The band is an endless thing—it goes right around a man. Christ's heart always keeps within the sacred circle of undiminished, unchanging, undying affection for all whom His Father gave Him, for all whom He bought with His precious blood! Never doubt the faithfulness of Christ to you, Beloved, since faithfulness is the band of His loins. Never think that a promise will fail, or that the Covenant will be broken. Trusting in Him, you will never be allowed to perish. It cannot be! While He wears that golden band, He cannot prove faithless. That heavenly decoration is a goodly order. Invested therewith, He cannot forget or prove untrue to those whom He has engaged to protect. Though Heaven and earth shall pass away, not one Word of Grace shall fall to the ground. The sun and moon shall expire—dim with age, they will cease to shed their light abroad—but the love of Jesus Christ shall be as fresh and new as in the

day of His espousals, and as delicious as when you first tasted of it! Yours shall it be forever and ever to inherit and enjoy!

In days of yore, moreover, *the band was the place where the Eastern kept his money*. It was his wallet. Some of the Orientals keep their cash in their turbans—in our Savior’s day it was carried in the band. When our Lord speaks in Matthew about His disciples going without purse or scrip, He mentions there that they are not to carry silver or gold in their bands. This golden band, then, to use a simple word, may represent the wallet of the Lord Jesus, and we infer from its being golden that it is full of unequalled wealth and unsurpassed riches. Jesus Christ bears about Him all the available supplies that can be needed by His people. What a multitude of people He has to support, for on Him all His saints depend! They have been drawing upon Him all their lives and so they always will. They are “gentlemen commoners,” as one used to say, upon the bounty of God’s Providence. We are pensioners upon the beneficence of our Lord Jesus Christ! He has supplied us until now. Oh, how much Grace you and I have needed to keep us from starving, from sinking, from going down to the pit of Hell! And we have had all we needed! In fearful temptations our foot has not slipped. We have passed through many trials, but without being crushed. Arduous has been our service, but as our day, our strength has been. We should long ago have broken any earthly bank and drained the contents, but Christ has been to us like an ever-flowing fountain, a wellhead, a redundant source communicating enough and to spare! What a source! What ready relief for every emergency Christ has at His command! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, have you but little Grace? Whose fault is it? Not your Lord’s! Oh, you who have no spending money! You who are full of doubts and fears! You who have slender comfort and little joy! You who are saying, like the elder son in the parable, “You never gave me a kid that I might make merry with my friends!”—whose fault is it? Does not your Father say, “Son, you are always with Me, and all that I have is yours”? It you are poor in spiritual things, you made yourselves poor, since Christ is yours and with Him all things are yours! Do enjoy what God has given you! Take the good that God provides! Seek to live up to your privileges. Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice! As that golden band gleams from afar, say in your spirit—

**“Since Christ is rich, can I be poor?
What can I need besides?”**

And now let me briefly point out to you—

II. THE GOLDEN LESSONS to be gathered from these five meanings of the golden band.

It will refresh your memories if I remind you that we showed how the golden band set forth the excellency of Christ in all His offices. The golden lesson, then, is—*Admire Him in all His offices!* He who loves Christ will never be tired of hearing about Him. Doubtless when Jacob’s sons came back and told him that Joseph was lord over all Egypt, after hearing the story once, the old man would be sure to say, “Oh, tell me that

again!" I will be bound to say that as he sat in that tent of his, he would ask first one, and then another, to tell the tale—and so he would try to pump them with questions. "Tell me, Judah, now how did he look? Has he grown stouter or thinner since the day he left me and I never thought to see or hear of him anymore? Tell me, Simeon, did he sit on a throne? Was he really like a king? Tell me, Levi, what did the Egyptians seem to think of him? Had they a high estimation of his character? Tell me, Zebulon, how did he speak? In what terms did he speak of his old father? Was there a tear in his eyes when he referred to Benjamin, your other brother, the little one whom his father would not spare?" Surely I might draw that picture without being suspected of exaggeration. It would be all true. He loved his son so dearly and doted upon him so fondly that he could not know too much—no, he could not know enough about Joseph! Anybody that had anything to tell about Joseph would be sure to be welcome! So with every renewed heart—if there is anything to be learned about Jesus, you will want to know it! Dear Brothers and Sisters, let us cultivate this spirit more and more. Let us live in the study of the life of Jesus. These are things the angels desire to look into. Do you not desire to look into them, too? Watch your Master. Let your experience, as it alters and ripens, reveal to you fresh beauties in your Lord. As you turn over page, after page, of Scripture, search after Jesus in it as men search after gold—and be not content unless you see your Savior's face revealed on every page!

Does the golden band indicate His power and authority? The golden lesson is that you *trust* Him. If all power is His, lean on Him! We do not lean on Christ enough. The remark of the Church was, "Who is this who comes up from the wilderness, leaning on her Beloved?" Lean on Him! He will never sink under your weight. All the burdens that men ever had to carry, Christ carried, and He certainly will carry yours. There can be no wars and lighting that perplex you which did not perplex Him, for in the great fight which comprehended yourselves, and the great warfare for all His saints, He overcame. Nothing, then, can be difficult to Him. How often we weary ourselves with walking when we might ride—I mean, we carry our troubles when we might take them to Christ! We fret, and groan, and cry—and our difficulties do not get any the less. But when we leave them with Him who cares for us, and begin to trust, like a child trusts its father, how light of heart and how strong of spirit we become! The Lord give us to watch that golden band carefully, and as we see the power of Jesus Christ may we come to lean upon that power and trust Him at all times.

Or did the golden band signify His activity? The golden lesson is that we *imitate* Him. Christ is in Heaven, and yet He wears a band. Christian, always keep your band round your loins. "Stand, therefore, with your loins girded about," says the Apostle, "and your lamps trimmed." This is not the place for the Christian to unbind. Heaven is the place of rest for

us—not this world of temptation and of sin. Always stand ready to suffer or to serve! At the Master's gate, watch and wait to do His bidding. Never, on weekdays, and much less on Sabbath days, let your spirits be out of order for Christian service! We ought so to live that if called to die at any minute, we would not need to say a prayer—ready for Heaven, ready for a life of service or for a death of glory! The true way for a Christian to live in this world is to be always as he would wish to be if Christ came at that moment. And there is a way of living that style—simply depending upon the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ—and then going out into daily service for Him, moved by love to Him, saying to Him, “Lord, show me what You would have me do.” I wish we always were as I have thus said we always should be. The Lord can teach us! Let us ask Him to teach us the lesson.

We told you, moreover, that the golden band indicated His enduring love, inasmuch as it is girded about His chest. Well, then, the golden lesson is, *let us love Him in return*. Let us wear the golden band, too. Oh, Beloved, love Him with all your heart, and soul, and strength! Let no rival come between you and Jesus. Keep your heart chaste for the Well-Beloved. My greatest longing is that I may present you as a chaste virgin unto Christ, that there may be nothing by way of error in respect to Doctrine or to holiness of life that may disturb the full union of your souls with Jesus. Oh, to see that golden band, and as we see it, to feel that He has belted us about after the same manner! “I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine.” I am not the world's, nor is the world for me—I belong to Jesus, and Jesus belongs to me! May that be the deep feeling and the truthful expression of everyone of you.

And then does the golden band suggest to us the wealth of Christ, as being His wallet, let it be our golden lesson *to rejoice in Him*. If He is so rich, and all that He is and all that He has belongs to us, bring here your choicest music and let your souls be glad in the name of the Lord! Why are you bowed down? Why distressed? Has your Lord withdrawn, or has He changed? Is He deaf, or is His arm shortened that He cannot deliver? No, but let the children of God be joyful in their King. If you cannot be glad in what is created, be glad in the Creator Himself! If you cannot drink of the streams, go and drink of the fountainhead—the water is sweeter and better there. Blessed wreck which makes us lose everything and cling to our God, for the loss will be a gain if we get nearer to God, love Him better and prize His friendship more!

Ah, me, the day will come when those of you who do not love Christ will have to look on Him and you will see that golden band, then, but it will bring no comfort to you! You despised Him, therefore in that band there will be no love to you, no blessing for you, no power for you! But what will there be? Why, that very band, since it is made of faithfulness, will show Him faithful to His threats! Those who hear Christ preached and reject Him will find that word true, “He that believes not shall be damned.” Nothing but condemnation can be the lot of the man or woman

who despises pardon and treats forgiveness with contempt. When simply to trust Christ saves the soul, to distrust Him is the direst and most damnable of sins! It is suicidal! Unbeliever, you refuse to pass through the only door that can lead you to Heaven! Well, if you never enter there, your blood be on your own head. Oh, that Grace may lead you just now to seek salvation! The Man with the golden band can save you, and none but He! Look to Him. Behold Him as He hangs upon the tree with hands and feet fastened there. Look and trust—trust and live! The Lord incline your hearts to espouse and not eschew His rich mercy, for His own dear name's sake. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
MATTHEW 11.**

Verse 1. *And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding His twelve disciples, He departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.* Whatever He commanded, He Himself did. He was always the example as well as the legislator of His people. How well it will be for us who are called upon to teach others, if we can teach them as much by what we do as by what we say! “When Jesus had made an end of commanding His twelve disciples, He departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.”

2, 3. *Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples. And said unto Him, Are You He that should come, or do we look for another?* Poor John! His spirit was brave enough amid the wilds when he was by the riverside, but shut up in prison, it was probably otherwise with him. Those bold spirits, when they lose liberty, are apt to be depressed. Perhaps, too, John sent the disciples as much for their sakes as for his own. At any rate, what a question it was to put to our Lord, “Are You He that should come, or do we look for another?” I would call your attention to the quietness of our Savior's mind—the absence of anything like anger. See how He answers them.

4-6. *Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which you do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.* Now if it had been the very least of us who had been attempting to do such service for God, and we had been questioned about what we were doing, should we not have felt hurt and grieved? And maybe there are some who would not have given an answer, especially if they were dignified with the name of an office. But our blessed Lord does not take a huff at it. He is not vexed, but He answers with the utmost gentleness, not by a word of authority commanding John to believe, but by an exposition of those blessed seals of Grace which were the best evidence that He was, indeed, the Messiah. He

pointed to the very miracles which prophecy declared the Messiah would perform—and He did this with that graciousness of temper which was always about our Divine Master, in which let us copy Him.

7-11. *And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went you out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went you out to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went you out to see? A Prophet? Yes, I say unto you, and more than a Prophet. For this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, which shall prepare Your way before You. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he.* Never did our Savior bear a more emphatic testimony to John than on this occasion! And it is remarkable that it should have followed upon the heels of John's doubt and John's question! How generously the Master repays His servant—not in his own coin, but in the heavenly coin of love! He seems to say, "Through the infirmity of your flesh you have been half-inclined to question Me, but through the strength of My Grace I turn round and extol you. Time was when you could say, 'He must increase, but I must decrease,' and now I turn round and say to those whom you have sent, and to those who saw your messengers, that there is none like you." Not even Moses, himself, is greater than John the Baptist! Though he who has entered into the Light and the Glory of the Kingdom of Grace since the coming of the Master is greater than he!

12-15. *And from the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. And if you will receive it, he is Elijah, who is to come. He that has ears to hear, let him hear.* But how many there are that have ears and do not hear! The external organ is affected, but the internal ear of the soul is not reached at all! Blessed are they who, having ears, do in very truth, hear.

16, 17. *But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows and saying, We have piped unto you, and you have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and you have not lamented.* The children would not agree! Whatever game was proposed, some of them would not follow it. At one time they imitated the pipers, and then the others would not dance. Then they imitated the lamentations of a funeral, and then the others would not join them.

18, 19. *For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He has a devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.* There was no pleasing them! And there is no pleasing people, now, whoever it is that God sends. One man is much too homely. In fact, he is vulgar. Another is much too rhetorical. In fact, his rhetoric runs away

with him. One man is doctrinal. Oh, he is dogmatic! Another man is practical. He is much too censorious. Another man is full of experience. He is mystical. Oh, surely God, Himself, cannot please the evil tempers of ungodly men! One thing is that He does not try to do so, nor do His servants, if they are truly sent of Him. That is a matter about which they have small concern.

19. *But wisdom is justified of her children.* Whoever Christ sends, He sends in wisdom, and there is an adaptation about each of His servants, even if men do not perceive it. The day shall come when wisdom shall be justified of her children.

20-24. *Then began He to upbraid the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto you, Chorazin! Woe unto you Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the Day of Judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, which are exalted unto Heaven, shall be brought down to Hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in you, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the Day of Judgment, than for you.* There was a tenderness about the tone of Christ when He spoke thus. The words are burning, but the eyes were full of tears. He could not contemplate the possibility of the Gospel being rejected without a broken heart. He sighed and cried as He bore testimony against those who refused Eternal Life. With what tenderness must Christ regard some that are present here tonight, whose privileges from their childhood until now have been so great that they could scarcely be greater—and yet they seem determined to reject the admonitions of love and trample over tenderness in their desperate resolve to perish! God have mercy upon such.

25. *At that time Jesus answered—*He seemed to answer Himself. He answered to the thoughts that passed through His own mind. “At that time Jesus answered.”

25-27. *And said, I thank You, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because You have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things are delivered unto Me of My father: and no man knows the Son, but the Father; neither knows any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomever the Son will reveal Him.* Did the Lord Jesus Christ, in His address to Bethsaida and Capernaum awaken in His own mind all those difficulties that hover round about the Doctrine of Predestination? Did it not seem strange that God should send the Gospel to people who rejected it, and did not send the Gospel to a people who would have received it? How can these things be? And the dear Savior answers the question to His own mind by falling back upon that other sublime Truth and to Him, full of thanksgiving—the Infinite Sovereignty of God! I do not know what

some of us would do if we did not believe that Truth of God. There are so many things which puzzle us—so many questions, but the Judge of all the earth must be right. He must! He will do as He pleases with His own, and it is not for us to question the prerogatives of the Most High. Now the Savior at last seems to give vent to His soul in one grand burst of Gospel preaching! And whenever you and I get worried about any Doctrine, it is always well to come back to the simplicity of the Gospel and proclaim it again.

28. *Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* There is no rest in the difficulties of metaphysics! There is no rest in the labors of human merit! “Come unto Me, and I will give you rest.”

29. *Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me: for I am meek and lowly in heart; and you shall find rest unto your souls.* First He gives rest to all who come. But afterwards there is a second rest which they find who become obedient and bear His yoke. The rest that comes of pardoned sin is sweet, but the rest that comes of *conquered* sin through obedience is sweeter still. The rest He gives is precious, but there is rest upon rest, as there is Grace upon Grace, and let us go in for the highest form of that rest! “You shall find rest unto your souls.” The very innermost part of your being shall be full of peace.

30. *For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.* Blessed be His name, we have found it so!

—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.**

LESSONS FROM THE CHRIST OF PATMOS NO. 1976

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 7, 1887,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His
mouth went a sharp two-edged sword:
and His Countenance was as the sun shines in its strength.”
Revelation 1:16.***

WE have carefully read John's description of the manner in which his Lord and Master revealed His Glory to him. The figure is colossal and I had almost said inconceivable. It would be quite impossible to draw a picture from the Apostle's words. If any artist were to try to set it forth with His pencil, the figure would be singularly grotesque and strangely unlike the idea which John intended to convey. How could anyone picture the *voice* like the noise of many waters? Or depict the feet as if they burned in a furnace? To make the portrait technically accurate would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, and the draftsman would surely lose the *spiritual* ideal in endeavoring to give it shape. The fact is that the details of this celestial vision are deeply instructive, but there is no impression left upon the mind by it as a whole—I mean no impression which a man could translate to his fellow. Probably the seer of Patmos was, himself, unable to form an idea of what he saw—we know that he fainted at the amazing sight. He was utterly overwhelmed and though he wrote under Divine command, he wrote of things beyond himself and beyond all human minds.

The impression produced by one part of the vision inevitably obliterates that of other parts. Take, for instance, the expression, “His eyes are as a flame of fire.” Can you get the idea? Then add to it the further one—“His Countenance,” which, of course, includes the eyes, “is as the sun shines in its strength.” You lose the brightness of the flames of fire in the superior glory of the sun—the eyes disappear as separate objects when the full countenance is seen in its overwhelming glory!

The vision is *spiritual* and you can take each point in detail and learn from it, but it presents to us no resemblance such as can be drawn upon canvas—it is, as a whole, beyond the grasp of imagination. John might almost have said, after all he had seen, “I saw no similitude,” for, what he did see, albeit it was a gathering up of rich and rare similitudes, could not be made into a single image which could be represented to the eyes or to the mind. In this I greatly rejoice, for in it I perceive the prudence of the only wise God, our Savior.

The tendency of the human mind is to idolatry. When we do not seek after another god, we are still tempted to worship the true God under some visible, tangible form—and this is directly opposed to the Divine will.

The leaning of our evil heart is towards some form, symbol, or imagery which we judge may help our thought and intensify our worship. All this comes of evil and leads to evil! Remember the stern command of God, never to be altered, “You shall not make unto you any engraved image, or any likeness of anything that is in Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: you shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments.”

God is a Spirit, therefore He is *not* to be drawn and we are not to use anything as a help towards our conception of Him, for it will be a hindrance, not a help. That which can be seen or touched is to be kept out of our worship of the invisible God, for there is really nothing to which we can liken Him—the very attempt at making a likeness in reference to Him is profanity! I know the common excuse, that men do not *worship* the image, but that by its means they are *helped* to worship God, but this is exactly what the Second Commandment forbids! Carnal objects are not helps to spiritual worship—they are snares to the mind and lead the heart away from God!

I feel my soul horrified and my blood boiling with indignation when I see in what are called Protestant Churches, not only a material *altar*, which is treated with honor, but upon it a cross to which idolatrous reverence is evidently paid by those who bow as they pass before it. It is very usual, nowadays, to see, also, the *Agnus Dei*, or a small figure of a lamb and this, like the figure of a calf among the Israelites, is viewed with devotion! Why, we are not only going back to Popery, we are reverting to Paganism! I do not care what shape your image takes, whether it is a cross, a crucifix, or an *Angus Dei*—if it is *anything* to be *seen* or *handled*, it is strictly forbidden in the worship of God!

Had the portrait of our Lord been a suitable subject for reverence—and I can conceive of nothing for which greater claim can be put in—we should have had His likeness preserved to us by the special care of the good Spirit who is always mindful of the edification of saints. But we have neither painting nor statuary of any authority, nor, indeed, any which can be supposed to depict His matchless form! If this best of images is denied us, let us not tolerate the idols of human invention. The hammers of iconoclasts might find good work in breaking those images in pieces which now pollute our churches! Take these things away! They are not becoming in the House of God! They do not help us towards spiritual worship, but they become grievous offenses to a jealous God who counts such worship a spiritual adultery by which His own worship is defiled!

Do not doubt that the Jews in the wilderness, when they made what *Moses* calls a *calf*, really intended to pay Divine honors to the image of a *bull*! They had learned in Egypt that the bull was the most venerable of all symbols of Deity—it is the embodiment of strength and, therefore, it appeared fit to represent the power of God. They said in effect—“We will adore the unseen power of God under the image of the useful and powerful ox.” And so they made an image of an ox out of their most precious

things and said, "These are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of Egypt." Moses did not treat this ritualism with respect, but with indignation! He calls the ox a calf, for it was newly born and but little in stature. He called it, in grim ridicule, "a calf," and therein he set us an example, for objects of idolatrous worship should be treated by us with scorn, lest in any degree we partake in the crime of idolatry! We must keep ourselves from idols.

When the Philistines called their god the God of Flies, the Jews ridiculed him as the God of Dung, thus showing their abhorrence of the imaginary deity. I do not blame our Reforming and Puritan fathers that they used names of ridicule and contempt for those things which Romanism has degraded into idols, for even the most sacred things lose all sacredness when elevated into objects of adoration, whatever may be the motive which leads to so great a crime! I may admire the sincerity which kisses the wounds of the crucifix, but I must, none the less, abhor the *idolatry* of the deed and feel a horror of the image! Did not Hezekiah break in pieces even the bronze serpent when it became an object of worship? He called it Nehushtan, that is, a mere bit of brass. If ever there was a piece of brass which deserved religious regard from men it was that bronze serpent by which so many had been healed! When used aright, it was God's channel of blessing, but when *idolized* it was broken in pieces as so much old metal. I feel glad, therefore, that even when the Lord Christ revealed Himself so specially to the mind of John, it was in a spiritual and symbolic manner—and the wonderful similitudes used were of such a character that it is not possible to construct from them a figure which could be set up for purposes of worship.

My Brothers and Sisters, though we pay no homage to an outward and visible revelation, yet to Him who thus revealed Himself we ascribe all honor, glory, majesty, power and dominion, forever and ever! Unto Him whom as yet our eyes cannot see. Unto Him who dwells in unapproachable light, very God of very God, even Christ Jesus our Savior, we pay the homage of our full and grateful hearts, not only now, but world without end!

Having thus removed your minds from any gross and carnal notion that our Lord is *actually* what this vision describes, I beg you to note that the spiritual teaching is all the more to be sought out and treasured up. I invite you to consider three of those similitudes by which the Lord Christ is set before us in this Divine Revelation. They stand in very significant relationship, one to the other. "He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His Countenance was as the sun shines in its strength." These are not only in one verse by the will of the translators, but they were intimately connected in the mind of John and were intended to come to us together, blended and united.

I. Learn from the first sentence THE POSITION OF INSTRUMENTALITY IN REFERENCE TO OUR LORD JESUS—"He had in His right hand seven stars." The stars are said to be the angels, or messengers, or, as many conceive, the *ministers* whom God used as messengers to the Churches and from the Churches to the outlying world. The word may mean the entire instructive and enlightening gift of the Church, whether found in one

person or in many. God has ordained that there shall be men anointed of His Spirit, who shall, beyond others, be the means of conversion and edification—and these are as stars in the sky of the Church.

Note well that *instrumentality is of temporary use and is intended for the time of darkness*. Churches themselves are “golden candlesticks” and candlesticks answer their purpose best at *night*. When the sun is up and the full day has come, do we need lamps? No, the Church militant has her reason for existence upon earth in the fact of the surrounding darkness! The ministers of the Gospel, what are they? Necessary to Christ? By no means, for the sun does not need the stars! They are necessary to the present darkness with which they are to struggle, as burning and shining lights until the Lord, Himself, shall shine forth in His Glory! The Lord will use instruments till He, Himself, appears, but even those whom He calls, “stars,” are only the transient apparatus of a passing night.

This should make us think very humbly of ourselves, for, dear Brothers, *this illustrates our weakness*. Were we lights of the first magnitude, the darkness would no longer remain. O stars, you by whom God shines! O stars with your sparkling and far-reaching light, making glad the eyes of the benighted! What poor things you are, after all! For with all your shining, it still remains night! Lamps of God though you are, you do but relieve the gloom which you cannot remove. If ministers were all they might be, there would soon be an end of them—but the fact of their continued necessity proves their weakness! O you that serve God best, remember that if you served Him *better*, the day would soon come when no man would say to his fellow, “Know the Lord,” for they all should know Him, from the least to the greatest!

Consider, then, that instrumentality at its *best*, when used in blessed unity as a Church, is no more than a lamp, or candle—and what can this do as compared with our Lord who shines as the sun? Instrumentality, when specially selected, enlightened and upheld, is but as a star—and what can a star do? Yes, what can the whole host of stars do towards turning night into day? This is a good beginning for our consideration of instrumentality, since we are apt to grow proud—and this may teach us humility. Whatever honor God may be pleased to put upon His servants by calling them stars, it is evident that they are only needed because it is night—and that they are far too feeble to cope with that night, to turn its darkness into light.

Still, *instrumentality is honorably spoken of* by Him whose judgment is supremely wise. The Lord Jesus does not despise the agency which He employs. Those whose testimony He blesses for the salvation of men are compared to stars.

Stars are *guides* and so are the Lord’s true ministers. Some stars in yonder sky have done measureless service to wanderers over the trackless deep and to those who have lost themselves in the labyrinths of the forest. That polestar has conducted many a slave to liberty! Happy have been the influences of the stars upon the hopeless who, being lost, have laid themselves down to die! Blessed are those men who, shining with the Light of God, have turned many to righteousness—shall they not shine as the stars forever and ever? Are there not preachers of the Word who have

stood like that famous star “over the place where the young Child was”? They have first led strangers to Jesus and then have remained in faithful love, shining over the place where the Lord abides. We preach Christ Crucified—God forbid that we should preach anything else! We point to Jesus, saying always, “Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.” Ours is, indeed, an honorable office, to guide wandering feet into the way of peace. Honored is the least in all our ministry if he may do this.

A certain star, the morning star, is also the *herald* of the day. All eyes are glad to see the morning star, because they know that the sun is always near it. Happy messenger of God who has the sound of His Master’s feet behind him! There have been men and, thank God there are such still, through whom God shines with rich promise of eternal day—their ministry heralds the coming of Christ to the heart! They preach so clearly of Him, that He is set forth evidently crucified in our assemblies! They hide themselves in their Lord. They have nothing to lift up but Christ. They bring nothing before men’s minds but Christ. Their only theme is Christ in His First Coming cleansing His people from their sins—and Christ in His Second Coming bringing them home to His Glory! Of such men it may be said, “He made the stars, also,” for those are God-made ministers, whose whole witness is for the Glory of Christ Jesus!

It is an honorable comparison that the instruments of God’s good pleasure have put upon them in being compared to stars, for the stars are the *comfort* and solace of the night. Well do men sing, “Beautiful star,” for, amid the surrounding gloom, the twinkling light is a thing of beauty and a joy forever. “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that brings glad tidings!” We do not rightly value the considerable amount of light which comes to the earth through the stars, and were they quite removed, we should soon find the thick darkness of night to be greatly intensified. It might even become like the darkness of Egypt that might be *felt*. In the same way we are apt to undervalue regular ministries which do not amaze us by any uncommon brilliance. We could not afford to lose these stars, however feeble their light. Let us thank God for the many ministries, gentle and obscure, which, nevertheless, keep the dense darkness from being utterly impenetrable. Thank God for all the agencies by which He works. He compares His faithful servants to stars—be sure that you think them heavenly bodies, bearing celestial light, shining from above. They are not so small as some think them—and they are not forgotten of Him who calls them all by their names and leads them out.

Instrumentality is honorably placed, for we see the stars in the right hand of Him who is the First and the Last. God’s ministers are stars, but not stars up yonder in the sky—they are stars held in the right hand of their great Lord! Oh, what a position is this! God’s true servants are in the highest place! His right hand made them. None can make stars but the Maker of all things. It is God who makes ministers of Christ and gives them light with which to shine! Because of this, they are honorable in His esteem and He places them in His right hand. Whatever some may think of faithful preachers, the Lord makes them the men of His right hand. They may be despised by those who oppose the Word, but they need not be ashamed, for while the right hand of God is their position, they are

more honorable than the princes and kings of the earth! Dear servants of God who are serving your Lord in great obscurity, twinkling feebly and thinking that no one notices you, receiving no honor from men—never mind, for if the Lord God has given you light, you are precious in His esteem and He sets you not only at His right hand, but *in it*! You are where seraphim might wish to be!

See, also, how *true instrumentality is graciously sustained*. The chosen servants of the Lord are under special protection, for they shine in Christ's right hand. This is where the ministers of Christ need to be, for they stand in the front of the battle and are in double danger. Their office has its temptations and even their success has its perils. If you win souls for God, the devil will have a grudge against you. If you preach the Word of God with power, all the hosts of evil will sharpen their arrows and point their shafts at you. The stars of the Churches have need to be in Christ's hand, for all the fiends of Hell will puff at them. If they could make a star fall, how greatly would they rejoice! Glory be to Him who keeps them all. "For that He is strong in power; not one fails."

Our Lord Jesus holds the seven stars in His right hand. Does not this teach us the entire dependence of each one of us upon Him? Other stars may shine in their own natural spheres, but Christ's stars can only shine as He, by the constant outgoing of His strength, holds them up, holds them out and holds them fast! They would cease to be stars if they were not in the Lord's hand. O my Friends who are working for the Lord in Church, or Mission Hall, or Sunday school—place no reliance upon yourselves! Do not let your confidence lean upon your own natural abilities, or acquired knowledge, or garnered experience! Let your dependence be only upon that right hand which holds you up! The hand of the glorified Savior is worth depending upon. Behold an arm that never can be paralyzed! A hand that can never grow weary! Rely not on yourself in any measure or degree, but only upon that right hand of power and skill which will hold you up even to the end.

See, then, Beloved, the special security of true instrumentality, for who can extinguish a star whose sphere is the right hand of God? I see the devil puffing against these stars until his cheeks are fit to burst, but he does not even make them flicker—what can harm those whom Jesus keeps? You know how some fine preachers have gone out in darkness, smoldering like candlewicks, filling the whole chamber of the Church with a nauseous smell—and if professed ministers become unholy or untruthful, their end is sad for themselves and mischievous for all who are around them. May God save His Church from the smoking flax of dying ministries! Blessed are they who, trusting in God, shine and shine on in His keeping. "Yes, they shall be held up." Did He not ordain for them a lamp which shall never be extinguished? Has He not put them where they must be safe?

Instrumentality of the right kind is wisely directed for it is in the Lord's hand. This generation, like children playing in the marketplace, is not content with the moods and ways of the Lord's servants, but Wisdom is justified of her children. The Lord sends by whom He will send! In wisdom and prudence He both kindles His stars and removes them. He arranges

their places and their magnitude, their rising and their setting. "All His saints are in Your hand," O Lord Christ, but specially those through whom You speak with men! As the judges in Israel came and went at the bidding of Infinite Wisdom, even so is it among the chosen ministers of the Lord Jesus.

Perhaps you think I am making too much of this subject, but I have no such desire. My design is very practical. The Churches should pray that their risen Lord would give them more stars and that He would uphold the stars that are already given, for there is unquestionably a very close connection between the prosperity of the Churches and these stars. Whether it should be so or not is not the question, but the fact is unquestionable—very much depends upon the minister. If you have a warm-hearted, loving, zealous preacher of the Gospel, you find, before long, earnest, hearty, godly, working people gathered about him. But where there is death in the minister—coldness, lukewarmness, need of zeal and need of holiness—what do you see? Do not the pews reflect the dreary condition of the pulpit? Is it not so, that like shepherd like sheep? We act and react upon each other! Brothers and Sisters, pray for us! It is my solemn conviction that one great need of the Church at the present time is a more faithful ministry. We need fewer fireworks and more stars!

One man whom God has given is worth a thousand that a college has made. When God takes a man and says, "Go and preach in the power with which I have endowed you," that man will accomplish what a host of learned and well-trained men would not dare to attempt. Why have we not more mighty preachers of the Word? Because we do not pray for them! Some of our ministers are half afraid that such men should come, for fear they should find themselves outshone. What better gifts can Christ give the Church with His own right hand than pastors and evangelists? The Church will never make any great advance until once more God sends here and there and in 50 places, men with burning hearts and with trumpet voices to proclaim the Truth of God, the whole Truth of God and nothing but the Truth of God! We need men that will not yield to the current of the times, nor care one jot about it, but will hold their own and hold their Master's Word against all comers because the Lord of Hosts is with them and the Spirit of God rests upon them!

I would have you at this time realize the Christ with the seven stars in His hand and I would have you pray, "Lord, fill Your hand with stars again. Light up the darkness of this period with flaming preachers of Your Word to the praise of the glory of your Grace." So much about the position of instrumentality. Follow me now to kindred themes.

II. And now, in the second place, I want you to notice with great care THE PLACE OF REAL POWER. Note the second of the three sentences—"And out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword." The sword-power, the war-strength of the Church, does *not* lie in her ministers. The battle and the victory are not with them, but with their Lord. I have put them in their proper place—I have told you that they are stars and I have reminded you of their usefulness—but the next symbol prevents your regarding them as forces to be relied on. We read, "Out of His mouth went a

sharp two-edged sword.” Not out of the *stars*, but out of our Lord’s mouth goes the strength which wins the day!

The true power of the Church lies in Christ personally. You may have all the stars that ever made bright the milky way with their combined sheen, but there is no power in them to kill evil, or conquer sin! The stars of the Church shine because God makes them shine. Their shining is not their own—it is borrowed light with which they are radiant. The power that overcomes evil, wounds the hard heart, pierces the conscience and kills reigning sin is of the Lord alone. “Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword.” Glory not, therefore, in men, for power belongs unto God. Boast not in the talent nor in the experience of the man of God, for he can neither kill nor make alive. The power of a Church is the Presence of her Lord! He has not deposited power in men. He retains it in Himself and from Himself we must seek it. Behold the infinite resources of the Church—all power is in Jesus—and Jesus is with His people!

The power lies in Christ’s Word— “Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword.” Beloved, the power that wins souls is the Word of God, not my explanation of it, nor yours. It is not my amplification of it, nor yours. It is not my illustration of it, nor yours. The power is not in the *stars*, but in the Word which made the stars! God’s Word is the source of all things. Therefore reckon that every sermon is a wasted sermon which is not Christ’s Word! Believe that all theology is rotten rubbish which is not the Word of the Lord! Do not be satisfied with going to a place of worship and hearing an eloquent discourse unless the sum and substance of it is the Word of the Lord! My Brothers and Sisters, whether you teach children or their parents, do not think you have done any good unless you have taught the Word of the Lord. For saving purposes we must have the Lord’s Word and nothing else! It is not your word, O you most devoted soul-winners! It is not your word, O you most impassioned evangelists! It is not your word, O you most plaintive persuaders! It is the Word of the Lord and that, alone, which will abide and subdue all things to itself. The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon—we can do all things with it! We can do *nothing* without it!

And notice again, that it is not only His Word, *but it is His Word as He, Himself, speaks it.* Does Christ, then, still speak the Word in the Church? Yes! It is not the Truth of God in the Bible, alone, which saves—it is that Truth taken by the Holy Spirit and vivified and laid home to the heart. It is not the letter of the Word which Jesus spoke 1,800 years ago which works wonders, but it is that same Word as He now delivers it into our ear and heart by His own living, loving, heart-subduing voice! I may speak Christ’s Words in vain, but *He* speaks to purpose. The sword in Peter’s hand cuts off an ear, but the sword in Christ’s mouth slays sin and subdues men to Himself! You have heard a sermon full of precious Truths of God and yet it has done you no good. At another time you have heard the same Truth and it has overwhelmed you by its hallowed power! What was this difference? Is it not that in one case it was God’s Word out of the preacher’s mouth and in the other case it was God’s Word out of His own mouth? Yes, every Word of God is a keen sword to slay sin when *Jesus* speaks it!

My soul melts in repentance when my Beloved speaks to me. Nothing can stand against the Word of Jesus! He speaks and it is done! O my Brothers and Sisters, I have no faith in my own preaching, but I have all faith in my Lord's speaking. His Word shall not return unto Him void. Out of His mouth no syllable shall come in vain. I charge you, look away from us, the twinkling stars, to our Lord, whose month is the conquering force of His Church!

The Word of God is, in itself, adapted to the Divine end, for it is sharp and two-edged. And when it is spoken by the Lord, its adaptation is seen. The Gospel is very sharp when the Spirit of God lays it home. No doctrine of men has such piercing power. Take care, O preacher, that you do not blunt the Word, or try to cover over its edge, for that would be treason to the Lord who made it to be sharp and cutting! There is much about the true Gospel which offends and it should be our desire never to tamper with it, or to tone it down, lest we become enemies to the Lord's Truth. Truth which is meant to offend human pride must be stated in its own way, even though seen to produce anger and annoy self-righteousness. Doctrine which is cutting and killing must not be concealed or softened down. "He that has My Word, let him speak my Word faithfully, says the Lord."

People are disturbed and troubled by the real Gospel—under a false gospel they can sleep into destruction. Bring out the sword—it is made to wound—let it exercise its salutary sharpness. The Gospel has two edges, so that none may play with it. When they think to run their fingers along the back of it, they will find themselves cut to the bone! Whether we regard its threats or its promises, it cuts at sin. Whether we move it up or down, it makes great gashes in that which ought to be wounded and killed. Let us, therefore, know that the power of the Church does not lie anywhere but in the Word as Jesus, Himself, speaks it. Let us keep to His own pure, unadulterated, unblunted Word—and let us pray Him to send it forth with power out of His own mouth into the hearts and consciences of men.

III. May the Holy Spirit fasten this on your memories! I must now conduct you to the third point which is a very wonderful matter—THE SOURCE OF TRUE GLORY. The source of true Glory in a Church lies in her enjoying the Countenance of her Lord. "His Countenance was as the sun shines in its strength." When Jesus is pleased with the Church, she enjoys noonday prosperity!

Brethren, endeavor to realize the idea of Christ's countenance shining as the sun. Let me then remind you of our former themes. Where are the seven stars? They are still in His hand, but I defy you to see them, for when the sun is once up, where are the stars? Ah, dear young people! When you first hear a minister preach with Divine power, he is everything to you! God enables him to bring light to your darkness and, for a season, you rejoice in his light. When you get further on in the road and come to see the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, in the Divine Glory of His blessed Person, then you will not glory either in Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, but you will glory in only Jesus! The stars are still twinkling, but you cannot observe them when the sun shines in noontide splendor and so the human

instrument is as useful as ever, but when Christ Himself is fully seen, the instrument takes a place far lower down. We are grateful for the stars—they have had blessed uses for our good—but we cannot mention them in the same *day* with the Sun! Now that we have seen the Lord, we value His servants, none the less, but they are still servants and only servants—and He is Lord of All. An hour with Jesus is better than a year with all the Apostles! Personal communion with Jesus is far more powerful for our good than the best preaching in the world!

If you catch the idea of our Lord's Countenance being "as the sun shines in its strength," let me ask you where is the sharp two-edged sword which came forth out of His mouth? You have not forgotten it, but at the same time it would be hard to discern it upon the face of the sun. When we enjoy Christ, Himself, we do not think the less of His Word! But it seems to be absorbed in Himself. He Himself becomes to us the Logos, the Word. Even the Gospel, itself, glorious as it is, bears no other glory than that which we behold in the face of Jesus Christ. This is the Glory which excels. This is the Glory before which dispensations, economies and systems of Truth appear to be mere reflections of that which is embodied and epitomized in Him! To see the face of our Lord and enjoy His love is to stand, like Milton's angel, in the sun!

I must hurry over places where I am tempted to linger. *To the saints, the Glory of Christ lies in Himself*—His own Countenance is the center of Glory. Consider the work which He has finished and the reward with which His Father has glorified Him. Consider His Divine Nature and the perfect Manhood which He has taken into union with it. Consider all His infinite perfections, but especially His love, His boundless, changeless love to His people. This is the sun which makes our day and fills us all with joy and gladness! What do we need more than His loving favor? I would to God that we were henceforth shut up to His praises and were bound to see no beauties but those of our Lord. To think that He should love you—that He should so love you as to *die* for you—and that having died for you He should go up unto the Father for you and fill all things for you and reign in everlasting splendor for you; why, all this is a surpassing glory of love! If you once know that His Countenance is towards you, then will you see such a Glory in His Grace and favor as you have never before imagined! Once behold the splendor of the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord and you will need neither candle nor star—for the Glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus will be as seven suns to you!

Notice that *the favor of Christ, if it is enjoyed by a Church, is effectual for all purposes*. Why do we crave for stars when the sun shines? In the absence of human instrumentality, the Lord Jesus will more than suffice. Even for those purposes for which the sword goes out of His mouth, the Lord's Countenance is enough. A sunstroke is as effectual for overcoming as the stroke of a sword. Let Christ shine in the Church and He will destroy His enemies with the brightness of His Glory! Let Him shine in the Church and you will have all the warmth, joy and delight that a Church can desire. Let Him shine in the Church and you will have all the life, growth, sweetness, mellowness and perfectness that even the Garden of the Lord can yield. If our Lord is with us, delighting Himself in us and

countenancing our endeavors, we shall, as a Church, prosper better than if we had the endowments of the State, the approbation of the wise and the patronage of the great!

To make the Church of God the grandest instrumentality conceivable, all that is needed is that she shall please her Lord in all things and, therefore, shall walk in the light of His Countenance. "Lord, lift up the light of Your Countenance upon us." "Cause Your face to shine and we shall be saved." "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Your Countenance." What a light it is! In the sun's beams we find the most necessary and indispensable gifts—and in our Lord Jesus we find all things for time and for eternity! When the Sun of Righteousness arises, He brings healing in His wings. Then we are made strong, so that we go forth and grow up like calves of the stall. Let the Lord show us His face and we have reached the height of our desires.

Yet note well that the brightness of our Lord cannot be measured, *neither could His Glory be endured of mortal men* if once it were fully revealed. "His Countenance was as the sun shines in its strength." John therefore could not gaze upon that Countenance, but fell at His Lord's feet as dead! It would be a dangerous thing for you to stand still and attempt to gaze upon the sun. To turn a telescope full upon the sun and place your eye to the glass would be the extreme of folly! Our eye must be shielded, or it cannot look on the sun. And, Beloved, if the Lord Jesus were to manifest Himself to us as He really is, in all His unveiled majesty, we should die with excess of joy! If He were to turn the whole stream of His love into our hearts, our frail bodies would be unable to bear the blissful excitement which would follow upon such a heavenly discovery. You know something of Him and you are pining to know more—and well you may—for your life lies that way. But still, He must always be the best judge of how much He shall reveal, for, "He knows our frame, He remembers that we are dust."

He holds Himself in reserve until we are prepared to receive the amazing bliss of His glorious manifestation. Perhaps even in eternity He will have to hide Himself somewhat, for there is in Him such greatness that our littleness would fail before Him were His Glory all revealed. Oh, cry to Him to show Himself to you, but still do not marvel if He answers you, "You cannot see My face and live." That holy man, Mr. Walsh, when the Lord revealed Himself to him, was obliged to cry, "Hold, Lord! Remember I am but an earthen vessel and if I have more of this delight I must die." One said he would like to die of that disease—and I am very much of his mind. They say, "See Naples and die." But to improve on it, another said, "See Naples and live." And truly this is the better sight of the two!

I would gladly see my Lord so as to live to His praise. Oh, for such a vision as should shape my life, my thought, my whole being, till I became like my Lord! Oh, to see Him so as to be changed into His image from glory unto glory! Perhaps some of us may even die in this sweet fashion, by the Lord's letting in of His Glory upon our souls in such a torrent that we shall be washed away into the bottomless sea of infinite delight! He may be pleased to pull up the sluice gates and let the sea of Glory in upon the marshy places of our dying hours. The little river of our life goes rippling down towards the sea and in our closing hour its stream runs low—

just then the tide from the shoreless sea comes up the river to meet the stream—and then the riverbed is filled by the fullness of the ocean. You shall realize that parable when heart and flesh are failing—and the Lord comes in to be your Portion forever!

Yet once again, Brothers and Sisters—if Christ’s face is so bright, then *we know where to trace all the light and all the glory that we have ever seen or known*. Is there any beauty in the landscape? It is the sun that makes it beautiful. Is there any brightness in any object round about us? It is the sun that makes it bright. If it were dark, you would behold no scenery and observe no beauty. Darkness is the grave of beauty—and the absence of Jesus would be the end of all human virtue. Is there any sweetness, excellence, holiness, goodness, Grace, about anything on earth? It comes only from Jesus! Attribute it to Him, then, and bless His name!

Rejoice also, you that behold His face and live in communion with Him, for *your faces, also, will shine*. You may look at yonder seven stars very long before you are made to reflect *their* light, but, dear Friends, if you see Jesus and abide in the light of His Countenance habitually, your faces, your characters, your lives, will grow resplendent, even without your knowing it! We read that Moses knew not that his face shone—all saw it but himself. The sons of men will wonder where you have been to have gathered such brightness. I know some few men and women who seem to carry about with them the fragrance of the ivory palaces—there is a perfume about their words, their actions and their very selves.

All nostrils do not enjoy the aroma of holiness, but the heart of the spiritual man is refreshed thereby. One cries, “From where came this perfume? Oh, that I had it! Oh, that such fragrance were shed abroad in my life!” I have heard that in the old times, when they would attract doves to a certain pigeon house, they took certain birds and smeared their wings with a costly perfume and sent them forth. Other pigeons were so delighted with their sweetness that they followed them to the dovecotes. Oh, that you and I may be so sweetened by dwelling near to Christ that others may come with us to see Jesus and His love! At any rate, may we so look on the Well-Beloved that our own faces may shine and others, beholding our brightness, shall glorify our Father which is in Heaven!

God bless you, Beloved. I wish we were in a better frame of mind for hearing and preaching. Truly this great heat and my own painful infirmity remind me of our Lord’s words, “The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Nevertheless, may our Lord reveal Himself to us according to the greatness of His compassion. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Revelation 1.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—417, 337.**

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***“He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth
went a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance
was as the sun shines in its strength.”
Revelation 1:16.***

WHILE reading this description given by John of what he saw in the isle called Patmos, I think you must have noticed that it would be quite impossible for any painter to depict it upon canvas and, equally impossible for any sculptor to embody it in stone or marble. Those who have attempted to copy the lines here given have signally failed—they may paint a picture of the garment down to the feet and the golden girdle—but the rest, if it is viewed from an artist's aspect, would be found to be incongruous. “His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes were as a flame of fire.” No great painter would ever venture to give us a portrait of our Lord with His head and His hair, “white like wool, as white as snow.” If he did, it would be quite impossible to depict eyes that were “as a flame of fire.” How would it be possible to make us realize, with the aid of any pen or pencil, that His feet were “like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace”? The task would have to be given over as quite hopeless when it reached this point—“He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shines in its strength.”

I believe that this difficulty of giving a truthful representation of the Lord Jesus Christ is according to the Divine purpose. Nothing, it seems to me, can be more detestable to the Lord's heart and mind than the worship of His image in any shape or form. If any are determined to break the Law of God about making graven images and bowing down before them, then let the idol be the image of something that is beneath the earth, or in the water under the earth, but, O, you idolaters, pray do not, as it were, make the Lord Jesus Christ accessory to your idolatry! *That*, He never really can be, for He abhors it! “Get you behind Me, Satan,” would be His answer to every proposal that His image should be worshipped, for He could not endure it! It is a dreadful thing that men should ever dare attempt to make any likeness of the Son of God, Himself, to be the occasion of sin. If you must make an image, make it, if you will, of a serpent, or of an ox, but not of the Son of God who came on purpose to redeem us from this, among other sins! Let us not degrade His sacred Personage by making even *it* to be an image before which we prostrate ourselves!

I know it is said that idolaters do not *worship* the image and that they worship God *through* the image, but that is expressly forbidden. The First Commandment is, “You shall have no other gods before Me.” Then the Second Commandment forbids the worshipping of God by or through any symbol or image whatever—“You shall not make unto you any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: you shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them.” The worship of the image of Christ appears to me to be not the more excusable form of idolatry, if there is any that is less evil than others, but it seems to me to be the more intensely wicked form of it since it is making even the glorious Personage of the Lord Jesus subsidiary to an act of transgression against the Commandments of His Father. If we cannot say concerning the Divine and human Personage of our Lord, “You saw no similitude,” yet we can say, “You saw no similitude such as can be engraved in any way whatever.”

The fact is that we have, in this apocalyptic vision, very extraordinary hieroglyphics put together. Hieroglyphic language does not aim at the artistic and the poetic—a hieroglyph has a higher objective than the mere gratification of taste. It is intended to give us mental ideas—not ideas for the eyes, but ideas for the *heart*—not what we shall see, but that which we shall feel and understand. Hence, these figurative representations of different parts of our Lord’s Person, though they cannot be put together so as to form a picture, are, nevertheless, deeply instructive to every loving and reverent heart.

So I want you, dear Friends, without wishing to make a complete portrait of your Lord, to try to follow the teaching in this verse. There are three things here. First, *the stars in Christ’s hand*—“He had in His right hand seven stars.” Then, secondly, there is *the sword in His mouth*—“Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword.” And then, thirdly, there is *the glory of His face*—“His countenance was as the sun shines in its strength.”

I. First, then, when John saw our Lord Jesus Christ, he naturally looked to His hands and, therefore, he saw THE STARS IN HIS HAND.

Note, dear Friends, that our Lord Jesus *has a hand*. He is not, as some fancy, an abstract *idea* of a personage without life. He has a hand and that hand is a working hand. The hand that was pierced by the nail is not paralyzed—it has strength to hold in itself seven stars. The hands that worked out our redemption have not ceased to work for us. Christ holds in His hands that which He bought with the blood of His heart. John saw that His Lord held in His right hand seven stars. Let us always think of our Lord Jesus Christ as full of power and actively using it. Let us think of Him at this moment as having a deft, skilled and mighty right hand which He will lift up on the behalf of all those who put their trust in Him. On the right hand of the Majesty on high there sits a right-handed Christ, still carrying on, according to His own good pleasure, the work of the Lord which always prospers in His hand.

When John looked at Christ’s right hand, he tells us that in it he saw seven stars. These are generally understood to be the ministers of the seven Churches of Asia. We are told, in the 20th verse, that “the seven

stars are the angels of the seven churches,” and I do not know who the angels of the Churches can be unless they are the messengers of the Churches—those ministers of whom Paul wrote—“they are the messengers of the churches and the glory of Christ.” At any rate, we shall take it for granted that these stars represent the pastors of the Churches, the ministers of Christ.

These stars are said to be in the Lord’s right hand, first, because He *made them stars*. They are in the hand of Him who made them what they are. Under the Old Covenant there were to be, in the Tabernacle, seven lights always burning upon the seven-branched candlestick, or lamp stand. But John saw in *Christ’s hand* seven stars—not ordinary lamps, but stars shining with a greater brilliance and a more heavenly light than could ever be seen in the oil-fed lamps in the ancient Tabernacle! If any man in the Church of God shines like a star to guide others to the port of peace, he owes his light entirely to Christ. It must be so, because it is Christ’s right hand that has made him what he is—he is a light because Christ has given him light! He owes his spiritual radiance entirely to Him who is the Lord and Giver of light in the midst of His Church. My dear Brothers in the ministry, if you want to shine for Jesus, you must be made into stars to be held in His right hand! There is no possibility of your being of spiritual use to your fellow men, or exercising a ministry that shall tend to their eternal salvation, except as you are made into a light to be held in the right hand of the Lord Jesus Christ. All the education in the world, all the natural talent that any possess, all the acquired practice of oratory, all the powers which are the result of long experience can never make a good minister of Jesus Christ! The stars are in the right hand of *Christ*—ministers are not made by men, but by the Lord, Himself, if they are worthy to be called ministers at all. So, the stars are in His right hand, first, because He made them.

They are there, next, dear Friends, because He *holds them up*. Every Christian has to face great perils and every Christian has need to pray to the Lord, “Hold me up, and I shall be safe.” But ministers of Christ—ministers whom He makes to be stars—are exposed to sevenfold peril. Against the leaders of the spiritual Israel the sharpest arrows of the enemy are sure to be shot. The command seems to be still passed round to our adversaries as in the ancient day of battle, when the king of Syria said to his captains, “Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel.” If there is a captain anywhere who leads the way and comes to the very front of the host, the temptations that gather about him will be most fierce and terrible. Slander, misrepresentation and every kind of evil shall dog his heels and he, above all men who are on the face of the earth, must cry to his Lord, “Hold me up, and I shall be safe.” The mercy is that the true minister of Christ is held up in Christ’s right hand. He shall be kept faithful even unto death! He shall not fall and, God helping him, he shall be caused to shine on right to the end of his ministry.

Every now and then we hear a rumor that some of God’s own children have fallen from Grace. I do not believe it. It is said that they have fallen away and perished. I do not believe it. Those of you who live till next November and go out late at night may see a great many shooting stars. And some of your little children will cry, “Look, Father, the stars are fal-

ling!” And possibly some children will believe that stars *have* fallen from their places. Take the telescope and look at the heavens—sweep the sky as far as the range of the instrument will permit. Jupiter is all right, and Saturn, and Mars, and Venus, and Mercury, and all the planets—they are all in their places—and the fixed stars are shining on as they have done ever since the Lord first kindled them to charm away the gloom of night! I do not know what these shooting stars may be—there have been many guesses with regard to them. Neither do I know what these apocryphals may be—there have been a great many guesses about those that did flame out so brightly. But I do know this—Jesus still holds the seven stars in His right hand and He will not drop even *one* of them—they shall not be reduced to six, or five, or four, or three, or two, or one, or vanish altogether—and neither shall it ever be with any of the true sons of God!

Our Lord Himself has said, “They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, who gave them to Me, is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hands.” If you, my Brother, are kept in the right hand of Christ, then you *are* kept. If you wish and hope to shine for Jesus through all the years that you shall live, then you *must be held* in His right hand, for He alone, who made you, can hold you up!

Next, are not the stars represented as being in Christ’s right hand because *He holds them out* as well as holds them up? As a man holds a lamp in his hand and holds it up and out as far as he can, that its light may shine the farther, so does Christ hold His servants up. Sometimes He holds some of them up high aloft above the multitude, so that, on the Sabbath, they rise quite out of themselves. They say what they could never have *thought* of saying by themselves and they are enabled to plunge into mysteries which before had not been opened up to them. And there are given unto them burning words that shine as well as burn, for their Lord lifts them up and holds them out. Dear Friends, pray much for us who are called to preach the Gospel, that we may always be lifted up in the right hand of Christ! If we try to shine simply with our own natural brightness, it will be a very poor, miserable exhibition of darkness. And if we try to work ourselves up, as some do, into a state of excitement, we may goad ourselves into a condition of semi-madness and lead others into the same folly, but no good will come out of it! That elevation of spirit which comes from the right hand which once was pierced for us—that lifting up of holy speech which is given through contact with the right hand of Him who spoke as never man spoke—that is the kind of uplifting that we need! Pray, Beloved, that every star in the right hand of the Lord Jesus Christ may be held up and held out—and so shine yet farther and farther across the wild waste of the waters of sin and sorrow!

Do you not also think that by the stars being in the right hand of Christ, is meant that *He claims them as His own*? Every faithful minister is Christ’s property. He belongs to his Lord and he recognizes that blessed fact. “You are not your own, for you are bought with a price,” is true of all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but it is especially true of as many as are called out from among their fellows that they may be the mouth of God—and that God may speak by them to the feeding of His

flock—and to the bringing home of His lost sheep. They are peculiarly and especially in the hand of Christ, for they belong entirely to Christ.

Is not this *the highest honor any man can have*, that he should be in Christ's right hand because he belongs to Christ? You see it is especially mentioned that these stars are not in the *left* hand of Christ, but in His right hand, as if the Lord intended to put peculiar and special honor upon His servants who are faithful to Him. Brothers, it does not become any of us who preach the Gospel to seek honor of men! What is it, after all? What is the value of commendation from the lips of men? Suppose they should praise us and flatter us, and say that we are "thoughtful men," "abreast of the times," and I know not what—all such stuff as this is but carrion, fit for the scavengers of the earth—not worthy to be set before the angels of the Churches! The true servants of Christ may well be satisfied to eat of the crumbs that fall from His table, rather than to feast upon the dainties that load the tables of the ungodly. If our hearts are wholly set on shining for Christ and shining for nothing but Christ, and shining with nothing but Christ's own Light, and the Light of Christ's own Truth, then are we as the stars in His right hand, beloved of Him and precious in His sight! Verily I say unto you there shall be a glorious reward at the last for those who are made by Christ into stars and who are held up, and held out in the right hand of their Lord, and so claimed by Him as peculiarly and especially His own!

So much, then, concerning the ministers of Christ. Brothers and Sisters, pray for us, and pray for all the preachers of the Word, that they may be stars in the right hand of Christ!

II. But now, secondly—and upon this I would dwell with great emphasis. Notice THE SWORD WHICH COMES OUT OF CHRIST'S MOUTH—

"Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword."

The conquering power of the Gospel is in Christ Himself. It does not lie with His ministers. The power with which Christ contends for the mastery against all the powers of darkness resides not with His servants, but dwells within Himself. The two-edged sword of the Lord is in the mouth of the Lord. We shine, dear Friends—such little twinkling stars as any of us are—we shine and God blesses the shining, but if ever there is a soul saved, *we* have not saved it! And if ever there is an enemy of Christ who is wounded and slain, the deed is not done by *our* sword. By ourselves, we have no power—the really effectual work is done by Christ, Himself—and by Him alone. The sword that goes out of our mouth is a poor blunt instrument which can accomplish nothing. It is the sword that goes out of *Christ's* mouth that does everything in the great battle for the right. Notice how the right hand of Christ has to be used, even, to hold up these stars—*ministers* are not His right hand—they are only as stars that He holds up with His right hand! They derive all their power from Him. And even when they are held up by His right hand, they are not the real warriors—it is not their strength with which the battle is fought and won. The power is in Christ, Himself. It is out of His mouth that there goes the sharp two-edged sword that wins the victory.

Notice, dear Friends, that the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to conquer men *is a power which is like a sword*. "The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God," comes out of the mouth of Christ, Himself,

and coming out of His mouth, it does several things which I will briefly mention to you.

First, it is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. This sword pierces “even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow.” When I am preaching most earnestly, some of you may find it possible to go to sleep—while I am talking to you about the most sacred things, they may glide over you as oil might run down a slab of marble. But if my Lord speaks to you, you will be compelled to feel the power of this sword that goes out of His mouth! Every Word that comes by His Spirit out of His mouth will seem to rip you open and lay you bare, for, “all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do”—and He can make you feel that He is discerning the thoughts and intents of your hearts! The Lord Jesus Christ, when He comes into our midst, brings His fan in His hand and with it He will thoroughly purge His floor. With every movement of that fan and every breath of His Spirit, He is separating the chaff from the wheat. There is no escaping His observation when He is at work among us—private thoughts are detected, the secrets of the heart are laid bare and the precious and the vile are severed, the one from the other, when He is working in the midst of His Church, for out of His mouth goes the Word which is sharper than a two-edged sword.

When this sword comes out of the mouth of Christ, it wounds as well as discerns. As a sword *cuts*, pierces, pricks and wounds, so does the Word of God. I do not wonder that people are sometimes angry with the Word of the Lord. Who would not be angry when he is cut as with a sharp sword? I am not surprised that others retire to weep as if their hearts would break. Who would not weep when the knife cuts into his flesh and touches his very marrow? When the Lord Jesus Christ blesses the Word by His Spirit, the wounded are all around Him. The ungodly begin to tremble and the godly ones, finding that Christ is fighting against the sin that is within them, are wounded and bleeding in a hundred places because of that two-edged sword of His which cuts through coats of mail and wounds, even, to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit!

Out of *Christ's* mouth comes not only a wounding but a *killing* sword. When He speaks with power—and, oh, how I wish that He would do so just now!—sinners feel that their self-righteousness is killed and that all their carnal hopes are killed. They can say—and I trust that some of you can say, with John—“When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead.” I was alive till I saw Christ, I seemed to be all that I wanted to be till I saw Christ. But when I saw Him on the Cross. When I read the mystery of His passion and understood what it cost Him to redeem a soul from death, then I saw what a sinner I must be—and I also saw what would be the result of my sin if *I* had to bear the penalty of it. And then, ‘I fell at His feet as dead.’”

Brothers and Sisters, let us pray the Lord Jesus Christ to use that sword which is in His mouth—constantly to use it among us, for what is the use of the seven stars in His right hand—what is the use of *anything* unless Christ's own voice is heard and Christ's own Truth is driven home to the hearts of men? We have a good deal of preaching, nowadays, do we

not? But one Word out of Christ's mouth would be worth fifty thousand out of the mouths of the greatest preachers who have ever lived. Oh, if HE will but speak, though the preacher may be very illiterate and may not have much to say—if God speaks through him, there will be a power about his message which cannot be resisted! On the other hand, the preacher may be one who has been well-trained and taught and he may speak eloquently, so as to please his hearers, but if God does *not* speak through him, what mere froth it is! It is gone like a vapor and no result comes of it. Let us keep on crying that the Master, Himself, may be at work in our midst with the sword of the Spirit, which is the *Word of God*, proceeding out of His mouth!

Did you notice that the text said that *out of Christ's mouth there went a sharp sword*? There is nothing so sharp as God's Word! When we are speaking, it is very seldom that God blesses merely *our* words—it is usually what we quote from the Scripture that is the means of the salvation of our hearers. I think it was McCheyne who said, "It is not our word, but God's Word, which saves souls." I notice that in most conversions, the point of decision has been reached when a text has been quoted. The word which God has blessed has been mainly Scriptural—even if the Truth of God has not been spoken in the exact words of Inspiration—yet it has been most clearly and manifestly a quotation from the Scripture put into other words. There is nothing so sharp as the Word of God! People will get around what we say, but they cannot get around what *God* says. They can ignore your opinion and my view of the case and another person's dictum upon it, but they cannot forget that which comes to them with this message, "Thus says the Lord," or, "It is written." And when the Spirit of God applies the Truth of God to their hearts, it is, indeed, a sharp sword!

It is also *two-edged*, for the text calls it, "a sharp two-edged sword." There is no handling this weapon without cutting yourself, for it has no back to it—it is all edge! The Word of Christ, somehow or other, is all edge. I remember preaching a sermon, on purpose, upon the Resurrection, to see whether God would bless it to the conversion of sinners. There were many brought to Christ by that discourse. With the same intention, I have preached Divine Sovereignty and the Election of Grace—and I have seen many won to Christ by those stern Truths of God. I have often noticed that when I have been preaching for the comfort of God's people, there have always been sinners wounded, even then, for the Word is all edge—and even the consolations of the Gospel, while they cheer the Believer, will cut the sinner in two! There is even something about that which is the sweetest Truth of God to the Believer which is sour to the unbeliever and cuts into his conscience. Only let us preach the Gospel and we shall never find any other weapon like it! As David said of Goliath's sword, so may we say of the sword of the Spirit, "There is none like that, give it to me." When I am invited to preach the novel doctrines of the present age, or to try the modern methods of fighting the devil, I look these new weapons up and down—and I advise those who offer them to me to send them to the Exhibition of Inventions up in the West of London! You may see them there, but you will never see them *here*! The old sword suits my hand and God blesses it to the cutting and the wounding

and the killing of sinners! God the Holy Spirit, who made it, uses it most effectually. So, by the Grace of God, we will keep to it—and use no other as long as we live.

I beg all of you who try to bring sinners to Christ, to stick to that old sword, the two-edged sword that goes out of Christ's mouth! If souls are not saved by the preaching of the Truth of God, they will not be saved by the telling of lies. I have sometimes heard really awful doctrine preached at revival services and an easy-going Brother has said, "Well, you see, it was an evangelistic meeting." Yes, but you should not tell lies at evangelistic meetings! "Oh, but if we were to preach the same Truth of God to these sinners that you would proclaim to a company of Believers, it would not do them any good!" Well, then, nothing else will, depend upon it! If the Truths of God will not have any effect upon them, your toning down of those Truths, or your screwing them up will not improve them, but will spoil them. I believe that the very Gospel that comforts saints is the Gospel that saves sinners—that there is but one Gospel for all purposes and all people and that, therefore, two gospels will never be required! You have only to strike this way with one edge of the sword, and that way with the other edge of it—or to swing it to and fro like that ancient warrior did with his great two-handed sword—and you will strike sinners down right and left, smiting the self-righteous this way, and the licentious the other way! Only keep to that grand old sword which the Apostles used, which was in the martyrs' hands, and by which Christ, Himself, triumphed, *is* triumphing and *will* triumph even to the end!

III. The third part of my subject will have but few words from me and, perhaps, the fewer I shall say, the better it will be. The point to which it refers is THE GLORY OF CHRIST'S FACE—"His countenance was as the sun shines in its strength." I will not attempt to explain these words, but will only call your attention to one or two thoughts concerning them.

First, what do you see in Christ's right hand? Seven stars, yet how insignificant they appear when you get a sight of *His face!* They are stars and there are seven of them—but who can see seven stars, or, for that matter—seventy thousand stars when the sun shines in its strength? How sweet it is, when the Lord, Himself, is so present in a congregation that the preacher, whoever he may be, is altogether forgotten! I pray, dear Friends, when you go to a place of worship, always try to see the Lord's face rather than the stars in His hand! Look at the sun and you will forget the stars. If you look for the stars, it may be that you will see neither star nor sun, for the Lord may withdraw His light from His servants because you are looking to *them* rather than to Him. In Christ's hand are the stars, but His countenance is "as the sun shines in its strength."

What does this mean but that there is about our Divine Lord *an inexpressible, indescribable, infinite splendor?* No man can look at the sun—it would blind him. The sun, when it shines in its strength—not when it is rising in the morning, nor yet when it is setting in the evening, nor yet when a cloud passes over it—but the sun *in its strength*, no man can look at! He would soon lose his eyes if he did. So, who shall ever know, much less tell, the glories of the Lord Jesus Christ? To know Him is our great ambition, but His love surpasses knowledge. That is our confession after

years of endeavoring to search into the height and depth and length and breadth of His love. Think of your Lord, then, as covered with inconceivable Glory.

But this expression is to also be regarded as setting forth Christ's *overpowering pre-eminence*. The best of His servants are only stars, but He is the Sun! In Christ there is more light than there is in all the Prophets, saints and Apostles who have ever lived! All their light came from Him, but all their light was still remaining in Him! And all the light that ever shall be, throughout all the ages, will be as *nothing* compared with the light that there is in Him. One said of Henry the Eighth, that if all the tyrants who ever lived had been dead, they might all have been considered as reproduced in that one man. I may say of our Lord Jesus Christ something very different, that is, if all the *good* things and all the *virtuous* things and all the *loving* things that have ever been since the world began were gone, they are all to be found in Him! As the sun is the great source of light and heat, so there is an overpowering pre-eminence about the Lord Jesus Christ!

Yet, further, this is *a communicable excellence*. The sun, when it shines in its strength, is pouring out its light—the sun has not light merely for itself, but its light is for all the worlds that are round about it, as the face, the glory, the excellence, the merit of Christ is for all His people. He is forever pouring it forth and this is His splendor, that He shines upon the sons of men to fill them with joy.

Yet this figure of the sun has in it something *justly terrible*. Who could fight against the sun that shines in its strength? If all the powers that are contended against the sun and attempted to invade its territory, the sun would consume them all! And who shall fight against You, O Sun of Righteousness? You shall utterly consume them in the day of Your wrath. There will be something terrible about the face of Christ when He comes to judgment—then shall men cry, “Hide us from the face of Him that sits upon the throne.” But to His people there is something in His face that is *intensely joyful*. We shall never be in the dark, for our Lord's face is like the sun! Put out all the lamps and let all temporal comfort and all spiritual comfort vanish, yet spare us Christ—give us but to see His face and to be favored with His smile—and we shall need no candle, neither light of any other sun, for the face of Christ “is as the sun that shines in its strength.”

Dear Friends, are you on the Lord's side? Are you on Jesus Christ's side? If so, be happy that you have such a Savior! Are you an opponent of His? Then tremble and bow before Him! “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.” May He send this choice blessing to you all, for His dear name's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: REVELATION 1

Verses 1, 2. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass. And He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John who bore record of*

the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. John was a most suitable person to see and to bear record of the Word of God, for in his Gospel, (John 19:35), he describes himself at the Cross as both seeing and bearing record. So now that his once-crucified Lord is in His Glory, it seemed right that the same beloved disciple should both see Him and bear record concerning Him. No eyes were so fit to see the Glory of Christ as those which had looked with so much love into the eyes of Jesus of Nazareth in the days of His humiliation. The head that had rested upon his Master's bosom at the Supper Table was prepared, thereby, for all the Glory that should afterwards be revealed. The nearer your communion with Christ is, the more will you be permitted to know of Him. Our perceptions of Christ, if they are true, will be *spiritual*—and in proportion as our spiritual life is in a right condition, shall we be able to know more and more of Him.

3. *Blessed is he that reads, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.* I do not perceive that John says, "Blessed are they that *understand* this Book," for, surely, they would be very few. I do not doubt that there are portions of Scripture which are not meant to be understood as yet—things concerning the future which are wrapped up in a phraseology which will be plain enough when that future arrives—but which, for the present, are not intended so much to gratify our curiosity as to stimulate our watchfulness. To keep us constantly on the lookout is the main objective of every Revelation concerning the future. So far, then, we have the *proem*, or preface, of this great Book of the Revelation.

4, 5. *John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.* John's benediction to the seven Churches of Asia is like that of Paul when he is writing to a Christian Church, "Grace be unto you, and peace." You have probably noticed that when Paul is writing to an *individual minister*, his greeting is, "Grace, *mercy*, and peace," for they who have the solemn charge of souls need "mercy" above all other men! May they find mercy of God in that day! But to the Churches, themselves, it is simply this double benediction, "Grace be unto you, and peace." These blessings, coming in their proper order—Grace, first, and peace afterwards—are very precious. That peace which is not founded upon Grace and does not follow Grace, is a false peace. "Grace be unto you, and peace." But if you have Grace, peace ought to follow—you have a right to it—it is a logical sequence to the possession of the Grace of God. Well does Dr. Watts sing—

***"If sin is pardoned, I'm secure;
Death has no sting beside."***

If Grace is given, Glory will follow. Therefore, Beloved, "Grace be unto you, and peace." And this Grace and peace must come from the Lord Jesus—"From Him which is, and which was, and which is to come." This Grace and peace must come from the eternal Father, the self-existent Jehovah, and from the ever-blessed Spirit. God alone is the Lord and Giver of Grace and peace! And this double blessing must come from a re-

alization of the Lord Jesus Christ in His glorious Character as “the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.” Never forget, dear Friends, that even today Christ is the Prince of the kings of the earth! The Queen reigns, and the Czar reigns—but it is still more true that “The Lord reigns.” There is One who is higher than the highest of all earthly kings, even “the Prince of the kings of the earth.”

5, 6. *Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.* Do not all of us who truly know our Lord, say that? Do we not wish for Him, Glory and honor beyond anything that we can conceive? May all dominion be His forever and ever, for it is His by right!

7. *Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth shall wail because of Him.* They have crucified Him! All of the earth have, alas, had a share in Christ’s death! And dying unforgiven, or being found alive at His coming without repentance, they “shall wail because of Him.”

7. *Even so, Amen.* Though the wicked shall wail at Christ’s appearing, the saints must give consent to the judgments of God as well as to His mercies—“Even so, Amen.”

8-12. *I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, says the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. I John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last and, What you see, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me.* This was a very natural thing for John to do. We always feel a desire to see who it is that addresses us and especially would this be the case if we heard such a sentence as this, spoken with a trumpet voice by One who could truly say, “I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last.” Who would not have turned to see such a Speaker? I am sure that John would, for he must have recognized that voice, though it was pitched in a higher key than usual, and was full of more sonorous force than when he last heard it. He must have known the voice of the Well-Beloved as He spoke, again, to His highly-favored servant!

12, 13. *And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks One like unto the Son of Man—It was the very same Son of Man, but John could only say, “like unto the Son of Man”—like unto the One whom he had known long before and whom he had loved with undying affection—like He, but, oh, how unlike He! The Christ in every position is still discernible as “like unto the Son of Man.” As John sees Him, with His face shining like the sun in its strength, yet still He is “like unto the Son of Man.” In the manger He was like to what He was afterwards upon the Cross. On the Cross He was like to what He*

is now upon His Throne—and when He comes again in all His Glory, He will still be like unto what He was and always is—“the Son of Man.” “In the midst of the seven candlesticks One like unto the Son of Man”—

13-18. *Clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the chest with a golden band. His head and His hair were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shines in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the First and the Last: I am He that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen. And have the keys of Hell and of death.* That dear familiar touch of Christ’s right hand had quickened John into sensibility, again, and brought him back from his swoon when he was lying at Christ’s feet as dead. O Master, if we are dead in a worse sense than John was. If we have fallen into a spiritual swoon. If we have come into a fainting fit, lay Your pierced hand upon us, now, and we shall live! Come near us, O Lord, come nearer, nearer, still, and touch Your servants with Your hand of love and power, and we shall be able to hear what You have to say, and our heart shall be strong to obey Your command!

19, 20. *Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks.* Then He proceeds to explain what He meant, just after the manner of the Son of Man who, when He pronounced a parable in public, opened it up to His own disciples in secret, even as He still does. Oh, how blessedly is “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever”! His characteristics never change! What He was, He is and that He will ever be, blessed be His holy name.”

20. *The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which you saw are the seven churches.* The Lord bless to us all the reading of this precious passage from His Word! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—418, 425, 413.

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

FEAR NOT

NO. 1533

**DELIVERED ON TUESDAY EVENING, MARCH 9, 1880,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE SHOREDITCH TABERNACLE,
ERECTED FOR THE CONGREGATION OF PASTOR W. CUFF.**

“Fear not.”
Revelation 1:17.

“FEAR not” is a plant which grows very plentifully in God’s garden. If you look through the lily beds of Scripture you will continually find, by the side of other flowers, the sweet, “Fear nots” peering out from doctrines and precepts even as violets look up from their hiding among places of green leaves. “Fear nots” bloomed in the old times at the feet of Abraham when he returned from fighting with the kings. Melchisedec blessed him and the Lord comforted him. The Patriarch might have been half afraid that he would always lead a troubled life, now that he had once drawn the sword. But the Lord came to him in vision and said, “Fear not, Abram. I am your shield and your exceedingly great reward.” If he had to undergo a soldier’s toils, he should have a soldier’s shield and a soldier’s pay and both should be exceedingly great, for he should find them both in God!

After you have been fighting battles for Christ you may feel weary and worried and then your great Melchisedec will refresh you with bread and wine and whisper in your ear, “Fear not.” A “Fear not” was spoken to Isaac when he had dug wells and the Philistines fought for them and he, like the meek soul that he was, gave them up, one by one, to avoid a conflict. At last he settled down at Beersheba and there the Lord appeared unto him and said, “Fear not, for I am with you and will bless you.” He was a feeble man and, therefore, the Lord dealt tenderly with him. If any of you are meek and quiet spirits and rather apt to tremble exceedingly, may the Lord often give you a blessed, “Fear not” to wear in your bosoms that its fragrance may comfort your hearts.

Then there was Jacob. You know how troubled his life was, but when he heard that his beloved son whom he thought was dead was alive in Egypt and was clothed with glory and that he had sent for him to go down to see him, he was afraid to go till the Lord said to him, “Fear not to go down into Egypt,” and gave him this encouraging promise, “I will go down with you into Egypt.” If any of you are making a great change in life and moving, perhaps, to the very ends of the earth, “fear not to go down into Egypt!” Should God command you to go to the utmost edge of the green earth, to rivers unknown to you, yet if He bids you go, fear not to go down into Egypt, for certainly He will be with you!

The Israelites at the Red Sea were afraid of Pharaoh and then the Lord said to them, “Fear not, stand still and see the salvation of God.” If you are brought to a pass tonight and know not what to do, take the advice of Holy Scripture and, “Fear not”—“stand still and see the salvation of God.” As we observe the Scriptures we perceive that “Fear nots” are scattered

throughout the Bible as the stars are sprinkled over the whole of the sky. But when we come to Isaiah, we find constellations of them! When I was a boy I learned Dr. Watts' Catechism and I am glad I did. One of its questions runs thus, "Who was Isaiah?" And the answer is, "He was that Prophet who spoke more of Jesus Christ than all the rest."

Very well and for that very reason—that he spoke more of Jesus Christ than all the rest—he is richest in comfort to the people of God and continually he is saying, "Fear not." Here are a few of his antidotes for the fever of fear—"Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not." "Fear you not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God." "Fear not, I will help you." "Fear not, you worm Jacob." "Fear not, I have redeemed you." "Fear not, for you shall not be ashamed; neither be you confounded, for you shall not be put to shame" and so on. I was going to say, "world without end." So abundant are these, "Fear nots," that they grow like the king-cups and the daisies and other sweet flowers of the meadows among which the little children in the springtime delight themselves. As to gathering them all, no one would attempt the task. The bank that is fullest of these beautiful flowers is that which Isaiah has cast up—go there and pluck them for yourselves.

Now I gather from the plentifulness of "Fear nots," even in the Old Testament, that the Lord does not wish His people to be afraid. I gather that He is glad to see His people full of courage and especially that He does not love them to be afraid of *Him*. He would have His children treat Him with confidence. Slavish fear may be thought to be congenial to the Old Testament and yet it is not so, for there the Lord cries to His chosen, "Fear not." When we come into the New Testament, there we see God coming more familiarly to men than ever before—not descending upon Paran with 10,000 flaming chariots, setting the mountain on a blaze—but coming down to Bethlehem in an Infant's form with angels chanting the joyful words, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill toward men."

The genius of the New Testament is drawing near to God—ceasing to tremble and beginning to *trust*—ceasing to be the slave and learning to be the child! Though in the precise form of it, the words of my text were not very often spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ, yet His whole life was one long proclamation of, "Fear not." I think I shall give you, to-night, most of the instances in which our Lord Himself expressly said, "Fear not," and, as each one I shall give you will either come from the lips of Christ, or else from Christ's own angel sent to comfort one of His servants, I pray that it may come fresh from God to every tried and troubled Believer and that all of us, together, may receive for our different fears this one same solace from the mouth of the Eternal, "Thus says the Lord unto you, fear not."

I. Our first text you will kindly look for if you have your Bibles with you. I hope you all have them, for I love to hear the rustling of Bible pages as we do in Scotland, but not often in England. Turn to the Book of Revelation, the first chapter and the 17th verse and there you will read that John beheld the Savior in His glorious array and he says, "When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the First and the Last." Our first, "Fear not,"

MEETS THE DREAD OCCASIONED BY THE MAJESTY OF OUR SAVIOR'S PERSON. You that know Him hold Him in deepest reverence, even as John did when, at the sight of his Divine Lord, he fell at His feet as dead.

Did you ever think of Jesus as Divine and try to form some idea of His grandeur, His triumph and His exaltation above the thrones and principalities of Heaven? As your soul has extolled Him and your mind has been expanded with high thoughts of the All-Glorious Son of God, has it not occurred to you to say within yourself, "How dare I think that He is *my* Beloved and that I am His? Could such Majesty meet such misery? Could such Glory bring itself into union with such insignificance as *mine*?" I know you must have experienced that feeling and yet you must not yield to it, for our Lord Jesus, although He loves to see your holy awe, would not have that reverence freeze into a chill reserve or a slavish trembling! No, though He is Divine, He invites you to approach Him without dread! Great as He is, you may dare to be free with Him—

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

Let your Lord be glorious to you, but still let Him be near you. Exalt Him on His throne, but remember that you sit there with Him. However glorious He may be, He has desired that you may behold His Glory and be with Him where He is. To you has He given to overcome and to sit upon His Throne even as He has overcome and has sat down with the Father upon His Throne. If you have studied the matchless purity of His Character with adoring admiration, you must have been amazed at the absolute perfection of His Manhood and the Glory of His moral and spiritual Character. At such times, if you have had a true sense of your own position, you have been ready to sink into the dust and you have exclaimed, "Shall He wash *my* feet? Shall He give Himself for *me*? Can it be that He could have loved one so stained and polluted, so mean and so beggarly, so altogether unworthy even to live, much less to be loved by such an altogether lovely One?"

I pray you will always remember, when you think of His perfection, that He has perfection of *mercy* as well as of holiness and perfection of love to sinners as well as perfection of hatred of sin—and that, guilty as you are, you must never doubt His affection, for He has pledged you in His heart's blood and proved His love by His death! Albeit that you are conscious of being less than nothing and vanity and know that Jesus is absolute Perfection, yet regard Him not with timorous dread, but draw near to Him as confidently as a child to its parent, or a wife to her husband. It is one of Satan's temptations to make us afraid of Christ. Let us not be ignorant of his devices. Why should you be afraid of Jesus when He tells you not to be? Why dread the Lamb of God? He says, "Fear not." It is not the preacher who cries, "Fear not," but it is Jesus Himself who whispers to His poor servant, fallen as dead at His feet, "Fear not: fear not."

It will be disobedience, then, to be afraid. When those lips, which are as lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh, say to me, "Child of Mine, fear not," how can I be afraid? Your safety lies, remember, dear Friend, in *trusting* Jesus and not in being afraid of Him. There was never a soul yet saved by

being *afraid* of Christ—there was never a prodigal that found forgiveness yet by being afraid of his father! This kind of fear needs casting out, for it has torment. Jesus, our Lord, is great and good and He has chosen to become the Savior of sinners and we need not fear to approach Him, for, “this Man receives sinners.” A Host that entertains at His table the poorest of the poor and the lowest of the low and bids them welcome is not one to be feared! Remember that if you are honestly *afraid* of Jesus, you must be afraid of *grieving* Him by being afraid of Him.

When the physician sees the patient shrinking from his knife, he does not wonder, but when Jesus sees you shrinking from that hand which does not wound, but cures by its own wound, He looks with eyes of sorrow upon such fear! Why shrink from Him? The little children ran into His arms! Why shrink from Him? Nothing cuts Him to the quick more than the unkind, ungenerous thought that He is unwilling to receive the guilty. If He meant to keep you at a distance, He would have never left Heaven. His coming here cannot mean anything else than love to the perishing—therefore do not grieve Him by being afraid of Him! Remember that His truthfulness forbids the rejection of any that ever come to Him since He has pledged His Word that He will in no wise cast them out. You need not, therefore, be afraid that you, in particular, may not come.

I had a letter but this week in which one poor soul says, “I believe that I am the worst person that ever lived, though not in outward appearance, yet in heart. I believe that all other sorts of people feel more than I do, or have some one point in which they are better than I am. I am the worst of all and I fear that Jesus will never look on me.” Downcast Soul, there is no true ground for such a suspicion! If you had a devil in you, you might still come to Christ! And if there were a *legion* of devils in you—and I do not quite know how many make up a legion—but if there were so many that you could not count them, yet you may still come with all the devils in Hell in you and He would still not frown upon you! And He would cast the devils out of you! Oh, be not afraid to come to Him whose wounds invite you! The blessed Savior who receives sinners loves not that you should stay away through fear.

I know what some of you are doing—you are trying to get to Heaven by a roundabout road. The late Emperor of Russia, when the railway was to be made between Moscow and St. Petersburg, employed a great number of engineers in making plans. He looked over many of their maps and, at last, like the practical man that he was, he said, “Here, bring me a ruler.” They brought him a ruler. He took a pencil and, drawing a straight line, he said, “That is the way to engineer it—we need no other plan than one straight line.” There are a great many ways of engineering souls to Heaven, but the only one that is worth considering is this—Draw a straight line to Christ at once!

Did I hear one awakened soul say, “I should like to talk to Mr. Cuff”? By all means talk to him, but do not stop at that, nor stop *for* that. Go to Christ first! “Oh, but I should like to talk with a good woman—a dear Christian lady.” I recommend you to go to Jesus Christ at once and see the lady afterwards! It is all very well to have an enquiry room and I have not a word to say against it, but the best enquiry room in the world is

your own bedroom. Go and inquire of Christ straight away! We may make our Christian workers and leaders into little priests if we do not watch what we are doing. There must be *nobody* between a soul and Christ! Blind souls will never get their eyes opened by all the kind hands of all the good people in Shoreditch, or in all of London! Christ's hands can give sight and only His—and you may get to Christ tonight.

“Which way?” you ask. By no movement of your body, but by a motion of your mind. Turn your thoughts towards Him, your desires towards Him, your trust towards Him. Look to Him and live! May the Holy Spirit lead you to trust Him now and He will save you. Thus have I tried very briefly to set forth the fear which arises from the majesty of the Divine Person of Christ for which He prescribes this cure—“Fear not, I am the First and the Last: I am He that lives and was dead; and behold I am alive forevermore.” Do not be afraid of Jesus because of His Glory, nor stand back because of your unfitness. You need a Mediator between your soul and God, but you do not need a mediator between your souls and Christ. You may come to Him straight away just as you are!—

***“Come needy and guilty, come loathsome and bare;
You can't come too filthy, come just as you are.”***

Draw a straight line—remember that—a straight line from your lost condition to Christ and let your resolve be, “I, being lost, trust Jesus to save me and I am saved!”

II. The second, “Fear not,” is equally precious. Turn to Luke, the eighth chapter and the 50th verse, the chapter we were reading just now and there you will find that Jairus had a little daughter who was dead and they said—“Trouble not the Master. But when Jesus heard it, He answered him, saying, “Fear not: only believe and she shall be made whole.” THIS MEETS THE FEAR ARISING OUT OF THE DESPERATENESS OF THE CASE IN HAND. The little girl was actually dead and yet Jesus said, “Fear not.” Here is comfort as to others. Dear Friend, if you have been praying, for a long time, about someone who is near and dear to you. If you have been longing for that person's salvation and your prayer has not been answered. And even if that person has gone from bad to worse, I want you not to give up praying!

“Oh, but,” you say, “I am getting very downcast, for they are plunging into deeper sin.” Well, there *is* cause for fear, but not while Jesus lives, for He can reach a soul as long as it remains on this side of the gates of Death! Jesus can still save a man while he is yet out of Hell! Continue to pray and fear not! No case is absolutely hopeless while Jesus lives! Love will still prevail. We meet, sometimes, with amazing instances where prayer is heard at last. I have read of a woman who prayed long for her husband. She used to attend a certain Meeting House in the north of England, but her husband never went with her. He was a drinking, swearing man and she had much anguish of heart about him. She never ceased to pray and yet she never saw any result.

She went to the Meeting House quite alone, with this exception, that a dog always went with her and this faithful animal would curl himself up under the seat and lie quiet during the service. When she was dead, her husband was still unsaved, but doggie went to the Meeting House. His master wondered whatever the faithful animal did at the service. Curiosity

made him follow the good creature. The dog led him down the aisle to his dear old mistress's seat. The man sat on that seat and the dog curled himself up as usual. God guided the minister that day—the Word came with power and that man wept till he found the Savior! Never give up your husbands, good women, for the Lord may even use a dog to bring them to Christ when you are dead and gone!

Never give up praying, hoping and expecting. Fear not! Only believe and you shall have your heart's desire. Pray for them as long as there is breath in your body and theirs. It is of no use praying for them when they are dead, but as long as they are here, never cease to plead with God on their account. Persons have been converted to God under very extraordinary circumstances. Two base fellows thought to rob the house of a godly man, the vicar of the parish, who was accustomed, on Sunday evening, to gather his poor people together in his parlor and preach the Gospel to them. This was a little extra work after the day's services. The thieves thought that if they could get into the house with the people during the evening and hide themselves away, they could rob the house easily during the night.

And so they got into the next room to that in which the Word was preached. But they never robbed that house, for through the godly vicar's address the Lord Jesus Christ stole away their hearts and they came forth to confess their sin and to become followers of the Savior! You do not know how far the arrows of the conquering Savior may fly! Never despair! Jesus Christ comforts you in reference to the souls of those for whom you are anxious by saying, "Fear not; only believe and they shall be made whole." Labor for them, pray for them and believe that Jesus Christ can save them! And let the same Truth of God be fully believed as to yourselves. O my dear Hearer, you may think you are too far gone for salvation, but you are not!

You may imagine that your case is altogether a lot out of the catalog, but you are just the sort of person that Jesus Christ saves! If He never saved odd people, He would never have saved me, for many men judge me to be a strange being! If you are another oddity, come along with me and let us trust in Him! If you are the one man that is a little over the line of mercy, you are the very man that Jesus Christ chooses to bless, for He loves to save extraordinary sinners! He is a very extraordinary Savior—there never was another like He and when He meets a sinner that is extraordinary and never another like he, He often takes him and makes him one of His captains, as He did Saul of Tarsus who became Paul the Apostle! I pray you "fear not" on account of the greatness of your sin. Be humbled on account of it, but do not despair about it.

Are you old in iniquity? Are you deeply ingrained in transgression by long practice in it? Still doubt not the Redeemer's power! If your salvation rested on yourself you might despair, but the Lord has laid help on One that is mighty, even on His only-begotten Son! And He is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him. O poor condemned sinner, look up and hope! O you who have heard the clang of the iron gate—you who are shut up in despair—have hope, have brave hope, for Jesus says

to you, "Fear not, only believe and you shall be made whole." God grant that this gracious, "Fear not" may be a comfort to some seeker here.

III. Our third, "Fear not," is taken from the fifth chapter of Luke beginning at the seventh verse. And perhaps what I am about to say will suit Mr. Cuff and other successful ministers—"They came and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken. And so was also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not, from henceforth you shall catch men."

THIS MEETS THE FEAR WHICH ARISES OUT OF THE GREATNESS OF HIS GOODNESS. If the Lord has made any one of you successful in His service, if you are made of the same stuff as I am, your success lays you low before His Throne. Time was when everybody was abusing me and then I rejoiced and gloried in God—I had happy days when my name was cast out as evil. But when the Lord, in His great mercy, gave me souls for my hire and began to build up the Church at the Tabernacle, I became subject to such sinking of spirits that I can scarcely tell you how crushed I have been under the weight of Divine Mercy. I should not wonder if my dear Brother Cuff has gone home, after seeing a crowd at the Town Hall and after seeing this great house full and has said, "Lord, why have You been pleased to use me and to favor me?"

If any of you are blessed in your work, as I trust you may be, you may also be made to feel the mysterious depression which takes the place of self-exaltation in those who know that every good gift comes from God alone. Fear because of the Lord's great goodness, also comes in another shape—a person says, "I believe that I am saved for I have looked to Christ and I am lightened. And yet can it be?" The thought suggests itself, "It is too good to be true." Now, look, Sirs, if it were not supremely good it would not be true! It is *because* it is so excessively good that it is true! As one said of God's mercy when his friend was astonished at it, "I am astonished, too, but still it is just like He." It is just like God, you know, to bless a poor sinner beyond all that he can ask or think! It is the way with God to astonish us with His Grace. When the Lord sends His mercy it never rains—it pours!

He deluges the desert. He not only gives enough to moisten, but enough to drench the furrows. He makes the wilderness a standing pool of water and the thirsty land springs of water! Do not, therefore, doubt the genuineness of His mercy because of its greatness. But some timorous professors say, "This is a great work which God is doing here, but it is too great to last." Yes, that, too, I have heard and the gathering of many to hear the Gospel has been sneered at as "a nine days' wonder." Alas, our unbelief has said, "It cannot last!" And yet it *has* lasted. The path of faith, to my mind, is very like that of a man walking on a tight-rope high up in the air and you always seem half afraid that he will fall. Yet if the Lord placed us on a spider's web as high as the Alps, He would not let us slip.

The walk of faith is like going up an invisible staircase. When you have climbed and climbed, you sometimes cannot see one single step before

you. Each step seems to be upon the air and yet when you put your foot down it is solid granite, firmer than the earth, itself. There are times when Satan whispers, "God will leave you. God will forsake you. He has done all this for you and yet He will leave you." Ah, but He never will, for His faithfulness never fails! We must not be like the countryman who, when he had to cross the river, said that he would wait till the stream was dry, for it could not run so fast as that long, but must all run away! We have feared that we should live till the river of God's mercy has run dry, but it never has and it never will!

Some professors say, when a great number of sinners are converted, "Oh, well, you see there are so many they cannot be all genuine." That is why I think the work to be real! When I see a little peddling work of one, every now and then, I am far more inclined to say, "Well, I do not know. It may be of God, but it is not a very great affair and He generally does great things when His Spirit is poured out." But when I see Him calling 3,000 in one day, I say, "This is the finger of God. I am sure of it!" I would be the last to despise the day of small things, but I must also speak up for the day of great things! I have noticed that those who are added to the Church at times of revival are people that hold on quite as well as others and I think better than others. That is my experience because at other times we are apt to say, "there are so few coming forward we must not be quite so strict in examining them." But when there is a great number we feel that we can afford to be particular and we are naturally more strict.

I do not justify this, but I am sure that the tendency exists. I believe in a great work and when I see our Lord filling the net, I think I hear Him saying to me, "Do not be afraid because the fish make the boat sink down to the water's edge. Fear not. You shall get many more than these. Let down your net again." Let us not doubt because it seems too wonderful that God should bless us to a great extent. It *is* wonderful, but let us have no doubt about it! Can the Lord use such poor worms as we are? He *does* use us. Do not ask how He can do it if He does it. He is a God of Sovereignty and He uses whom He wills and if He blesses you, give Him the glory of it—and do not let the greatness of His Grace cause you to mistrust Him!

You have seen a painter with his palette on his fingers and he has ugly little daubs of paint upon the palette. What can he do with those spots? Go in and see his picture. What splendid painting! What lights! What shades! Where are those daubs of paint? They have been used up upon the picture. What? Did he make that beautiful picture out of those ugly spots of paint? Yes, that picture was made out of those little daubs of color! That is the way with painters. In even a wiser way does Jesus act towards us. He takes *us*, poor smudges of paint, and He makes the blessed pictures of His Grace out of us, for it is neither the brush He uses, nor the paint He uses, but it is the skill of His own hands which does it all and unto His name be the praise!

Now, poor worker, do not be afraid. The great Artist will take you in hand and make something of you. I forget how much can be made out of a pennyworth of iron, but I do know that there are methods by which a pennyworth of iron can be so molded and worked and fashioned that it

can become worth a hundred times what it was before it came under the manufacturer's hands! What the Lord can make of such poor creatures as we are, who shall tell? He says, "Fear not" and I pray you do not fear. You who make up the Church in Shoreditch, do not be afraid because the Lord fills this great house. Beckon to your partners that are in the other ships to come and help you! Help those round about to fill their boats and may God send you a long and continued revival of religion in this whole region!

Let not the old folks get frightened at the Lord's glorious working—believe in it and rejoice! Why, if the Lord were to convert 3,000 in one day in *any* place, there are numbers who would say, "I do not believe in it, for I never saw anything like it." Many Churches would say, "We do not think that we ought to take them in just yet." At Pentecost they baptized the converts the same day! You see, the Church was *ready* to baptize them—we have no Church in England that would do that—I fear not one and we have no Christian people who would approve of it if it *were* done. No, they would, as a rule, murmur that it was rash enthusiasm and an ill-advised haste. "I believe in the Holy Spirit." We say that, but do we practically believe it? God grant we may!

IV. But now I turn to a fourth, "Fear not," which we find in the 10th chapter of Matthew, the 28th verse. I will not turn to it, but I will just tell you of it because there are many of you here who need its comfort. "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell." THIS IS MEANT TO REMOVE THE FEAR ARISING OUT OF SHARP PERSECUTION. In a region like this, when a working man is converted to Jesus Christ, his friends and his neighbors soon find it out and, I am sorry to say, that working men, as a rule, do not treat Christian men fairly. They used to say in America, "It is a free country. Every man may whip his own slave," and so it is here. It is a free country. Every man may swear at his fellow workman for worshipping God.

It is a fearful piece of meanness that men should molest their fellows for being godly. If you have a right to swear, I have a right to sing Psalms! And if you have a right to break the Sabbath, I have a right to keep it and I have a right to go in and out of the workshop without being called bad names because I live in the fear of God. But the right is not always recognized. Some have to run the gauntlet from morning to night because they serve the Lord. Now, my dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, do not be afraid though you are nothing but poor sheep and you are sent out into the midst of wolves. Does it not seem as if our Lord could hardly have known what He was doing when He said, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep among wolves"?

Yet He made no mistake. Just think for a minute—how many wolves are there in the world now? They have been eating up the sheep ever since they had a chance, but are there more wolves or more sheep alive at this day? Why, the wolves get fewer and fewer every day, till when a wolf comes down into the inhabited lands in France, we have it reported in the paper and we have not one wild animal of the kind in this country, though they used to abound here! The fact is, the sheep have driven out the wolves! It looked as if they would eat the sheep up, but the sheep have ex-

terminated *them*. So it will be in the end with defenseless Believers and raging persecutors—patient weakness will overcome passionate strength! Only be patient.

You have an anvil in the shop and you know how hard the hammer comes down on it. What does the anvil do? Why, bears it. You never saw the anvil get up and fight the hammer. Never! It stands still and takes the blows. Down comes the hammer. But now listen. How many hammers have been worn out to one anvil? Where it has stood for years, the old block of iron remains, ready to bear more strokes. The hammers will break, but not the anvil! Be an anvil, Brother. Still be the sheep, Brothers and Sisters, for heavenly submission shall win the victory and patient non-resistance shall come off more than a conqueror! Do not fear, I pray you, so as to conceal your testimony! Tell all what Jesus Christ has done for you and the more they blaspheme and persecute you, be you the more determined, by God's Grace, that they shall not be able to find fault in your character and that they shall *know* that you are a Christian!

Climb up the mast and nail the colors to it! Drive another nail tonight. Fix the colors to the masthead. Say, "No, never, by God's Grace, will I be ashamed of being a Christian! I might be ashamed if I were a drunk. I might be ashamed if I were a swearer. But I will never be ashamed that I am a follower of the crucified Son of God." O poor men and women, who have, for the most part, to bear the brunt of the world's assaults, God grant that you may not fear! Do not fall into doubt about your religion, either. Do not be so afraid as to fall into questioning and unbelief. True religion never was in the majority and never will be for many a year to come. You may rest assured that if we were to poll the world for any opinion and if that opinion should be decided by a majority, it would be necessarily wrong.

Now and then, in one country, the right prevails, but all the world over the seed of the serpent outnumber the seed of the woman. Blessed is he who can stand in a minority of one with God, for a minority of one for God is, in the judgment of the Truth of God, a majority! Count God with you and you have more with you than all they that are against you!

V. I must not keep you much longer, for the heat grows great and I fear some of you are fainting. Therefore I want to say another word which I should like you all to hear. This is the fifth, "Fear not." You will find it in Luke 12:32. Christ preaching to His disciples said—"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." THIS IS MEANT TO PREVENT FEAR AS TO TEMPORAL THINGS. Now, I know that this is a time in which many of God's people are much tried and they tremble lest they should not be provided for. Listen to this—Did you escape from poverty by being frightened about it? Did your fears ever make you any richer? Have you not found it to be vain to rise up early and to sit up late and to eat the bread of carefulness when you have had no faith in God? Have you not learned that?

And do you not know that if you are a child of God He will certainly give you your food and raiment? Ah, I hear a heavy sigh from one—"It has been a hard winter." It is true, my Friend, it has been a hard winter. I dare say that the birds have found it so and yet on Sunday morning I no-

ticed, when I opened my window early, that they were singing very sweetly. And this morning, too, they broke forth in a chorus of harmonious song. You know what the little bird sings when he sits on a bare branch with the snow all around him? He chirps out—

***“Mortal, cease from toil and sorrow,
God provides for the morrow.”***

Learn the sparrow’s song and try, if you can, to catch the spirit of the bird which has no barn or storehouse and yet is fed! There is this to comfort you—“Your heavenly Father knows what things you have need of.” He understands your needs. Is it not enough for a child that his father knows his needs? Rest in that and be confident that verily you shall be fed.

You will not have much in this world, perhaps, but you shall have the kingdom of God! Be of good cheer about that. Your inheritance is yet to come—you shall have the kingdom! You have even now a reversionary interest in Eternal Glory and this involves present supplies! He who promises the end will provide for the way. Some of the Lord’s best people are those that have to suffer most, but it is because they can glorify Him here most by suffering. I think the angels in Heaven must almost envy a child of God who has the power and the privilege to suffer for Christ’s sake, for doubtless angels render perfect service to the heavenly King, yet not by suffering. Theirs is active and not passive obedience to the will of God! I think they will cluster round some of you in Heaven and say, “You lived down at Bethnal Green, or Shoreditch. Ah, yes,” the angels will say, “What sort of a place did you live in? One dark room? You were very poor. You were out of work and did you trust God?”

The angels will be pleased as you tell them, “Oh yes, we still went to the heavenly Father and we said, ‘Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.’” That is the grandest thing that a man ever did say! At least, I think it is. Mr. Cuff says some fine things, but he never uttered a nobler sentence than that—“Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” The expression is sublime! When Job had lost everything, after being immensely rich, he sat on a dunghill and scraped his sores and he said, “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb and naked shall I return there.” He was reduced to the most abject need and yet he added—“The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” You cherubim and seraphim, in all your songs, no stanza excels that heroic verse! Angels cannot rise to such a height of sublime devotion to the Invisible One as Job did when, in his misery, he glorified his God by abiding confidence.

Oh, you that are brought very low, you have grand opportunities for honoring God if you will but trust Him. “Fear not.” “Fear not.”—

***“Fear not the loss of outward good,
He will for His provide.
Give them supplies of daily food,
And all they need beside.”***

And He will give you *spiritual* food, too. When God saves His people He gives them spiritual food to live upon till they get to Heaven. God does not give us treatment like that which the Duke of Alva measured out to a city which had surrendered. He agreed to give the inhabitants their lives, but when they complained that they were dying of hunger, he maliciously replied, “I granted you your lives, but I did not promise you food.” Our God

does not talk so. He includes in the promise of salvation all that goes with it—and you shall have all you really need between here and Heaven! Fear not!

VI. Lastly, time fails me, but I was going to close with that word in the 27th of Acts, the 24th verse, where the Lord sent His angel to His servant Paul in the time of the shipwreck and said to him, “Fear not, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God has given you all them that sail with you.” So I pray God that all perils in the future—all imminent ills and dangers which surround you now—may not cause you to fear, for the Lord will not suffer a hair of your head to perish! He that has made you will bear you through and make you more than conquerors! Tried people of God, rest in the Lord and your confidence shall be your strength!

You have often heard of the boy on board ship in time of storm who was the only person that was not afraid. When they asked him why he did not fear, he said, “Because my father is at the helm.” We have still better cause for casting away all fear, for not only is our Father at the helm but our Father is everywhere! He is holding the winds and the waves in the hollow of His hand! No trouble can happen to you or to me but what He ordains or permits. No trial can come but what He will restrain and overrule. No evil can happen but what shall certainly work for good to them that love God! Therefore be not afraid.

Though the howling tempest yell and the ship creak and groan as she labors among the waves and you think that nothing but destruction awaits you, fear not! Let not fear linger for a single moment in the Presence of the eternal Christ who says, “It is I. Be not afraid.” May God grant that His own, “Fear not,” may go home to the heart of everyone here present in some form or other—and unto His name be Glory, world without end. Amen!

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THE GLORIOUS MASTER AND THE SWOONING DISCIPLE NO. 1028

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 7, 1872,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not. I am the First and the Last. I am He that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen. And I have the keys of Hell and of death.”
Revelation 1:17, 18.*

LOW thoughts of the Lord Jesus Christ are exceedingly mischievous to Believers. If you sink your estimate of Him you shift everything else in the same proportion. He who thinks lightly of the Savior thinks so much the less of the evil of sin, and, consequently, he becomes callous as to the past, careless as to the present, and venturesome as to the future. He thinks little of the punishment due to sin because he has small notions of the Atonement made for sin. Christian activity for right is also abated, as well as holy horror of wrong. He who thinks lightly of the Lord Jesus renders to Him but small service—he does not estimate the Redeemer's love at a rate high enough to stir his soul to ardor. If he does not count the blood wherewith he was redeemed an unholy thing, yet he thinks it a small matter—not at all sufficient to claim from him life-long service. Gratitude is weak when favors are undervalued. He serves little who loves little and he loves little who has no sense of having been greatly beloved.

The man who thinks lightly of Christ also has but poor comfort as to his own security. With a little Savior I am still in danger, but if He is the mighty God, able to save unto the uttermost, then am I safe in His protecting hand and my consolations are rich and abounding. In these, and a thousand other ways, an unworthy estimate of our Lord will prove most solemnly injurious. The Lord deliver us from this evil! If our conceptions of the Lord Jesus are very enlarged, they will only be His due. We cannot exaggerate here. He deserves higher praise than we can ever render to Him. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high is He above our loftiest conceptions. Even when the angels strike their loudest notes and chant His praises most exultingly on their highest festal days, the music falls far short of His excellence! He is higher than a seraph's most soaring thought! Rise then, my Brothers and Sisters, as on eagle's wings, and let your adoring souls magnify and extol the Lord your Savior!

When our thoughts of Jesus are expanded and elevated we obtain right ideas upon other matters. In the light of His love and atoning sacrifice we see the depth of the degradation from which such a Redeemer has lifted us up—and we hate, with all our hearts, the sins which pierced such an altogether lovely One and made it necessary for the Lord of Life to die.

Forming an adequate estimate of what Jesus has done for us, our gratitude grows and with our gratitude our love—which love compels us to consecration—and consecration suggests heroic self-denying actions. Then are we bold to speak for Him and ready, if needs be, to suffer for Him while we feel we could give up all we have to increase His Glory without so much as dreaming that we had made a sacrifice!

Let your thoughts of Christ be high and your delight in Him will be high, too! Your sense of security will be strong and with that sense of security will come the sacred joy and peace which always keep the heart which confidently reposes in the Mediator's hands. If you would, yourself, be raised, let your thoughts of Christ be raised! If you would rise above these earthly joys, you must have higher and more elevated thoughts of Him who is high above all things. Earth sinks as Jesus rises! Honor the Son even as you would honor the Father, and in so doing your soul shall be sanctified and brought into closer fellowship with the great Father of Spirits whose delight it is to glorify His Son!

My object, this morning, is to suggest some few Truths of God to your recollection which may help to set the Lord Jesus on a glorious high throne within your hearts. My motto this morning will be—

***“Bring forth the royal diadem
And crown him Lord of all.”***

My anxiety is that He may be crowned with many crowns in all these many hearts and that you may now perform those exercises of faith—those delightful acts of adoring love—which shall bring to Him great glory.

I. Coming to the text, the first thing we notice in it is THE DISCIPLE OVERPOWERED. We will meditate a little while upon that. John writes, “And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead.” The beloved disciple was favored with an unusual vision of His Glorified Lord. In the blaze of that revelation even his eagle eye was dimmed and his holy soul was overwhelmed. He was overpowered, but not with ecstasy. At first sight it would have seemed certain that the excess of delight would have been John's most prominent feeling. It would appear certain that to see his long lost Master, whom he had so dearly loved, would have caused a rush of joy to John's soul and that if overpowered at all, it would have been with ecstatic bliss.

That it was *not* so is clear from the fact that our Lord said to him, “Fear not.” Fear was far more in the ascendant than holy joy. I will not say that John was *unhappy*, but, certainly it was not delight which prostrated him at the Savior's feet! And I gather from this that if we, in our present embodied state, were favored with an unveiled vision of Christ, it would not make a Heaven for us—we may think it would, but we know not of what spirit we are. Such new wine, if put into these old bottles, would cause them to burst. Not Heaven but deadly faintness would be the result of the Beatific Vision if granted to these earthly eyes!

We would not say, if we could behold the King in His beauty as we now are, “I gazed upon Him and my heart leaped for joy.” But like John we would have to confess, “When I saw Him I fell at His feet as dead.” There is a time for everything, and this period of our sojourn in flesh and blood is not the season for seeing the Redeemer face to face! That vision will be ours when we are fully prepared for it. We are as yet too feeble to bear the

far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory. I do not say that we are so prepared, by His Grace, that if He now took us away from this body, we should be able to bear the splendor of His face. But I do say that *flesh and blood* cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and that when, as an exception to the rule, a mortal man is permitted to behold his Lord, his flesh and blood are made to feel the sentence of death within themselves and to fall as if slain by the revelation of the Lord.

We ought, therefore, to thank God that “He holds back the face of His Throne, and spreads His cloud upon it.” That face which shines as the sun in its strength manifests its love by wearing, as yet, a concealing veil. Be grateful that while you are to be here to serve Him and to do His will in suffering for Him, He does not deprive you of your power to serve or suffer by overwhelming you with excessive revelations! It is an instance of the Glory of God’s Grace that He conceals His majesty from His people and wraps clouds and darkness round about Him. He does this not to deny His saints a bliss which they might covet, but to preserve them from an unseasonable joy which, as yet, they are not capable of bearing.

We shall see Him as He is, when we shall be like He is, but not till then. That for a while we may be able to perform the duties of this mortal life and not lie perpetually stretched like dead men at his feet, He does not manifest Himself to us in the clear light which shone upon the Seer of Patmos. I beg you to notice with care this beloved disciple in his fainting fit, and note first the occasion of it. He says, “I saw Him.” This it was that made him faint with fear. “I saw Him.” He had seen Him on earth but not in His full Glory as the First-Begotten from the dead and the Prince of the kings of the earth.

When our Savior dwelt among men, in order to their redemption, He made Himself of no reputation and took upon Himself the form of a servant. For this reason He restrained the flashings of His Deity and the Godhead shone through the Manhood only with occasional and softened rays. But now Jesus was resplendent as the Ancient of Days! He was girt with a golden girdle—with a Countenance outshining the sun in its strength—and this, even the best beloved Apostle, could not endure! He could gaze with dauntless eyes upon the Throne of jasper and the rainbow of emerald. He could view with rapture the sea of glass like unto crystal and the seven lamps of fire burning before the Throne. But the vision of the Lord Himself was too much for him!

He who quailed not when the doors of both Heaven and Hell were opened to him in vision, yet fell lifeless when he saw the Lord! None either in earth or Heaven can compare with Jesus in Glory! Oh for the day when we shall gaze upon His Glory and partake in it! Such is His sacred will concerning us. “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My Glory.” To bear that sight we shall need to be purified and strengthened. God Himself must enlarge and strengthen our faculties, for as yet, like the disciples upon labor, we should be bewildered by the brightness! Here, then, was the occasion of his faintness.

But what was the reason why a sight of Christ so overcame him? I take it we have the reason in the text. It was partly fear. But, why fear? Was

not John beloved of the Lord Jesus? Did he not also know the Savior's love to him? Yes, but for all that, he was afraid, or else the Master would not have said to him, "Fear not." That fear originated partly in a sense of his own weakness and insignificance in the Presence of the Divine strength and greatness. How shall an *insect* live in the furnace of the sun? How can mortal eyes behold unquenched the light of Deity, or mortal ears hear that voice which is as many waters? We are such infirmity, folly and nothingness, that, if we have but a glimpse of Omnipotence, awe and reverence prostrate us to the earth!

Daniel tells us that when he saw the great vision by the river Hiddekel, there remained no strength in him, for his comeliness was turned in on him into corruption and he fell upon his face into a deep sleep. John, also, at that time, perhaps, perceived more impressively than ever the purity and immaculate holiness of Christ—and, being conscious of his own imperfection, he felt like Isaiah when he cried, "Woe is me, I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the Lord of Hosts." Even his faith, though fixed upon the Lord, our Righteousness, was not able to bear him up under the first surprising view of uncreated holiness!

I think his feelings were like those of the Patriarch of Uz when he said, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes see You, therefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." The most spiritual and sanctified minds, when they fully perceive the majesty and holiness of God, are so greatly conscious of the great disproportion between themselves and the Lord that they are humbled and filled with holy awe—and even with dread and alarm. The reverence which is commendable is pushed by the infirmity of our nature into a fear which is excessive—and that which is good in itself is made deadly unto us—so prone are we to err on the one side or the other.

There is no doubt, too, that a part of the fear which caused John to swoon arose from a partial ignorance or forgetfulness of his Lord. Shall we charge this upon one who wrote one of the Gospels, and three choice Epistles? Yes, it was doubtless so because the Master went on to instruct and teach him in order to remove his fear. He needed fresh knowledge or old Truths brought home with renewed power in order to cure his dread. As soon as he knew his Lord he recovered his strength. The wonderful Person who then stood before him bade him know that He was the First and the Last, the ever living and Almighty Lord.

The knowledge of Jesus is the best remedy for fears! When we are better acquainted with our Lord we part company with half our doubts—these bats and owls cannot bear the sun! Jesus, in His Person, work, offices and relations, is a mine of consolation. Every Truth of God which is connected with Him is an argument against fear. When our heart shall be filled with perfect love to Him, fear will be cast out as Satan was cast down from Heaven. Study, then, your Lord! Make it your life's object to know Him. Seek the Holy Spirit's illumination and the choice privilege of fellowship—and your despondency and distress will vanish as night birds fly to hide themselves when the day breaks. It is folly to walk in sorrow when we might constantly rejoice!

We do not read that John was afraid after the Lord had discoursed lovingly upon His own glorious Person and Character. That Divine enlightenment which was given to his mind purged from it any secret mistake and misjudgment which had created excessive fear. But, while we thus notice the occasion and the reasons, we must not forget the extent to which John was overpowered. He says, "I fell at His feet as dead." He does not say in a *partial* swoon, or overcome with amazement—he uses a very strong description—"I fell at His feet as dead." He was not dead, but he was "as dead." That is to say he could no more see—the blaze of Jesus' face had blinded him! He could no more hear—the voice like the sound of many waters had stunned his ears! No bodily faculty retained its power.

His soul, too, had lost consciousness under the pressure put upon it. He was unable to think, much less to act. He was stripped not only of self-glory and strength, but almost of life itself! This is by no means a desirable *natural* condition, but it is much to be coveted *spiritually*. It is an infinite blessing to us to be utterly emptied, stripped, spoiled, and slain before the Lord. Our strength is our weakness. Our life is our death. And when both are entirely gone we begin to be strong and in very deed to live! To lie at Jesus' feet is a right experience. To lie there as sick and wounded is better. But to lie there as *dead* is best of all! A man who comes to that is taught in the mysteries of the kingdom.

Moses with dim *legal* light needs to be told to take off his shoe in the Presence of the Lord of Hosts. But John is manifestly far in advance of him because he lies lower, and is like a dead man before the Infinite Majesty! How blessed a death is death in Christ! How Divine a thing is life in Him! If I might see Christ at this moment upon the terms of instant death, I would joyfully accept the offer—the bliss would far exceed the penalty! But as for the death of all within us—that is, of the flesh and of fallen nature—that is beyond measure desirable, and if for nothing else my soul would pant more and more to see Jesus! May that two-edged sword which comes out of His mouth strike all my besetting sins! May the brightness of His Countenance scorch and burn up in me the very roots of evil! May He mount His white horse and ride through my soul conquering, and to conquer—casting out of me all that is of the old dragon and his inventions—and bringing every thought into subjection to Himself. There I would gladly lie at His dear conquering feet, slain by His mighty Grace!

Only one other reflection while we look at this fainting Apostle. Observe well the place where he was overpowered. Oh, lovely thought. "I fell as dead." But where? "I fell at His feet as dead." It matters not what ails us if we lie at Jesus' feet! Better be dead, there, than alive anywhere else! He is ever gentle and tender, never breaking the bruised reed or quenching the smoking flax. In proportion as He perceives that our weakness is manifest to us, in that degree will He display His tenderness. He carries the lambs in His bosom and does gently lead those that are with young. Feebleness wins on Him. When He sees a dear disciple prostrate at His feet, He is ready at once to touch him with the hand of His familiar love and to revive him by His own strength. "He restores my soul." "He gives power unto the faint." He says unto our pitiful weakness, "Fear not, I am the First and the Last."

To be as dead is not desirable, but to be as dead at Jesus' feet is safe and profitable! Well does our poet say, when expressing his desire to escape from all worldly bonds—

***“But oh, for this, no strength have I,
My strength is at His feet to lie.”***

II. And now, having seen the disciple overpowered, I shall ask your consideration of THAT SAME DISCIPLE RESTORED. He was not long in the condition of death, for the Master laid His right hand upon him and said to him, “Fear not.” Here then, we shall notice that when the children of God become exceedingly faint and feeble—and their own sense of impurity and nothingness becomes painful, and even killing to them—the Lord has ways of restoring and reviving their spirits.

And first He does it by a condescending approach. “He laid His hand upon me.” It is noticeable that in the great cures which our Savior worked, He almost always *touched* the patient. He could, with a word, have healed. But to prove His *fellowship* with the sick, He put His hand upon the leper, and upon the blind eyes, and touched the deaf ears. He thus manifested His condescending contact with the infirmities of our nature. The Master could have spoken a word to John and have revived him. He did not stand at a distance or guard Himself with a, “Touch Me not,” but, instead of that, He commenced His care with a *touch*. No other hand could have revived the Apostle but the hand which was pierced for Him!

There is mighty healing in the royal hand of our Immanuel! When the Holy Spirit inspires us with a sense of the relationship which Christ bears to us—of the sympathy which Christ feels with us, of the kinship and fellow-feeling which reign in Jesus' breast—then we are comforted! To know that He is not ashamed to call us Brethren is a wellspring of comfort to a tried child of God! To feel His Presence! To perceive the touch of His hand and to hear Him say, “I am with you, be not dismayed, for I am your God”—this is new life to our waning spirits! Oh what bliss is this! “In all their afflictions He was afflicted.” He is a Brother born for adversity, a sympathetic and tender Friend touched with a feeling of our infirmities. “He laid His hand upon me.”

O child of God pray for a manifestation of the kinsman Christ to your soul! Ask that He would instruct you as to the fact that He enters into your grief, having Himself endured the like. You are one with Him, and He is one with you, and as surely as the head feels the pain of the members, so does Jesus share in all the sorrows of His people. Let this be a comfort to you, you who are now lying as dead before the risen Lord. He comes near to you, not to kill you, but to revive you by most intimate communion, talking with you as a man speaks with his friend. O Brothers and Sisters, greatly beloved, be not so overwhelmed with the greatness of your Lord as to forget His love, His great love, His familiar love which at this moment lays its hand upon you!

The same action implies the communication of Divine strength. “He laid His right hand upon me.” It is the hand of favor. It is also the hand of power. God gives strength to those who have none. He puts power into the faint. When the child of God is brought very low, it is not a mere subject for consideration or theme for reflection that can lift him up. Sick men need more than instruction—they require cordials and supports. There

must be actual strength and energy imparted to a swooning soul, and, Glory be to God, by His own Holy Spirit Jesus can and does communicate energy to His people in the time of weakness! He is come that we may have life and that we may have it more abundantly. The Omnipotence of God is made to rest upon us so that we even rejoice in *infirmities*.

“My Grace is sufficient for you, My strength is made perfect in weakness,” is a blessed promise which has been fulfilled to the letter for many of us. Our own strength has departed and then the power of God has flowed in to fill up the vacuum. I cannot explain the process—these are secrets and mysteries to be experienced rather than expounded—but as the coming of the Spirit of God into us, first of all, makes us live in regeneration, so the renewed coming of the power of God into our soul raises us up from our weakness and our faintness into fresh energy. Be encouraged, then, you fainting ones! They that trust upon the Lord shall renew their strength. All power belongs unto the Lord and He will give it plentifully to those who have none of their own. Be of good courage and wait upon Him, for none shall be ashamed who make Him their confidence.

Then there followed a word from the Master’s own mouth. He spoke and said, “Fear not.” Here He applied the remedy to the disease. Christ Himself is our medicine, as well as our Physician. His voice, which stilled the sea, also casts out all our fears. The Word of God, as we find it in this Book, is very consoling. The Word of God, as we hear it from Christ’s ministers, has great power in it. But the *real* and true power of the Word lies in Jesus THE WORD! When the Truth of God falls fresh from His own lips, then is it power! Right truly did the Master say, “the words which I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.”

With what power did those syllables fall on the fluttered heart of John—“Fear not.” Oh that we might hear the same voice by the Spirit in our inmost souls!—

**“Oh might I hear Your heavenly tongue,
But whisper, ‘You are Mine.’
Those gentle words should raise my song
To notes almost Divine.”**

Truly there are many voices and each has its significance, but the voice of Jesus has a Heaven of bliss in its every accent! Let but my Beloved speak to me and I will forego the angelic symphonies! Though He should only say, “Fear not,” and not a word more, it were worth worlds to hear Him speak to us!

But, you say, can we still hear Jesus speak to us? Yes, by His Spirit. His Spirit still has fellowship with the hearts of men and He can bring the Word of Scripture right home into the soul until it becomes no more the letter but the living, quickening word of Christ. Do you know what I mean by this? If you do not, it is not possible to tell you! And if you do, you will need no explanation! Jesus speaks to the *heart*—the Truth of God comes not in word only, but in demonstration of the Spirit and with power. O you troubled Believer, you who are abashed by the very Glory you have been made to see, be assured that Jesus will draw near unto your soul and touch you, and speak with you, so that you shall be strengthened with might by His Spirit in your inner man!

Had John not fallen as dead, he might never have heard the voice and felt the touch of His Lord. Sweet is the fall which leads to such a rise again! In order to complete the cure of His servant, our Lord went on to give him fuller instruction in that very matter which had overpowered him. Sometimes like cures like. If in a certain sense it is true of Divine Revelations, that, "shallow drafts intoxicate the brain," it is assuredly true that, "drinking largely sobers us again." If a glimpse of Christ makes holy men faint, a clearer sight of Him will set them on their feet again! Our Lord went on to instruct John in the Glory of His Person and power that his fears might be removed.

And truly, Brethren, John was in a right state for such celestial instruction! He who is lowly is ready to learn mysteries. He was like wax ready for the seal, or as paper cleansed of all other writing. Because we think we know, we know not. But the death of the pride of knowledge is the birth of true understanding. The Lord loves for pupils to lie low before Him. "The meek will He guide in judgment, the meek will He teach His way." "With the lowly is wisdom." Where Jesus is the Teacher and instructs the heart in the things concerning Himself, the soul is made to inherit substance and its treasures are filled! Blessed are the men who are taught by Him who is the Wisdom of God, even though while they watch at the posts of His doors they lie as dead men, they are blessed—for they shall find life, and obtain favor of the Lord!

III. We will now advance to the third point of our discourse which contains the essence of it. We have observed the beloved disciple overpowered and we have seen him afterwards revived. Now we shall consider for awhile THE SAME DISCIPLE STILL FURTHER INSTRUCTED. Let me have your attention, dear Friends, to the glorious Truth of God which is now opening up before us in the text. John was first of all instructed as to the Lord's Person. "Fear not, I am the First and the Last. I am He that lives and was dead."

As to the Lord's Person, Jesus revealed to His disciple that He was most truly Divine. "I am the First and the Last." This language can be used of none but God Himself—none but He is first. None but He is last—none but God can be First and Last. Now, our Lord Jesus Christ was evidently First. He existed before He was born into the world. We read, "a body have You prepared Me." Then Christ was a previously existing One for whom that body was prepared. And He it is who said, "Lo, I come, to do Your will O God." He came into the world, but He had, from old eternity, dwelt in the bosom of the Father. John the Baptist was born into the world before the Savior, of whom he was the forerunner, but what does he say? His testimony is, "He, coming after me, is preferred before me, for He was before me."

He is first in order of honor because first in order of existence. John was the elder as man, but as God the Lord Jesus is from everlasting. Go back in history as far as you will—with one leap ascend to the days of Moses and there is Christ before you, for we read—"Let us not tempt Christ as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents." There was Christ, then, in the wilderness vexed by the people. He it was

whose voice then shook the earth, but who will yet shake not the earth, only, but also Heaven!

Go further back to Abraham, and we find the Angel of the Covenant there. Our Lord expressly says, "Before Abraham was I Am." Mark you, not, "I was," but, "I Am"—He speaks in a God-like manner. Ascend even to the age of Noah, the second parent of our race, and there we discover Jesus Christ preaching to those spirits who are now in prison, who sometime were disobedient when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing. It was Christ in Noah, who, by the Spirit, preached to the antediluvian sinners. We go further back to the creation of the world, and we find, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God."

And if we fly back to old eternity, before the creating hand commenced its work, we find in Proverbs, the eighth chapter, the witness of the Incarnate Wisdom Himself. "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled. Before the hills were I brought forth: While as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world." Our Lord is thus the First, and so, assuredly, will He be the last, for all things consist and subsist through the perpetual emanations of His infinite power!

When the kings of the earth shall sleep in the dust and the popovers thereof shall have passed away. When the treasures of time shall have melted and its most enduring memorials shall have gone like the mists of the morning, He shall be the same, and of His years there shall be no end. Christ is the true Melchisedec, without beginning of days or end of years, "made a priest not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." This was revealed to John for his comfort and it stands true to us today—and is equally fraught with consolation.

Moreover, by the words, "the First and the Last," are signified, in most languages, the sum and substance of all things. We say, sometimes, the top and the bottom of it is so and so—we mean that it is the whole of it. And the Greeks were apt to say, "This is the prow and stern of the business," meaning that it is the whole. And so Jesus Christ, in being First and Last, is All in All. And, truly, it is so in the working of redemption and salvation—He begins, carries on, completes—He asks no creature help and will have none. To us He is the Author and the Finisher of our faith—the Alpha of our first comfort and the Omega of our final bliss. We worship Christ as the sum and substance of all good!

Here is a wealth of comfort, and therefore did the Lord instruct His servant, John. He did as much say, "John, you need not fear, for I am no enemy, no stranger, no avenging spirit, but God Himself, in whom you have learned to put your trust. You believe in God, believe also in Me." To every trembling Believer we would say, Why do you fear? Jesus is All. Are you afraid of Him, your Brother, your Savior, your Friend? Then what do you fear? Anything old? He is the First. Anything to come? He is the Last. Anything in all the world? He is All in All, from First to Last.

What do you need? If you have Him you have all! Do you need more than all? Have you discovered a need within your spirit, a grievous lack which troubles you? How can that be when your Lord Jesus fills all things, and all things are yours in Him? If you have, indeed, placed your confidence in Him, and made Him all your salvation, to what end and for what cause should you be troubled with any sort of fear? Having a Divine Person to be your Protector and your Savior, why should you be afraid?

In addition, however, to rendering John the comfort derived from His Person, our blessed Master went on to comfort him with the truth of His existence. "I am He that lives," says He, or, "I am the Living One." Creatures are not living in themselves, they borrow leave to be. To God alone it belongs to exist necessarily. He is the I AM, and such is Christ. Why, then, do you fear? If the existence of your Lord, your Savior, were precarious and dependent upon some extraneous circumstances you would have cause for fear, for you would be in constant jeopardy. If He had to get permission to be, derived strength from creatures and needed to look here and there for strength to sustain His own existence, you would always be in danger and consequently in distress. But, since Jesus cannot possibly cease to be, or be other than He is, or less than He is, what occasion can you have for alarm? A self-existent Savior, and yet a troubled Christian? Oh, let it not be so! "Fear not, I am He that lives."

And, if these two sources of consolation should not suffice, the Lord in the glory of His tenderness mentions a third—His atoning death. He says, "I was dead." The original more correctly rendered, is, "was made dead." Here we come upon the Human Nature of our Redeemer. As God and as Man He had two Natures, but He was not two Persons. As one Person He ever lives, and yet He was made to die. He came into this world in Human form that He might be capable of death—the pure *Spirit* of God could not die—it was not possible that He, the I AM, could be subject to death. But He allied Himself with humanity and in that Human form Jesus could die, and did die. In very deed, and truth, and not in semblance—Jesus bowed His head, and gave up the ghost—and they laid His corpse in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

Here to the child of God is a fruitful source of consolation. He died. Then the atonement is complete! Without the shedding of blood there is no remission—but the death of the Son of God brings plenteous pardon. There must be, in the death of such a One, sufficient merit to remove guilt and cleanse transgression. Is it not written, "He has washed us from our sins in His own blood?" Do you not hear that song in Heaven? Will not its music make you glad? His own blood has washed you! If you believe in Him you are clean! Look to Calvary, and as you look there and perceive that He was dead, "fear not."

And then the Master declared His endless life, "I am alive forevermore." He who offered up the Atonement lives again to claim the effect of His sacrifice. He has presented the meritorious Sacrifice and now He has gone to Heaven to plead the Sacrifice before the Throne of God and to lay claim to the place which He has prepared for them that love Him. You have no dead Savior to trust to—you rely in Him who once died! This is comfort to you—He lives, the great Redeemer lives! He has risen from the tomb! He

has climbed the hills of Heaven! He sits at the right hand of the Father, prepared to defend His people. If you had a Christ in the sepulcher that were sorrow upon sorrow. But you have a Christ in Heaven, who can die no more. Be of good cheer!

And then, to close the whole, the Master said, "Amen. And I have the keys of Hell and of death." The mediatorial office which Christ now occupies is one of great power. He is "God over all, blessed forever." His dominion is over land and seas and over Heaven and the regions of the dead. There is nothing hid from the energy of His power. He is Lord of all. "He has the keys of Hell and of death." By the word, "Hell," may be meant here the entire invisible land—the whole realm of spirits. Christ is Lord there, adored in Heaven and feared in Hell. But, if we restrict the sense to the common meaning of the word in our language, He is Lord of Hell.

The devil, despite his malignity, can do nothing but what Christ permits him. He is a chained enemy. He may rave and rage, but he cannot injure the child of God. Christ has him ever in check, and when He permits him to wander abroad, He makes the wrath of man and the wrath of devils to praise Him and the remainder He does restrain. Why do you fear? You say, "I am a sinner—Satan will prevail against me." But Christ says, "I am master of Satan, I am Lord of Hell, He cannot prevail against you." He cannot leave Hell unless Christ permits him, for Christ can turn the key and lock him in. Satan could not take you there for Christ has locked you out and keeps the key. You are eternally and perpetually safe from all the machinations of the powers of darkness.

And do you tremble at death? Is it *that* which alarms you? Have the pains and groans and dying strifes sounded in your ears till you are timid and afraid? Then remember Christ has the keys of death! You cannot die until He permits. If men of blood should seek your life, they could not strike you till your Lord should allow it. And if plagues and death should fly about you, and thousands die at your right hand, and ten thousands at your left, you cannot die till the Lord wills it! You are immortal till He says, "return." The iron gate of Death opens not of its own accord to you. A thousand angels could not drag you to the tomb. You go there only at His call. Fear not, therefore, but remember that death is no longer death to the saints of God—they fall asleep in Jesus.

Since your Lord will be with you, it will not be death to die! You shall find death to you an enemy muzzled and chained—the wasp shall have lost its sting, it shall be a bee that shall bring you honey—out of the lion, as Samson did—shall you get sweetness to yourself. Death is conquered, and when it arrives, Jesus will come with it and make your dying bed most soft to you. Remember one thought more. He that has the key of death will annihilate death—for your body shall not become the prey of the worm forever. At the trumpet of the archangel your body shall rise again! There shall not a bone or a piece of a bone of one of His people perish—their very dust is precious in His sight! They sleep awhile and rest from their labors—but, from beds of dust and silent clay the Lord of Life shall call them all. O Death, where is your sting! O Grave, where is your victory! Since Jesus who died and ever lives has the keys of death and

Hell at his waist, we will not fear to die, let the appointed time be when it may.

So that you see there was abundance of comfort for the sinking spirit of the Apostle John, let me close by saying in the Glory and exaltation of Christ is the saint's cordial. Some of us have tried it when our mouths were full of bitterness and we have rejoiced and been exceedingly glad at the thought. A reigning Savior makes a joyful people! Run there for comfort, you sons of sorrow! Rejoice in your King, all you His saints! But this same glorious Savior will be the sinner's *terror*. They shall hide their faces at the last from the brightness of His Glory! They shall ask the hills and mountains to conceal them from His face who sits upon the Throne. A glorious monarch is the rebel's horror! By so much as He whom you have rejected is great and glorious, by so much shall the punishment from His right hand be intolerable! Oh that you were wise enough to cease from fighting with the Almighty Lord!

But, lastly, He is also the *penitent's* hope! For now, today, if you would be forgiven, the exalted Savior presents Himself to you most freely. He is exalted on high, but what for? It is to give "repentance and remission of sins." The greater He is, the better for those who need great mercy! The more royal and kingly He is, the better for humble, broken, bleeding hearts! "Oh, kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way while His wrath is kindled but a little." From the highest Heaven He stretches down the silver scepter—touch it by a simple faith!

May He enable you to do it, and though as yet you fall at His feet as dead, you shall hear Him say this morning, "Fear not, I am He that lives, and was dead, and am alive forevermore, Amen." "I am, therefore, able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Me, seeing I ever live to make intercession for you."

God bless you, dear Friends, by His Spirit. Amen.

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THE EVER-LIVING CHRIST

NO. 2689

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, AUGUST 26, 1900.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JULY 24, 1881.

*"I am He that lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen."
Revelation 1:18.*

WE long, sometimes, to behold Christ in His Glory. Certainly, it is one of our brightest hopes that we shall see Him as He is. Every true Believer can say, with Job, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another." But, Brothers and Sisters, as we are now constituted, we are quite unfit for the vision of our Master's Glory. It was well that, when He was on earth, He veiled himself in the form of man, for when He did lift up the veil a little, as He did on the Mountain of Transfiguration, the sight, though it was but a glimpse, was too much for Peter, James and John. They were overpowered by it! They fell asleep on the holy mount and even when they were awake, they knew not what to say. And as we now are, if we could be favored with a sight of Christ in His Glory, it would be too much for us, also.

It was too much, even, for John, and we are far inferior to him—our eyes are not as clear and strong as his were—yet he could not endure that wondrous vision! The gray old saint in Patmos had been familiar with his Master more years than most of us have known Him. He had laid his head upon the Savior's bosom—a privilege accorded to none beside himself. He had stood at the Cross and seen the blood and water flow from that dear heart that loved him so well and yet, though he was "that disciple whom Jesus loved," when he had a sight of his glorified Master, he fell at His feet as dead! The full Glory of Christ is too much for us to behold while we are here on the earth, so ask not to have it yet, dear Friends. By-and-by, when you are fitted for it and Christ has prepared a place for you, His prayer shall be fulfilled in your happy experience! "Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My Glory, which You have given Me." He might say to each one of you, "Not yet, My child, not yet may you see Me as I Am. Your eyes are not yet fit for such a sight as that."

Observe, Beloved, how the Savior comforted John when, through the excessive Glory of the vision of his Lord, he swooned away and was as one dead. First, He laid His right hand upon him—and that is where *your*

comfort and mine must always come from—from the hand that was crucified for us. There streams from that pierced hand a wondrous power that makes the weakest strong. A touch of it proves how near Christ is to us. We know, when He touches us, that He is Man as well as God, and the familiar touch which brings Him so consciously near our spirit makes us glad and joyous, and we become strong again. And if the fact of His Incarnation—the Truth of God that Christ is flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone—should not suffice to cheer us, then He adds, as He did to John, “Fear not.” The Master is saying that to each one of you who believe in Him, but especially to such of you as are very faint and weak and who feel that you are soon to die. He is drawing near to you, Brothers and Sisters, who are shortly to lay aside the frail tabernacle of this mortal body. The glinting and gleams of the Glory yet to be revealed overcome you, but He whispers in your ear, “Fear not; I am the First and the Last: I am He that lives, and was dead.” All these words are full of good cheer to spirits that faint away with expectation of the coming of the King and to hearts that are ravished with desire for the company of the Best-Beloved.

“Fear not,” He says, and that we may not fear, let us now look into the things here made known which ought to be a cause of strength and comfort to us. They seem to me to be three—though there are many more—there are three that strike me most. The first is, *the identity of Christ*. However glorious He may be, and His very face is as the sun when He shines in His strength, yet He is the same Christ as when He was here on earth. “I am He that lives, and was dead.” Those words prove to us the identity of Christ. The next ground of sweet comfort, whenever we think of Christ in His Glory, is *the perfection of His work*, which is implied in the expression, “and was dead.” He has nothing to do with death now—as far as He is personally concerned, that is all over. You see that the words are in the past tense—“I am He that lives, *and was dead*.” And then, thirdly, the great source of heart-cheer to every Believer, as he trembles in the Presence of his glorified Master, is the fact of *Christ’s eternal existence*. “I am alive forevermore.” He will never again be the dead Christ of Calvary—“I am alive forevermore, Amen.”

I. Let us begin, then, with the first great Truth that I mentioned—and I must necessarily speak somewhat hurriedly on each one—THE IDENTITY OF OUR BLESSED MASTER should greatly comfort us when we think of His Glory.

Christ in Heaven is the same as He was here. A great change has passed over Him, but not a change as to His identity or His Nature—and especially not a change as to His heart of love to us, for He is “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever”—absolutely the same! He who now makes all Heaven bright with His Presence is the same Christ who was born at Bethlehem, trod the waves of Galilee’s storm-tossed lake, hung upon the Cross, was wrapped in the cerements of death and laid in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea. That same Jesus has risen from the dead and is now sitting at the right hand of God, reigning over all worlds! I want specially to bring before you this one

thought—that while Christ was here, during the 40 days after His Resurrection—He was manifestly the same Jesus that He had been during His earthly life. We will not suppose—we cannot *imagine* that any change has taken place in Him since then. The 40 days of His Glory on earth were a fair specimen of what He now is and He was, then, the same Jesus that the disciples had known before He was crucified.

There were certain points about Him in which He made it quite clear that He was the same. The first was, *His tenderness*. He was always meek and lowly, gentle and kind, and He was just the same after He rose from the dead. Mark tells us that, “when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils.” There is a fine touch of tenderness in that mention of the seven devils in connection with Christ’s appearance to Mary Magdalene. She was one who loved Him much. She had been one of the last to watch by the sepulcher and now she was to be the first to meet her Lord after He had risen from the dead. It was just like Christ to manifest Himself first to her—to find one of the weakest of His followers, one of those who loved Him most—and one for whom He had already done the most.

Then, it was just like He to send His angel with this message to the women, “Go your way, tell His disciples”—the very men who had all forsaken Him and fled! The cowards who had deserted Him in His hour of greatest need—“tell His disciples”—and then follows that tender, Christ-like touch—“tell His disciples *and Peter*”—poor, willful Peter who said that he would die rather than deny his Lord, yet he did deny Him with oaths and curses! Yet Christ sent him a special personal message, “tell His disciples and Peter that He goes before you into Galilee: there shall you see Him, as He said unto you.” I am quite sure that this is the same Christ who said to Peter, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not.”

Then, further on, dear Brothers and Sisters, notice Christ’s tenderness to Thomas. Even after Christ had risen from the grave a whole week, Thomas was still unbelieving. He had said that he would not believe that his Lord had risen unless he could see in His hands the print of the nails and put his finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into the wound in Christ’s side. On the second Sabbath, the Master came again to His disciples and, after saying to them, “Peace be unto you,” He spoke to Thomas no word of anger, but simply said, “Reach here your finger and behold my hands; and reach here your hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing.” There were, necessarily, some rebukes during that memorable period, for love must rebuke that which is not right, but those rebukes were like the reproof of which David said, “It shall be an excellent oil which shall not break my head.” They were just such rebukes as always come from Jesus—and only from Jesus—so we are sure it was the same Man who had both died and risen again.

And if another instance is needed to complete and crown the evidence, look at our Lord when He invited the disciples to eat fish with Him by the

lake and then, afterwards, said to Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me more than these?" Thrice He repeated the question, "Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me?" And then He commissioned him to feed His lambs and act as under-shepherd to His sheep. That was exactly like Christ—there was no counterfeit about such an action as that! He might then and there have said, "I am He that lives, and was dead"—the disciples would have recognized the tones of His voice, the manner of His speech and the spirit of His rebuke. Everything about it was so tender that it could not have been imitated and we say at once, as John said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" We cry, like Thomas, "My Lord and my God!"

A second characteristic which, in connection with other things, proves the identity of Christ, is *His energy*. If Christ, after the Resurrection, had been very slow, dull, heavy, lethargic, we would have said, "This is not He who was eaten up with the zeal of God's house. This is not the Christ who was clad with zeal as with a cloak." But on that day of our Lord's Resurrection, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, then to Simon Peter. Then, toward evening, He joined the two disciples going to Emmaus and, after He had revealed Himself to them, they could scarcely reach Jerusalem before He was there in the midst of the eleven saying, "Peace be unto you." We have not a complete record of all that transpired during those 40 days, but we have sufficient record to show us that our Lord was busy, here and there, showing Himself, sometimes, to little groups of two or three, and at one time to as many as 500 brethren at once. And we can see that His never-tiring energy was steadily maintained through those days of His glory-life while yet He tabernacled here below.

Another point, too, is especially noticeable in the records of those 40 days. That is, *the constant Scripturalness of the blessed Master's talk*. You know that, in His day, even the religious people did not quote Scripture as He did. The Rabbis said, "Rabbi Yohannin has said," or, "Rabbi Simeon has said," or, "Rabbi Levi has said so-and-so and so-and-so." But Christ quoted nothing from the Rabbis. On the way to Emmaus, "beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." It was always His custom to do so and often He seemed to go out of His way to do or say something "that the Scripture might be fulfilled." He was always careful that by some act or word of His, He might fulfill a prophecy which, perhaps, we never would have understood if He had not fulfilled it. So, after He had risen from the dead, if He had not been a Bible-loving Christ, we might have questioned whether He was the same Christ.

I have reminded you what He said to the two disciples going to Emmaus. And when He was back at Jerusalem among the eleven, He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." His constant reference to the Word. His manifest delight in quoting it—the Scriptural-

ness of His whole conversation—all this is clear and convincing evidence that He was the same Christ who, all His life, from the temptation in the wilderness to His death on the Cross, constantly quoted the Scriptures! There was no other such teacher, in His day, who continually drew his instruction from the written Word. He was the one lone Man who was mighty in the Scriptures and who perpetually quoted them and, as He continued to do so after His Resurrection, this was another proof of His identity! He was the same Christ, depend upon it.

There was another trait in His Character which must not be forgotten. That is, *His love for the souls of men*. Does that come out after His Resurrection? Yes, it does, not only in the incidents to which I have referred, but also in His declaration “that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” I can see a great deal in those three words, “beginning at Jerusalem.” Depend upon it, they were spoken by the Man who wept over Jerusalem and who cried, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the Prophets and stone them which are sent unto you, how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not!” “Give them one more opportunity of coming to Me,” He says, “preach repentance and remission of sins, in My name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” That is the Man, I am sure, of whom it is written, “Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners to hear Him.”

The Pharisees and scribes said of Him, “This Man receives sinners, and eats with them.” That is why He said to His Apostles, “Begin with the greatest sinners first—‘beginning at Jerusalem.’” I know it is He, it must be the Christ, Himself, for, before He died, He prayed for His murderers, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” And having risen from the dead, it was for those very murderers that He gave His commission of Grace and mercy! His care for men, and for the very worst of them, and His love for souls, and for those that were most of all in need of His pity and forgiveness prove that He was the same Christ who “was moved with compassion on the multitudes, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.”

One other thing I may note, for it helps to prove the identity of Christ. That is, *His mention of the Spirit*, for, in those times, there were none but Christ who preached about the Spirit of God. I greatly fear that there are not very many who do so now. Oh, how the Spirit of God is neglected in many sermons! I heard of one preacher, of whom it was said that people who listened to him did not know whether there was a Holy Spirit—they had not heard of Him for so long that they thought surely He must have ceased to operate! But our Lord continually mentioned the Spirit. In that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, “If any man thirsts, let Him come unto Me, and drink. He that believes on Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (By this spoke He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Spirit was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified).” In that blessed Chapter where He tells us about the Comforter whom the

Father would send to us in His name, He showed that He was, Himself, clothed with the Spirit and He spoke much of the Spirit. Now see how He spoke after He had risen from the dead—could anything be more plain than this—“Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry you in the city of Jerusalem, until you be endued with power from on high”? In His last words to His disciples, there is always this reference and deference to the Spirit, this Witness to the necessity of His operations, this warning to His followers that they can do nothing without Him, that they cannot preach the Gospel successfully unless the Spirit of God is with them. That is the same Christ upon whom the Spirit rested without measure! I am sure it is He and when He says, “I am He that lives—and was dead,” all the tokens of the 40 days go to prove the identity of the risen Christ with the Christ who died upon the Cross!

Let us dwell on that thought for just a minute before we pass on. Christ in Glory is none other than He who was here. No man ever loses anything by going to Heaven—an ordinary man gains much by going there, so I am sure my Lord is none the worse for entering into His Glory—He is none the less tender, none the less zealous, none the less mighty to save! And just as we might have been glad to run to Him when He was here, so may we gladly go to Him now, for He is just the same.

II. Now I must speak very briefly upon the second head, although I might enlarge upon it to almost any extent, for it relates to THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST.

When our Lord used to John the words, “was dead,” and applied them to Himself, He meant that *He had performed the crucial part of the Atonement*. The very central point of the Atonement was death—there was no way of making atonement for sin except by the shedding of the precious blood of Jesus, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. There must be life to atone for sin—and that life sacrificed—therefore, Christ “was dead.” It was no dream, no delusion, no sleep, no swoon, no coma. He “was dead.” Though it was not possible for our blessed and glorious Savior to be held by the bands of death, yet He “was dead.”

This meant, further, that *Christ’s work was ended and done with*. There are some people who talk about presenting the perpetual sacrifice of the “mass.” There is perhaps, no grosser blasphemy under Heaven than the idea that we can offer up the body and blood of Christ again. “Once and for all” Jesus died, but He is not a dead Christ now! Pictures of Christ dead, crucifixes and all things of that sort may, to some extent, represent what He *was*, but they do not represent what He *is*. I should not care to have hanging up in my house, the picture of a dead friend, representing him as he looked when he was dead—especially if he had been raised to life again. I would rather wait for his portrait till I could get one of him alive, for the picture of a dead man is not the man’s likeness at all! I saw in a friend’s house, the other day, the likeness of a minister and I said, “Oh, dear, how ghastly he looks!” The gentleman replied, “I am told that the photograph was taken after he was dead.” “Well, then,” I said, “put it away at once, pray put it away! That is not the likeness of the man at all, for the man was gone before it was taken.” So,

dear Friends, do not feel any kind of reverence for representations of the dead Christ—He is not dead and we ought not to think of Him as dead.

I have seen, and some of you must also have seen, in Roman Catholic countries, figures of the Savior on the Cross till you have grown sick of the sight and you have said, “If there is anything that could drive me away from being a Christian, it is these perfectly hideous caricatures of Christ that some people stick up at every corner of the road.” Christ is not dead! He “*was* dead.” It is in the past tense, never forget that—but He is not dead now. “He is not here: for He is risen, as He said.” And our trust is not in a dead Christ, but in the ever-living Christ who is still able “to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He always lives to make intercession for them.”

Remember, also, dear Friends, that in the enterprise upon which our Lord’s heart was set—the enterprise of saving men—the *love which led Him to die is living love*. He has proved, once and for all, and beyond all doubt, how much He loves His people! “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” He has done that and, therefore, He has proved His love to guilty men in a way that is perfectly indisputable and—

**“Now though He reigns exalted high,
His love is still as great.”**

And remember, next, that *the purpose of Christ in dying will certainly be accomplished*, now that He has laid down His life for His people and taken it up again. I am not one of those who think that the result of Christ’s death ever hung in jeopardy for a single moment. I believe that all He intended to do by His death will be done and that there is not one soul, for whom He stood as Substitute, that shall ever be lost. He has paid the debt for all His elect and they shall never be charged with their debts again—they are gone, and gone forever. If the Son of God has actually laid down His life to achieve a certain purpose, I cannot suppose that He will be prevented from achieving it. I can imagine myself living and dying for a certain end and yet being foiled, for I am but a man. I am not capable of such blasphemy as would be involved in believing that the Son of God could ever be born and live for a certain set purpose—and die to carry out that purpose and yet not accomplish it! “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.” He “was dead” and He has, therefore, put forth all His strength for the accomplishment of the end He had in view—and that end will certainly be achieved!

And remember, too, that *the merit of His death lives*. He “was dead,” but all the merit of that death is just as efficacious, today, as though He had only died today. Imagine for a moment that this was the morning of Christ’s Resurrection—that I stood here to tell you that I had gone with Mary Magdalene and seen His empty tomb—and that He had spoken to me as He did to her. With what freshness and power would I talk to you about those dear wounds of His and about the meaning of His death and the Sacrifice which He had offered! Well, now, although more than 1800 years have passed since His Resurrection, it is just as fresh to God and just as acceptable to God as ever it was! Still does He approve of the

atonement Sacrifice of the Well-Beloved and the merit of it comes up perpetually before Him like the odor of sweet incense.

This is a glad, a joyous theme over which I would gladly linger—to think that Christ's work is all done, all finished, all complete—there is nothing more to be done for His people's redemption! As He Himself said, before He gave up the ghost, "It is finished." That expression, "was dead," comes to me like the sound of a peal of bells tolling the death of death and ringing in the jubilee of all who believe in Jesus! He "was dead," but He is dead no longer! He lives now and He is "alive forevermore!"

III. With that third word of comfort I am going to conclude. THE ETERNAL EXISTENCE OF CHRIST should always comfort us whenever we think of His Glory. He that was dead is "alive forevermore."

Here, then, you warriors of the Cross, is *unique leadership*. Never did men before have such a leader as this One, who has proved His ardor for the accomplishment of His purpose by dying to achieve it, and who now lives to see that purpose fully accomplished! When Mohammed was alive—false prophet though he was—he inspired his followers with extraordinary enthusiasm when he snatched up a handful of dust from the road and flung it in the faces of his adversaries, crying, as he did so, "Let them be blinded." His followers believed that a miracle would really be worked and they, therefore, rushed upon their enemies and swept them away like chaff before the whirlwind. Yet now that Mohammed is dead and gone, his religion wanes and must, in time, expire. But our Master is not dead, our Leader is alive! He still rides at the head of the army of the Cross and calls us to battle for truth and right. The ungodly hear Him not, but as many as believe in Him still hear His clear voice ringing out the command, "Onward, hosts of God! Forward to the fight! 'Go you into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature' until I come."

We take comfort from the fact that we are led by the living Christ. When the Cid, Rodrigo Diaz, had been slain in battle, these who had been accustomed to dread his mighty sword did not, for a time, know that he was dead. His followers mounted the dead Cid on horseback and the very sight of him, though it was only his corpse that they saw, made his adversaries flee before him. We set no dead Christ in the forefront of our army—it is the *living* Christ who marches before us and, therefore, we are confident of victory, for never was a host so led as by Him who can say, "I am He that lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore."

Next, here is *a singular guarantee*. He, who was dead, is now alive. Then, Brothers and Sisters, He will carry on His work! If, when He died, He had never risen again, but had left His cause in our puny hands, it would soon have failed. But He has risen and, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He has set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for His Law." His Kingdom shall extend to the utmost bounds of the earth—"they that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him and His enemies shall lick the dust." Be you sure of this, Beloved, that there is a *guarantee* of victory in the fact that Christ is still alive! In these dreary times in which we live, men tell us that Christianity is a failure, that the

Gospel is a delusion and I do not know what is *not* going to happen. Yes, yes, but there is one very important thing which they omit to mention. He lives, *He lives*, HE LIVES who can never be crucified again! The Lord has set Him as King upon His holy hill of Zion and though “the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sits in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision,” for the Lord reigns and He shall reign forever and ever, Hallelujah!

In addition to this unique leadership and this singular guarantee of success, we also have, here, *special encouragement to sinners*. I verily believe that if my Master were here tonight in bodily Presence, there are some of you who have been seeking Him who would come and fall at His feet. Yes, you would be only too glad if you might wash His feet with your tears and wipe them with the hairs of your head. Well, He is living and He is here, though you cannot see Him or touch Him—but you may come to Him! You have not to travel any distance with weary feet in order to get to Him. Your minds can get to Him at once! Forget your eyes, awhile—they are poor dim things that hinder true sight. That may seem to be a strange description of our eyes, but it is true. And when we have got rid of them we shall see much better than we do now. But, oh, for once, believe without seeing! Believe that Jesus Christ is near you and ask Him to save you! Come to Him and, by faith, touch the hem of His garment just as if He were here corporeally. Cry to Him, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me,” for He will hear you and grant your request! Say, “Lord, that I might receive my sight” and He will spiritually open your eyes, now, even as, in the days of His flesh, He literally opened the eyes of blind men! You may well come to Him, for He is just the same Jesus as He used to be when He said, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” He lives, *He lives*, HE LIVES! Therefore go to your homes and find Him there! Go to your bedrooms and tell Him that you need Him! Cast yourselves down before Him in humble penitence and true faith, and He will save you! He will bless you because He still lives to make intercession for all that come unto God by Him.

Now I close by noticing that there is something in this text which has a *solemn warning* in it. Christ lives and as He lives, woe be to those who persecute His people! Woe be to those who make a jest of Him, or trifle with His Truth, neglect His Gospel and put off seeking their own salvation until tomorrow! O my dear Hearers, if Christ were dead, we ought to respect His memory. But since He lives, remember that He takes cognizance of every insult to His cause and though He is always ready to forgive, yet, if your ears refuse the invitations of His Grace—if you hold out against His warnings and entreaties, He will surely come again—and when He comes, there will be upon that face of love something which you will dread more than all the lightning and thunders of the Last Tremendous Day!

What, do you think, will be the most dreadful thing in the Day of Judgment? The fairest sight that ever was seen by mortal men—the face that causes the holy angels to sing and that makes Heaven for the saints—the face of Christ—love and justice, gentleness and truth, Godhead and Manhood blended in that matchless face. While His saints clap their hands with jubilant exultation at the sight of Him, the most awful thing in all the world to the ungodly will be *that face*, for, as they look into it and see the lines of suffering, and of suffering despised—and see the marks of love, and of love rejected—of majesty, and of majesty that has been insulted—as they look there, they will cry to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”

O Sirs, that must be a dreadful thing which turns the best thing in Heaven into an object of the utmost terror! So, give up that sin of yours, I pray you. Give up that unbelief! Give up that self-righteousness! Give up everything that will, as it were, curdle the very love of Christ till even His great love shall turn to jealousy—for fiercer than the lion with his prey is love when once it is transformed into wrath! “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him,” for their confidence is in Him who still says, “I am He that lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore.” God bless you, for His dear name’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: HEBREWS 5.

Verse 1. *For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.* Notice that the high priests were taken from among men, not from among angels. Hence, our Lord Jesus Christ took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. The Jewish high priests were ordained for men. They acted on behalf of men and they stood in the place of men. So the Lord Jesus Christ stood in the place of His people that He might offer to God for them two things—gifts—that is, such offerings as the Jew made when he presented the fine flour, and oil and other bloodless oblations which were only intended for thanksgiving. Christ offered thanksgiving unto His Father and that offering was a sweet savor unto God. But beside those gifts, the priests offered sacrifices, and our Lord Jesus Christ did the same, for He was made a Sin-Offering for us, though He, Himself knew no sin!

2. *Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.* The marginal reading is, “Who can reasonably bear with the ignorant”—that is, one who does not lose his temper even when they are very slow to learn what he teaches them. Having taught them 19 times and finding that they do not understand or remember the lesson, he is ready to teach them the 20th time! He is one who will give them line upon line, and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, because he

has compassion on the ignorant. Then there were others who tried the high priest far more, even, than the ignorant did—they were those who erred from the right path, those who went out of the way and who continued to do so even after many warnings and much earnest exhortation. The true priest must have patience with people of this sort.

2. *For that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.* So all the high priests under the Law of God were. They had to confess their own ignorance, they had to admit their own errors and wanderings and, therefore, they could the more readily have patience with others. Our Lord Jesus Christ had neither ignorance nor sin of His own, but He has become so completely one with His people, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, that He can have compassion upon us, ignorant and out of the way as we may be. Are you distressed, my Brothers and Sisters, because you feel your own ignorance? Do you mourn because you have gone astray? You have to come to no angry Christ—you have to approach One who will be very gentle toward you! Come boldly to Him, then, and confess your folly and expect the pardon that He is waiting to bestow.

3. *And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.* We know that, being compassed with infirmity and imperfection, the high priests first offered sacrifices on their own account and then, afterwards, offered them on behalf of the people. Christ, being pure and holy, needed no sacrifice for Himself, but He did offer a complete, acceptable and sufficient Sacrifice for us.

4. *And no man takes this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.* Men could not constitute themselves high priests, for the appointment was made by God alone.

5, 6. *So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest; but He that said unto Him, You are My Son, today have I begotten You. As He says also in another place, You are a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.* Beloved, there is rich comfort for all Believers in the fact that Christ is God's appointed and accepted High Priest! God ordained Him to do what He has done and is doing, and will do—and therefore it is impossible but that God should accept Him and all His work.

7, 8. *Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.* Just as the earthly high priests offered sacrifices for themselves, so Christ, though He needed not to offer sacrifice for Himself, did need to *pray* for Himself. You know, Beloved, how He gave Himself unto prayer upon the cold mountains at midnight, and how Gethsemane's Garden witnessed the bloody sweat falling in clots to the ground. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." God had one Son without sin, but He never had a son without suffering. We may escape the rod if we are not of the family of God, but the true-born child must not—and would not if he might—avoid that chastisement of which all such are partakers.

9. *And being made perfect.* That is, perfect in His obedience, perfect as a Sacrifice, perfect as the Mediator and Substitute for His people.

9. *He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.* Brethren, what a grand expression that is, “eternal salvation!” You know that there are some who preach a temporary salvation. They say that you may be in Christ today and out of Christ tomorrow, that you may be saved by Grace at one hour, but damned by sin the next. Ah, but the Bible says no such thing! This may be the Gospel according to Arminius, but it is not the Gospel according to John, nor according to Paul, nor according to our Lord Jesus Christ. That Gospel is—

***“Once in Christ, in Christ forever;
Nothing from His love can sever.”***

Christ became the Author of “eternal salvation” and the word, “eternal,” must mean without end, so that, if we once receive the salvation which Christ has worked out, we are saved in time and shall be saved throughout all eternity! Christ is the Author of this eternal salvation—not our good works—though our faith and our works become the *evidences* of our having received this eternal salvation.

10. *Called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.* Then the Apostle appeared to be going on to enlarge upon the Melchisedec priesthood, but he stopped. Perhaps he remembered what his Master said to His disciples on one occasion, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot hear them now.” In a similar fashion Paul writes.

11-14. *Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing you are dull of hearing. For when for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again which are the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For everyone that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness for he is a babe. But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”— 307, 334, 326

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

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

CHRIST WITH THE KEYS OF DEATH AND HELL NO. 894

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER, 3, 1869,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*"I have the keys of Hell and of Death."
Revelation 1:18.*

THEN Hell and death, terrible powers as they are, are not left to riot without government. Death is a land of darkness, as darkness itself, without any order, yet a Sovereign eye surveys it and a master hand holds its key. Hell, also, is a horrible region where powers of evil and of terror hold their high court and dread assembly—but Hell trembles at the Presence of the Lord and there is a Throne higher than the throne of evil. Let us rejoice that nothing in Heaven, or earth, or in places under the earth is left to itself to engender anarchy. Everywhere, serene above the floods, the Lord sits King forever and ever!

No province of the universe is free from the Divine rule. Things do not come by chance. Nowhere does chance and chaos reign. Nowhere is evil really and permanently enthroned. Rest assured that the Lord has prepared His Throne in the heavens and His kingdom rules over all—for if the lowest Hell and Death bow to His government, much more all things that are on this lower world. It is delightful for us to observe, as we read this chapter, that government of Hell and of Death is vested in the Person of the Man Christ Jesus. He who holds the keys of these dreadful regions is described by John as, "One like unto the Son of Man," and we know that He was our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

John saw a strange and glorious change in Him, but still recognized the old likeness, perhaps impressed by the nail-prints and other marks of manhood which he had seen in Him while yet He was in the days of His flesh. What an honor is thus conferred upon mankind! Unto which of the angels said He at any time, "You shall bear the keys of Hell and of Death"? Yet these keys are committed to the Son of Man! Jesus Christ, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, made in all points like unto His Brethren, rules over all!

Yet Manhood is not so exalted as of itself and apart from Godhead, for while the description given of our Lord by John, as he saw Him at Patmos, is evidently human, yet is it also convincingly Divine. There is a glow of Glory about that mysterious Manhood which stood between the golden candlesticks, that comes not of the Virgin Mary nor of Nazareth, but is a light apart—belonging only to the everlasting God, whose Son the Redeemer is and whose equal He counts it not robbery to be! Jesus, in essence, is, "God over all, blessed forever." Let us rejoice, then, in the con-

descension of God in taking man into such union with Godhead, that now in the Person of Christ man has dominion over all the works of God's hands!

He rules not only over all sheep and oxen and all fowl of the air and fish of the sea and whatever passes through the paths of the sea, but Death and Hades, also, are committed to the dominion of the glorified Man. "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven and things in earth and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The metaphor of keys is intended, no doubt, to set forth the double thought of our Lord's possessing both the *rightful* and the *actual* dominion over Death and Hell. The rightful dominion, I say, for often it has been the custom when kings have come to the gates of loyal cities, for the mayor, or high bailiff, or governor of the city, to present the keys in formal state, in recognition that His Majesty was the lawful owner and rightful sovereign of the borough.

So Christ has the keys of Hell and Death—that is to say He is rightfully the Lord over those dark regions and rules them by indefeasible title of sovereignty. But in most common life the key is associated with actual possession and power. When the tenant gives up the key to the landlord, then the owner has the house, again, under his power and in his possession, by that act and deed. So Christ is not only *de jure* (according to right), but *de facto* (according to fact), Lord over Hell and Death. He actually rules and manages in all the issues of the grave and overrules all the councils of Hell, restraining the mischievous devices of Satan, or turning them to subserve His own designs of good. Our Lord Jesus Christ still is supreme! His kingdom, willingly or unwillingly, extends over all existences in whatever regions they may be.

It may be well, here, to remark that the word translated, "Hell," though it may be rightfully referred to the region of lost and damned spirits, yet need not be restricted to it. The word is, "Hades," which signifies the dwelling place of spirits and so it may include both Heaven and Hell—no doubt it does include them both in many places and I think in this. Our Lord, then has the keys of Heaven and Hell and Death. Wherever separate spirits are now existing, Christ is King and over the iron gate through which men pass into the disembodied state, the authority of Christ is paramount. All hail, You brightness of the Father's Glory—be You evermore adored!

We now come to consider this text in the following lights—first, as we may be enabled and strengthened, we shall consider *the power of the keys*. Secondly, we shall consider *the key of this power*. And then, thirdly, *the choice reflections locked up in this doctrine of the keys*.

I. What is intended by THE POWER OF THESE KEYS here mentioned? A key is first of all used *for opening and* therefore our Lord can open the gates of Death and Hell. It is His to open the gate of the separated spirits, to admit His saints, one by one, to their eternal happiness. When the time shall come for us to depart out of this world unto the Father, no hand but

that of the Well-Beloved shall put that golden key into the lock and open the pearly gate which admits the righteous to the spirit land.

When we have tarried awhile as disembodied spirits in Paradise, it will be Christ's work to open the gates of the grave where our bodies shall have been confined, in order that at the trumpet of the archangel we may rise to immortality. He is the Resurrection and the Life—because He lives, we shall live, also. At His bidding every bolt of Death's prison shall be drawn and the huge iron gates of the sepulcher shall be rolled back. Then shall the body sown in weakness be raised in power, sown in dishonor be raised in glory! We need not ask the question, "Can these dry bones live?" when we see in the hands of our Omnipotent Savior the golden key! Death in vain shall have gathered up the carcasses of millions as his treasure—he shall lose all these treasures in a moment—when the Lord shall let go his captives, not for price nor for reward!

In the Egypt of the grave no Israelite shall remain a prisoner. There shall not a one be left behind—of all that the Father gave to Christ He will lose nothing—but will surely raise it up at the last day. Christ has purchased the bodies as well as the souls of His people! He has redeemed them by blood and their mortal frames are the temples of the Holy Spirit. Rest assured He will not lose a part of His purchase. It is not the will of our Father in Heaven that the Redeemer should be defrauded of any part of His purchased possession. "Your dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise."

But a key is also used *to shut* a door and even so Jesus will both shut in and shut out. His golden key will shut His people in in Heaven, as Noah was shut in the ark—

***"Far from a world of grief and sin
With God eternally shut in."***

There is no fear that glorified saints shall fall from their high estate, or that they shall perish after all the salvations which they have experienced. Heaven is the place of eternal safety. There the gates shall be fast shut by which their foes could enter, or by which their joys could leave them. But, alas, there is the dark side to this shutting of the gate. It is Christ, who, with His key shall shut the gates of Heaven against unbelievers. When once the Master of the house has risen up and has shut the door, it will be useless for mere professors to come with anxious knocks and bitter cries, "Lord, Lord, open unto us!"

I know that the Son of David, when He shuts, shuts so that no man opens and He Himself does not change His mind! Once let Him close Mercy's gate upon the soul of a man, and the iron bar shall never be uplifted. O may none of you know what it is to see Christ shut the door of Heaven in your face! It will be terrible when you are expecting to enter into the marriage supper to find yourselves thrust forth into "outer darkness, where shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth." Jesus, with His sovereign key, has locked out of Heaven all sinners who die impenitent and shut out of Heaven all sin—shut out of Heaven all temptation, all trouble and all pain and death—shut out of Heaven all the temptations of

the devil and not even the howling of that dog of Hell shall be heard across the jasper walls of that New Jerusalem.

A key is used to shut and to open and so it is used to shut in, in reference to Hell and those spirits who are confined there. "Between us and you," said Abraham to Dives, "there is a great gulf fixed, so that they that which would pass therefore to you cannot. Neither can they pass to us, that would come from there." It is Christ's key that has shut in the lost spirits so that they cannot roam by way of respite, nor escape by way of pardon. May you never be so shut in! Christ has the key by which He shuts in Satan. He is to be bound for a thousand years, but Jesus shall hold the chain, for only our Immanuel could bind this old dragon.

When temptation is kept away from a Christian it is the Savior's restraining power which holds back the arch enemy. And if the enemy comes in like a flood it is by permission of Jesus that the trial comes. Every roaming of the lion of the Pit is permitted by our Master, or he could never go forth on his devouring errands. The key that shall bind the old dragon in those blessed days of the millennial rest is in our Lord's power—and the final triumph, when no sin shall any further be known on earth and evil shall be pent up in the grim caverns of Hell—will be achieved by Christ Jesus, the Man, the Mediator, our Lord and God! To open, then, and to shut out. To shut in and to shut out—these are the works of the keys.

By the keys we must further understand here that our Lord *rules*, for the key is the Oriental metaphor for government. He shall have the key of David—"the government shall be upon His shoulders." We understand by Christ's having the keys of Hell that He rules over all that are in Hell. Therefore *He rules over the damned spirits*. They would not, in this life, have this Man to rule over them. But in the life to come they must submit whether they will or not. In that seething caldron every wave of fire is guided by the will of the Man Christ and the mark of His Sovereignty is on every iron chain. This the ungodly will be compelled to feel with terror, for although the ferocity of their natures will remain, yet the boastfulness of their pride shall be taken from them.

Though they would still revolt, they shall find themselves hopelessly fettered and powerless to accomplish their designs. Though they would gladly continue stouthearted as Pharaoh and cry, "Who is the Lord, that we should obey His voice?" they shall find their loins loosed like Belshazzar's on that dreadful night when his city was destroyed. They shall wring their hands in anguish and bite their tongues in despair! One of the great terrors of the lost in Hell will be this—that He who came to save was rejected by them and now only reveals Himself to them as mighty to destroy! He who held out the silver scepter when they would not touch it, shall forever break them with a rod of iron for their willful impenitence.

You despisers, behold and wonder! If you will not honor the Lord willingly, you shall submit by force of arms. What must be the consternation of those that were loudest against Christ on earth—the men who denied His Deity, the infidels who vented curses upon His blessed name—your

Voltaire and Tom Paine who were never satisfied except when they uttered bitter words against the Man of Nazareth! What will be their amazement! What confusion to the wretch who said he would crush the wretch, to find himself crushed by Him whom he despised! What consternation and confusion shall overwhelm that man who said he lived in the twilight of Christianity, to find himself where the blaze of Christ's Glory shall forever be as a furnace to his guilty soul! O that none of us may know what it is to be ruled in justice by Christ because we would not be ruled by *mercy!*

“Kiss the Son, lest He is angry and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.” But beware, you that forget Him, lest He tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver. As in Hell Christ has power over all the damned spirits, so our text implies that He has power over all *the devils*. It was willfulness, doubtless, that made Satan revolt against God. Perhaps Milton's poetic surmise is not far from the truth and Satan did think it, “better to rule in Hell than serve in Heaven.” But, fool that he was, he has to serve in Hell with a service 10,000 times more irksome than that which would have been his lot in Heaven!

There, firstborn Son of the Morning, brightest of the angels of God, how happy might have been his perpetual service of the Most High! But now blighted by the scathing thunderbolts of Jehovah, he crawls forth from his den degraded, going like the serpent on his belly, with dust to be his meat, debased beneath the very beasts of the field and cursed above all cattle—going forth for meanest ends—seeking to tempt others that they may come into the same loathsome condition with himself! Yet, mark how even in those temptations of his, Satan is ruled by Christ! He permits the foul fiend to tempt, but there is always a, “To here shall you go and no further.” Just as Satan was permitted to try Job up to a certain point, but beyond that point he must not heap up the Patriarch's agony, thus in all cases Christ rules Satan by restraining him.

Yes, and even in that which he is permitted to do, God strengthens His servants so that Satan gets no honor in the contest, but retires continually more and more disgraced by being defeated by the poor sons of Adam. Cunning spirit as he is, he is worsted in the conflict with poor creatures who dwell in flesh! Yes, and better still, out of all the temptations of Satan, God's people are made to derive profit and strength. In our exercises and conflicts we are taught our weakness and led to fly to Christ for strength. And so, as Samson's slain lion yielded him honey, out of the eater comes forth meat and out of the strong comes forth sweetness. An abject slave of Christ are you, O Satan—a very scullion in the kitchen of Providence. When you think most to effect your own purposes and to overthrow the Kingdom of Christ on earth, even then what are you but a mere hack, accomplishing, still, the purposes of your Master, whom in vain you do blaspheme! Lo, at Christ's belt are the keys of Hell! Let the whole legion of accursed spirits tremble!

Brothers and Sisters, I have said that the word, "Hades," here may include both Hell and Heaven, or the whole state of separated spirits. Therefore we are bound to remark that our Savior rules over all *the glorified spirits in Heaven* and all the angels that are their associates and ministering spirits. Is not this a delightful reflection, that the Redeemer is the King of angels, for in times of danger He can send an angel to strengthen us, or, if needs be, 20 *legions* of angels would soon find their way to stand side by side with the weak but faithful warrior of the Cross! O Believer, you can never be cast where Divine succors cannot reach you!

Angels see their way by night, and journey over mount and sea with unwearied flight, unimpeded by wind or tempest. They can meet your enemy, the prince of the power of the air, and overcome him for you—as doubtless oftentimes they do unknown to us—in mysterious battles of the spirits. You shall never be left to perish while the chariots of God which are 20,000, even thousands of angels, are all at the beck and command of Him who has redeemed you with His precious blood! Joyous is the thought that Jesus rules over all redeemed spirits in Heaven, for we hope to be there soon and this shall be among our dearest joys that, without temptation, without infirmity, without weariness, we shall serve our Lord day and night in His Temple!

My Brethren, of all the joys of Heaven, next to that of being with Christ, one delights to think of *servicing* Christ. Ah, how rapturous will be our song! How zealously we will praise Him! How earnest shall be our service! If He should give us commissions to distant worlds, as perhaps He will—if He shall prepare us to become preachers of His Truth to creatures in unknown orbs—if He shall call us through revolving ages to publish to new created myriads the wondrous Grace of God in Christ, with what ardent pleasure will we accept the service! How constantly, how heartily will we tell all of the story of our salvation by the precious blood of Jesus! O that we could serve Him here as we wish—but we shall serve Him there without fault or flaw. Oh, happy Heaven, because Jesus has the key of it and reigns supreme when we shall stand upon yon sea of glass before His Throne!

One more remark is needed to complete the explanation of the power of the keys. Our Lord is said to have the keys of Death, from which we gather that *all the issues of death* are at His disposal, alone. No man can die unless as Jesus opens the mystic door of Death. Even the ungodly man owes his spared life to Christ. It is the intercession and the interposition of Jesus that keeps breath even in the *swearer's* nostrils. Long since had you been consumed in the fire of God's wrath, O Sinner, had not Jesus used His authority to keep you out of the jaws of Death. As for His saints, it is their *consolation* that their death is entirely in His hands. In the midst of fever and pestilence, we shall never die until He wills it! In the times of the greatest health, when all the air is calm, we shall not live a second longer than Jesus has purposed! The place, the circumstance, the exact *second* of our departure, have all been appointed by Him and settled long ago in love and wisdom.

A thousand angels could not hurl us to the grave, nor could a host of cherubim confine us there one moment after Jesus said, "Arise." This is our comfort! We are "immortal till our work is done"—mortal still—but immortal, also. Let us never fear death, then, but rather rejoice at the approach of it, since it comes at our dear Bridegroom's bidding! There are some who count it a most notable expectation, that perhaps they may be among the number of those who shall not sleep, but be alive and remain at the Lord's coming. I am sure I would not disturb any joy which they can derive from such a contemplation. For my own part, if I had the choice, I would prefer to die, for it seems to me that such as do not die, while they cannot have any preference over them that fall asleep, (for we are told they shall not prevent them that are asleep), will lose much of desirable experience.

They will never be able to say in Heaven, "I was made like unto my dying Savior." They can never say that they have slept in the grave as He did. They can never say, "My body came forth in the resurrection as His did." I would gladly be in all points made like unto my Lord—to have fellowship with Him in all respects. "To die," says the Apostle, "is gain." I will add, a gain I would not lose, and, "Death is yours," says the Apostle, nor would we have it taken away from us. Though the prospect of our Lord's coming is sweet, immeasurably sweet, yet the prospect of going to Him if so He wills it, is not without its sweetness, too. Christ has the key of Death, and therefore Death to us is no longer a gate of terror. Thus have I, as best I could, while suffering much bodily pain, labored to open up to you what is the power of the keys in the Redeemer's hands.

II. What is THE KEY OF THIS POWER? Where did Christ obtain this right to have the keys of Hell and Death? Does He not derive it, first of all, from *His Godhead*? In the 18th verse He says, "I am He that lives"—language which only God can use, for while we live, yet it is only with a borrowed life, like the moon that shines with a borrowed light and as the moon cannot say, "I am the orb that shines," neither can man say, "I am he that lives." God says, "I am and there is none beside Me," and Jesus being God, claims the same self-existence. "I am He that lives."

Now, since Christ is God, He certainly has power over Heaven and earth and Hell. There can be no dispute concerning the Divine prerogative. He is the Creator of all things. He is the Preserver of all things. All power belongs to Him. As for all things that are apart from Him, they would vanish as a puff of air is gone, if so He willed it. He alone exists. He alone IS. Therefore let Him wear the crown, let Him have undivided rule. That doctrine of the Deity of Christ, how I tremble for those who will not receive it! Brothers and Sisters, if there is anything in the Word of God that is clear and plain, it is surely this! If there is any doctrine that is necessary for our salvation, it is this.

How could we trust a mere *man*? If there is anything that can give us comfort when we come to rest upon Christ, it is just this, that we are not looking to an *angel* nor depending upon a *creature*, but are resting upon Him who is Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the Almighty

God. O you who dare trust in a man, I pity you for your credulity! But you who cannot trust in Jesus, the living God, I may well *blame* you for your unbelief! Having such a Rock of our salvation as the ever-living and ever-blessed God, let the thought kindle in our souls purest joy! But the key to this power lies also in our Savior's *conquests*. He has the keys of Death and Hell because He has actually conquered both of these powers!

You know how He met Hell in the dreadful onset in the Garden—how all the powers of darkness there combined against Him. Such was the agony of that struggle that He sweat great drops of blood falling to the ground. Yet He sustained the brunt of that onset without wavering and kept the field unbeaten. He continued, still, to wrestle with those evil powers upon the Cross and in that thick midday midnight into which no curious eyes could pry—in the midst of that darkness He continued, still, to fight. His heel was bruised—but He broke, meanwhile, the dragon's head. Grim was the contest, but glorious was the victory, worthy to be sung by angels in eternal chorus. Take down your sweetest harps, you seraphs! Lift up your loudest notes, you cherubim, unto Him that fought the dragon and overcame him, to Michael the great Archangel of the Covenant, unto Him be glory forever and ever!

Well does Jesus deserve to rule the provinces which He has subdued in fight. He has conquered the king of Hell and destroyed the works of the devil and good right has he to be King over the domain of the vanquished. As to Death, you know how our Lord vanquished him! By death he conquered Death! When His hands were nailed, they became potent to fight with the grave. When His feet were fastened to the wood, then they began to trample on the sepulcher. When the death pangs began to thrill through every nerve of the Redeemer's body, then His arrows shot through the loins of Death! And when His anguished Soul was ready to take its speedy flight, and leave His blessed Corpse, then did the tyrant sustain a mortal wound!

Our Lord's entrance into the tomb was the taking possession of His enemies' stronghold! His sleep within the sepulcher's stony walls was the transformation of the prison into a couch of rest! But especially in the Resurrection—when, because He could not be held by the bonds of Death, neither could His Soul be kept in Hades, He rose again in Glory! Then did He become the, "death of Death and Hell's destruction," and rightfully was He acknowledged the plague of Death and the destruction of the grave. As if to prove that He had the keys of the grave, Jesus passed in and passed out again and He has made free passage, now, for His people—free entrance and free exit. Whether, when our Lord died, His Soul actually descended into Hell, itself, we will not assert or deny—elder theologians all assert that He did and therefore they inserted in the Creed, the sentence, "He descended into Hell," meaning, to many of them, at any rate, Hell itself.

It was not till Puritan times that that doctrine began to be generally questioned, when it was, as I think rightly asserted, that Jesus Christ went into the world of separated spirits, but not into the region of the

damned. Well, it is not for us to speak where Scripture is silent, but why may it not be true that the Great Conqueror cast the shadow of His Presence over the dens of His enemies as He passed in triumph by the gates of Hell? May not the keepers of that infernal gate have seen His star and trembled as they also beheld their Master like lightning fall from Heaven? Would it not add to His Glory if those who were His implacable foes were made to know of His complete triumph? At any rate, it was but a passing presence, for we know that swiftly He sped to the gates of Heaven, taking with Him the repentant thief to be with Him that day in Paradise!

Jesus had opened, thus, the grave by going into it. Hell by passing by it. Heaven by passing into it. Heaven, again, by passing out of it. Death, again, by rising from it into this world and Heaven by His Ascension. Thus passing and repassing, He has proved that the keys are at His belt. At any rate, by His achievements, by His doings, He has won for Himself the power of the keys. We have one more Truth of God to remember—that Jesus Christ is installed in this high place of power and dignity by the Father Himself, as a *reward for what He has done*. He was, Himself, to “divide the spoil with the strong,” but the Father had promised to give Him a “portion with the great.”

See the reward for the shame which He endured among the sons of men! He stooped lower than the lowest—He has risen higher than the highest! He wore the crown of thorns, but now He wears the triple crown of Heaven and earth and Hell. He was the servant of servants, but now He is King of kings and Lord of lords! Earth would not find Him shelter—a stable must be the place of His birth and a borrowed tomb the sepulcher of His dead body—but now all space is His! Time and eternity tremble at His bidding and there is no creature, however minute or vast, that is not subject to Him. How greatly has the Father glorified Him whom men rejected and despised! Let us adore Him! Let our hearts, while we think over these plain but precious Truths of God, come and spread their riches at His feet and crown Him Lord of all!

III. THE PRACTICAL BEARING of the whole subject appears to be this—according to the 17th verse—“*Fear not.*” This manifestation of Christ, as having the keys of Death and Hell, was given to the trembling John who had fallen down with astonishment and dread as one dead. To comfort him and as if to make this clear the words were spoken, “Fear not.”

Beloved, those words I would address to you this morning, “Fear not.” Why need you fear? There is no possible cause for Believers to fear since Jesus lives! “But I may be very poor,” says one—

**“Since Christ is rich, can you be poor?
What can you want beside?”**

“But I may be very sick,” says another. “I will make all their bed in their sickness,” says the Lord. And since Christ is with you, sickness shall work your soul’s health. “Ah,” says another, “I may be grievously tempted.” But while He lives, He will pray for you that your faith fails not, though Satan has desired to have you. Yes, but you yourselves are very frail, you say, and you fear that in some dark hour that frailty may overcome your faith. Yes, but He ever lives and you are one with Him and who shall destroy

you while the vital energy pours from your Covenant Head into you as a member of His body?

I say again, there is no possible cause for fear to any soul that believes in Christ! You can ransack the corruptions of your heart within. You can count your trials without. You can imagine all the tribulations that shall come tomorrow and reflect on all the sins that were with you yesterday and in the past. You can peer into the shades of Death and horrors of Hell, but I declare solemnly to you that there is nothing in any of these which you, believing in Christ, have any cause to fear! No, if they all should unite, if the whole together—the world, the flesh, the devil—in trinity of malice should all come against you, while you have a living faith in a living Savior, “Fear not,” is but the logical inference from that precious fact.

Carry this fearlessness in your life and be happy as a king! Oh, with nothing else but a living Savior, how rich ought a saint to be! And with everything else, but missing that living Savior, how miserable the richest and the greatest of men always would be if they did but know their true state as before the Lord! Now, observe, that this, “Fear not,” may be specially applied to the matter of the grave. We need not fear to die because Jesus has the key of the grave—we shall never pass through that iron gate with an angel to be our conductor, or some grim executioner to lead us, as it were, through the Traitor’s Gate, or into a dreary place of hideous imprisonment. No, *Jesus* shall come to our dying bed in all the Glory of His supernal splendor and shall say, “Come with Me, from Lebanon, My Spouse, with Me from Lebanon. Look from the top of Amana for the day breaks and the shadows flee away.”

The sight of Jesus, as He thrusts in the key and opens that gate of Death, shall make you forget the supposed terrors of the grave, for they are but suppositions and you shall find it sweet to die! Since Jesus has the sepulcher’s key, never fear it again, never fear it again! Depend upon it, your dying hour will be the best hour you have ever known! Your last will be your richest moment—better than the day of your birth will be the day of your death. It shall be the beginning of Heaven, the rising of a sun that shall go down no more forever! Let the fear of death be banished from you by faith in a living Savior!

Some saints have a fear of the world of spirits. “Oh,” they say, “it must be a dreadful thing to enter that unknown land. We have stood and peered as best we could through the mist that gathers over the black river and have wondered what it must be like to have left the body and to be flitting, a naked soul, through that land from which no traveler has ever returned.” Ah, but perhaps you imagined that you were sailing into an enemy’s country, but Jesus is King in Hades, as well as Lord of earth. It is not as though you crossed the channel from England into France and were among a people speaking another language and owning another sovereignty. It is but as passing the Tweed from England to Scotland—you do but pass from one province of your Lord’s empire into another and, indeed, from a darker into a brighter territory of the same one Sovereign!

In that spirit-land they speak the same tongue, the tongue of the New Jerusalem, which you have already begun to lisp. They acknowledge the King whom you here obey, and when you shall enter into the assemblies of those disembodied spirits you shall find them all singing to the praise of the same glorious One whom you have adored today, rejoicing in the light which was your light on earth and triumphing in His love which was your Savior here below. Be of good courage, Jesus is King of Hades! Fear not! Neither, Brothers and Sisters, ought we to fear the devil. We ought to be watchful against him, but we must not fear him so that he may get an advantage from our fear. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." Stand trembling and he will attack you worse than ever.

The boldness of courageous faith is that which makes the devil tremble. Well may you be brave, for when he comes howling at you like a lion, you may taunt him and say, "Ah, show your teeth and howl and yell, but you are chained! You can do no more than threaten me. You think to worry me, but you can not devour me and therefore I defy you. Be gone! In the name of Jesus Christ who bruised you, dragon of Hell, be gone!" The courage that shall enable you to deal with the enemy, while it gives glory to your Lord and Master, shall give rapid victory to you. Satan is a chained enemy! This leviathan has a bit between his jaws and a hook in his nose. He may vex you for awhile, but you shall be "more than conqueror through Him that loved you"—therefore fear not!

That is the lesson from the text to the child of God. One other word to the Believer of God. Should not this contemplation make us say, "Let us worship Him who has the keys of Hell and Death?" Should it not cause us to come into His Presence with thanksgiving and show ourselves glad in Him with songs? Preaching is not the great end of the Lord's-Day—listening to sermons is not the great aim of Sundays. They are *means*! What is the end? Why, the end, so far as we can attain it on earth, is for us to glorify God in service and especially in the singing of His praises. Worship rendered to God in prayer and praise is the true fruit of the Sabbath and I am afraid we are behind in this. I wish that when Believers come together they would render unto Christ the coronals of their hymns, to crown him Lord of All.

His enemies miss no opportunity to spite Him. Those that hate His Gospel are zealous to bring shame upon it. Oh, miss no opportunities to extol Him with your praises and to honor Him with the holiness of your lives and the zeal of your service. Is He King over Heaven, and Death and Hell? Then shall He be King over the triple territory of my spirit, soul and body! And I will make all my powers and passions yield Him praise.

To conclude. If to the righteous the lesson from all this is, "Fear not," I think the lesson to the ungodly is, "Fear and tremble." Christ has the keys of Death. Then you may die this moment—you may die before you reach your homes. You have not the key of Death—you cannot, therefore, prolong your life. But Christ has them and He can end the times of His long-suffering just when He so wills it. And what would it be to some of you if the gate of Death were opened for you and you were driven through it like

dumb driven cattle this very day? O Man, what would become of you? O Woman, what would become of you, if now those eyes should glaze and that pulse should stop? I beseech you, consider your ways and turn unto God lest you die and perish suddenly.

Remember, Soul, that even if you could fight it out with Christ and be His enemy, yet you cannot, for He is Lord and will be Lord. Even should you fly to Hell to escape Him, He rules *there*. “If I make my bed in Hell, You are there.” “Oh,” said one who had gone into the backwoods of America far away and there met a preacher, “I thought I had escaped these Methodists and here comes a parson worrying me even here.” “Yes,” said the other, “if you went to Heaven you would find religion there and if you go to Hell you will, I am afraid, find preachers even there.” If religion thus follows a man, how much more does the power of God *surround* him! You cannot escape from the Lord of all true preachers, even if you can escape from them. Wherever you may go, there shall the remembrances of His rejected love pierce you like barbed arrows.

Even in Hell shall the glory of His power, which you could not thrust down though you tried to do it, strike you with a deeper despair. I implore you to listen to His Gospel. He that believes and is baptized, shall be saved. This is the message He gave us when He was taken up—almost the last words He spoke before He rose into His Glory—“Go you, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” O then, yield to His Gospel! Believe, that is, trust implicitly in Him who died on the Cross of Calvary to make Atonement and now lives to make intercession!

Trust in Him and then come forth and *confess* your trust! Be baptized in His name, confessing your sins and acknowledging yourself to be His disciple. This is the Gospel—reject it at your peril! Submit to it, I beseech you, for Christ’s sake.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Revelation 1.

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LABORING AND NOT FAINTING

NO. 1069

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 8, 1872,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For My name’s sake you have labored and have not fainted.”
Revelation 2:3.***

THE Lord Jesus Christ never removes His eyes from His Church. He notes everything that concerns her, observing not merely the life of her members but their soul’s health, and not merely their health, but the way in which they spend their spiritual strength. He knows their works, He observes their charity, their patience, their zeal for His name’s sake. Seven times in His words to the Churches, He says, “I know your works.” This should make us live with great care, for albeit the whole world is under the eye of God, yet of His Church it is true, “upon one stone there shall be seven eyes.” The full perfection of Omniscience exerts itself upon the Lord’s chosen people. The farmer has an eye to all his estate but his chief care is his own family. And, even so, while the Great Husbandman of all creation observes all His works, He chiefly looks upon His own household. “The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy.”

Our Lord Jesus, it appears from the text and its connection, notices what it is that His Church cannot bear and He is very glad when she cannot endure false doctrine or unholy living. He would have her never to endure these but to purge herself from them with all strictness. But He notes also, with joy, what she can bear—toilsome labor, abundant self-denial, reproach for His sake, persecution and suffering even unto blood. In this He sees her love made manifest and His delight is in her. It appears that our Lord especially fixes His eyes upon the labors of the Church. What is the Church allowed to be on earth for but that she should labor for her Lord? If there were nothing to be done in this world there would be no reason for her lingering here below. She would be transported to the better land if there were not great ends to be accomplished by her tarrying here.

She is put here because the world needs her and because God’s Glory is to be revealed through her. She is to be salt to a society which otherwise would be putrid—light to a people who otherwise would sit in darkness. Consequently a Church which does not labor misses the chief end of its being—it is a plant that bears no flower—a vine branch that yields no cluster. Christ observes the labor of His Church and He has special delight in it when it is continuous, so that He can give to her the double commendation of our text, “You have labored and have not fainted.” Oh, that we might receive this commendation from our Master’s lips at the last! May He whose blood and righteousness are our only hope of salvation see in us abounding evidences of the grateful love which He so well deserves at our hands.

We shall, this morning make persevering service our theme.

I. First I would call your attention to the text itself, noticing THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE GOOD here combined. “You have labored”—there is something positive. “You have not fainted”—there is a negative which helps to make the positive more positively excellent. “You have labored.” We will not consider the original, but we will take the words of our version.

“You have labored.” Now, to labor signifies working with the putting forth of much strength. It is work with an emphasis. It means hard work, intense exertion, vigorous action. Men may work, but yet not labor and I fear there are many who claim to be working men who do not often trouble themselves with anything approaching to “labor.” There are also working *Christians* who do not approach to laboring—a lifetime of such work as theirs would not exhaust a butterfly.

When a man works for Christ he should work with all his might. Surely we should not offer less love under the Gospel than was required under the Law, and you know the Law speaks on this wise—“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” Surely Jesus Christ deserves all that—and when we labor for Him it should not be with the careless indifference of slaves—but with the ardor of lovers, the devotion of enthusiasts. If any master is to be served badly, let it not be our Master who is in Heaven! We owe Him too much to wish to be eye-servants towards Him. If anywhere a dilatory servant may be excused, certainly it cannot be in the service of Him who redeemed us with His most precious blood! A Church ought, therefore, not merely to be a *working* Church, but a great deal more—it should be a Church working to its highest pitch—a *laboring* church.

If I may use the figure, we ought to employ every particle of our steam power. We should drive the engine at high pressure. We have no force that can be allowed to escape in waste. We should not be simply *walking* to Heaven, but running the heavenly race and running it with diligence and eagerness! When a man truly labors it takes a good deal out of him. Laboring, therefore implies self-denial. In labor the man’s strength is brought forth and expended. See how the hot sweat stands upon his brow, how it pours from him as he continues to exert himself. He has to deny himself, for he would like to be at rest. He sees his comrade, perhaps, lounging against yonder pillar or stretching himself at ease upon the greensward. But he cannot do that and *labor*—he knows he cannot. He lays aside his ease and comfort for the sake of what he has to do.

So would the Church if she were what she should be—she would deny herself and take up the cross of high-pressure service. She would toil without cessation and give without stint. An energy far beyond anything usual in Christendom would be common in the Church if she were in a right state of heart. Alas, I fear the bulk of professors are not earnest enough to preserve their professions from ridicule. I noticed the other day a remark which struck me. Speaking of a certain congregation, the writer said he believed there were a hundred persons in it who were worth not less than 5,000 pounds a year each, and then he mentioned the sum that

was given for the maintenance of the work of God, and he added, “if any ordinary person who was not a Christian, went in there and heard them sing—

**“And if I might make some reserve,
And duty did not call,
I love my God with zeal so great,
That I would give him all”**

—he would say to himself, “I was at the theater on Saturday night and saw a farce, but if I need a *screaming* one I must come here on a Sunday.”

Indeed, I thought the remark to be sadly true. When I see how much there is of available strength both in worldly substance, in mental vigor and in other forms in the Church which is never used, I dare hardly say that any Church now upon earth really labors for Christ. A little of your spare strength is given to Jesus and then you think you have done well. He is put off with odds and ends—the cheese parings and the potato peelings of the Church! I ask you, does He get much more? What are the gifts of most? Do they give as much as would keep the lowest menial in their kitchens? It was not so in early times. Then men were Christians all over and altogether and served Christ first, Christ last, Christ midst, and Christ without end! But now it is enough if we gloss over life with a little varnish of holy talk and pious profession.

Would God these eyes might live to see a Church that really labored, putting forth all its strength with all its might, using all the force in its possession for the propagation of the Gospel of the Lord and the extension of the Redeemer’s kingdom! But labor implies not merely the strong effort I have tried to depict, but a *continuance* of it, for a man might take up a workman’s tool and for a few minutes make a mighty show of effort and yet be no laborer unless he kept on working till his task was done.

If a few minutes sufficed him and he said, “I have had practical experience of what labor is and I rather think it does not agree with me.” And if, therefore, he should lay down his tool and go back to his gentlemanly ease, he would be no laborer. He merely *plays* at labor, that is all. So have we known too many whose service for God has been *occasional*—they have fits and starts of effort, but they are soon over—their spasmodic zeal is today so hot as to be well near fanatical and tomorrow it will be succeeded by an indifference far more astounding! If the Church is said to labor, it means that she puts forth all her strength as a regular thing. Like the sun and moon she continues in her orbit of duty. She does not flash and foam for a brief interval like a torrent, but she flows on steadily and continually like a river. She keeps at her lifework and with all her might she continues in well-doing and is not weary.

There is the positive good. The negative, as I have said, crowns the positive—“And have not fainted.” Now, there are different degrees of fainting. Some may be said to faint comparatively when they flag in exertion. They drop from running to walking, from diligence to indolence. They did run well—what hindered them? They flag. Many continue to do as much as ever they did outwardly, yet their heart is not in it and so they faint. Their service is the same to the eyes of man, but not the same to the eyes of God. They act as mere officials—their work is done mechanically—they

go through the routine, but they put forth no energy, no life power. There is no anointing of the Holy Spirit in them.

There is fruit, but it resembles the berries of a sunless summer. It is tasteless, insipid, and all but worthless. Some flag by growing weak in all they do. They do put forth such force as they have, but they are essentially feeble. They preach their best, but their best is wine mixed with water. They teach in the school and what they teach is the Truth of God and they deliver it with some degree of earnestness—but they have lost the power with which to influence the heart. *Ears* they can weary, but they cannot stir consciences!

They are vigorously feeble, vehemently weak. They have got away from God, the Source of all spiritual strength and therefore their locks are shorn and though, like Samson, they shake themselves, they shake themselves in vain. The power of God has departed from them and though they may not know it, Ichabod is written upon their works. Too many go further than this—they renounce all or a large part of the Christian work they were accustomed to do. Content with the efforts of other days they surrender to the sluggard's vice. They faint, that is, they give up the work altogether! The soldier grounds his arms; the workman puts away his tools—they count their day's work to be done before the day is done, and cry for their wages before the pay day has arrived!

It is sad that there should be so many in the Church of this kind. And some go even further than that, for after retiring from labor, themselves, they cease to have any care about the Lord's work. They grow indifferent. They even become critical and censorious towards those who are zealously occupied—whether Christ's kingdom grows or declines appears to be little or nothing to them. They still wear the Christian name but they have fainted. They are like persons in a swoon who have become unconscious of all around. They need assistance from others and can give no help in return. They are a draft upon the Church's resources, instead of an addition to her strength. For all usefulness they might as well be dead—only as a tax upon the energy of the Church can they be said to be alive. Happy are they who are preserved from fainting in any of these degrees! God grant especially that we may never come to that last, lest it should be said of us that we had a name to live and were dead.

But, Brothers and Sisters, members of Christ's Church, by His Grace this may be said of us through a long course of years—"They labored and fainted not." When our hair is white with the snows of many winters, may it truly be said by the dear lips of Him who is in Heaven for us, "You have labored and have not fainted." When we lie in our last narrow bed, may this be the encomium which our spirit shall hear before the Throne of God, "You have labored and have not fainted." May this be such a sentence as an honest affection may dare to write upon our tombs. Have we begun to faint already? If we are yet in our youth let us scorn to faint so soon. If we are yet in the prime of our days, let us call shame upon ourselves for fainting before yet the sun shines.

Or, are we beginning to faint now that we are growing gray? Why should we faint now when the day is almost over, and the shadows are drawn out? Brothers and Sisters, call shame upon yourself if you would

faint in your last evening hours when Glory is at your door and the crown of immortality is all but upon your brow! Let us be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord so that this text may be our own at the last—"You have labored for My name's sake, and have not fainted."

II. Now we pass on to a second part of our discourse and that is to dwell upon EXCUSES FOR FAINTING. Fainting has become so common in the Church of God that various apologies have been made for it and they are constantly being repeated. When a sin is frequent, excuses for it are multiplied until men cease to blush and think that they have done no ill whatever.

There are some who faint in the work of God because the work itself has proven very tedious to them. When they first undertook it and the novelty was upon it they did not tire, but now the freshness is gone and they have come into the real wear and tear of it, they do not enjoy it quite so much as they thought they should. They hoped for an office in which the chief labor should be to gather lilies, or lie upon beds of roses. The service of the Crucified is far less romantic and far more laborious.

Dear Friends, if any of you think that the road of Christian service is all level and rolled with a steam roller, you have made a very great mistake. There is no royal road to eminence in *anything*—it is always uphill work and rough climbing—and certainly there is no such road in the service of God! Never was there a truer sentence than that we sung just now—

***"True, it is a straight and thorny road,
And mortal spirits tire and faint."***

Friends were debating the other day concerning the work of the ministry, the ease or the labor of it, and I reminded one of them of that saying of Baxter, "God have mercy upon the man who finds the ministry of the Gospel to be easy work, for he will have need of all God's mercy, indeed, when he renders up his account at the Last Great Day."

I cannot conceive of a more atrocious offender against humanity and against God than the man who, having souls committed to his trust, finds it an easy thing to take care of them and watch for their salvation! Sirs, the ministry is a matter which wears the brain and strains the heart—and drains out the life of a man if he attends to it as he should. If God were served by any of us as He should be, I question whether we should not grow old before our time through labor and anguish, even as did that great lover of Souls, Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep! Soul-winning is a work that might fill an angel's heart—it did fill a Savior's hands. Any service for God, if it is done at all, should be hard work.

If you need to be feather-bed soldiers go and enlist somewhere else—Christ's soldiers must fight and they will find the battle rough and stern. We, of the Church militant, are engaged in no mimic maneuvers and grand parades! Our life is real and earnest. Our battle, though not with flesh and blood, is with spiritual wickedness in high places and it involves hard blows and keen anguish. You must look for real fighting if you become a soldier of Christ, and oh, Sir, if the excuse for fainting is that the work is toilsome, that it is too much a drag upon you, why did you begin

it? You ought to have known this at the first. You should have counted the cost!

But, ah, let me say, the work was not toilsome when your heart was loving! Neither would it now be so hard if your soul were right with God. This is but an *unworthy excuse*. Ardent spirits love difficulties! Fervent love delights in making sacrifices! They would not wish to swim forever in smooth seas of pleasure. They know that manhood's truest glory lies in contending with and overcoming that which is hard. Give to the child the easy task, but let the man have something worth the doing to perform. Instead of shrinking because the work is tedious, we ought to gird up our loins and push on the enterprise with all the greater force.

Another apology is pretty frequently heard. "But I have been so long at it now. I have been a tract distributor. I have been a city missionary. I have been an evangelist, or I have been a Bible Woman, or I have been a Sunday school teacher now 20 or 30 years and I think it is time to retire." Say you so, my Comrades? The sun has been shining now a great many thousand years, but I have not heard that he intends retiring from the business yet. God has given to us fruitful seasons and I have not heard that He intends to cease to bless our husbandry. Every day we drink from the river of His mercy and we have had no intimation, yet, that that river has ceased to flow and that God intends to cut off the supplies.

Why, then, should any one of us dream of staying his hand? What is a lifetime at its utmost length for the service of God? Suppose a man could spend 70 clear years in unflagging exertion in the service of his Master—what would it be, after all? But now half our time must go in sleep and in the necessary refreshment of the body. Next, a very large proportion must be taken off for the business of the world—and then what is left? Why, we can only give our Master a few hours in the week, the most of us, and yet you talk about having served Him so long! Dear Master, put Your hand upon our lips next time we would use such words and never permit us to insult the sovereignty of Your dear love by making such an excuse for our sluggishness!

Other excuses, however, will be sure to come and among them, this, that we have been disappointed up till now in the success of what we have attempted. We have sown, but the most of the seed has fallen upon the wayside or upon the rocks—and where it *did* spring up we have not gained anything like a hundred-fold increase. We thought that in our class we should have had all the girls or all the boys converted almost immediately—and when we went into the village to preach, we concluded everybody would come to hear us and that hearing us, they would be converted and a Church would be speedily formed. We dreamed that when we visited a district in the crowded city, we should be able, very soon, to so reform the people that the public houses would grow fewer and the Sabbath would be better kept, and I do not know what beside! Very little of this fair vision has been realized—we have not succeeded as we desired.

And what is very perplexing to us is the fact that we know of somebody who *has* succeeded where we have failed—a person who does not appear to have all the gifts we have, or all the capacities we have—whose sphere was evidently quite as difficult as ours and yet he has prospered and we

have not. And therefore we conclude that we would do well to cease our working. If we were in our right minds and did not need an excuse for being sluggards, we should not reason thus, but should argue to a conclusion of a diametrically opposite nature!

He who has succeeded so well might, perhaps, have an excuse for going home and saying, "Master, my work is done," but he who has done so very little should continue at his work till he can show some sort of result for his efforts. He should say, "I will stick to this till I succeed, or till I can say, 'If I have not succeeded it was no fault of mine—I did what my Master bade me, I called upon Him for help in it—and I went to work in His way with faith in Him,' and if I have not prospered, I have done what I could."

I remember hearing a certain young preacher exclaim after he had heard an older Divine who had preached with some power, "There now, I shall never be able to preach again after this. I shall feel quite ashamed to go into the pulpit with my poor sermons!" I could not help remarking that the effect ought to be the other way. If this man had done so well, it only shows what God can enable *me* to do, and I will go to God and ask Him to help me. If this Brother is so useful in the Church, I will bless God that he is a better man than I am and if God pleases to give me a gleam of success occasionally, I will thank Him even if I am not able to bear so much success as my fellow servant. We must not give up the war because we have not yet conquered, but fight on till we can seize the victory. Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.

Another set of excuses I must mention. They are little, pettish, pitiful, proud excuses—but they are very common. Here is one. "I shall leave the work, for I am sure I am not appreciated as I ought to be." You do not exactly use these words, but that is your feeling. I am only photographing your thoughts. You began to serve God very enthusiastically and you thought the minister ought to have said, "I am thankful that God has sent such a very zealous young man into our Church." But he has not made any such remark. You have gone on for some time working among the poor, but the good people around you have not been heard to say, "Have you heard of So-and-So? She is such a remarkably useful woman, quite a godsend among us, an example to us all." You feel hurt that you are not admired. You are vexed that you are not highly esteemed.

Now, I will not waste words in exposing this feeling, but I will at once ask you to look at it and tell me if you don't think it is the meanest and most miserable thing you have ever set your eyes upon? Do you mean to give way to such pettiness and silliness? If so, I have done with you, for you will never do any good in this world! The slave of such a mean feeling is incapable of being free. "Ah," cries another, "my complaint is more reasonable, for I am discouraged because no one aids me in my work. I should not mind their not *appreciating* me, but they have not *assisted* me though I have needed much help. I have kept on under great pressure, and where I thought I should surely find sympathizers and helpers, I have met with the cold shoulder and unkind remarks."

Oh, my Brother! My Brother! Does your life, after all, depend upon the breath of other men's nostrils? Has it come to this, that you cannot live upon the approbation of your Master unless you gain also the smile of

your fellow servants? Does it mean this, that you will not do your duty because other people are negligent of theirs? It seems to me if others will not aid me I must put my shoulder to the wheel and do the work myself by the help of God! If the toil is unshared the honor will be undivided. To tread the winepress alone makes us more like our Lord. Therefore, let us labor on in the name of the Lord whose support is far better than the help of kings or princes!

Another says, "I have no patience with these frivolous excuses, but mine is a solid one. I must leave my work, for I am so much opposed in it." Granted that you are opposed, but why should you run away? Overcome the opposition, dear Brother—the more of it to be overcome, the more Divine Grace you need—and the more honor you may gain. Suppose a troop should come against you. Is it not said of Gad, "A troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last"? Would you be crowned without a conflict and made a victor without fighting? Of one of old it is said that he broke through a troop and leaped over a wall through his God. Why should you not do the same?

"But my wall is so high," you say, "I cannot leap over it." Is it an iron wall or a granite wall? Then, if God tells you to leap, leap right at it. He will either bear you over it, or else its solid substance will dissolve into impalpable vapor and vanish quite away. You only need courage! Go in this, your might, for you shall thresh the mountains and the wind shall winnow them and carry them away. "But I am so incompetent and feel so weak," says one, "in fact, the further I go the weaker I get!" You are progressing admirably, dear Brother, and when you become still weaker you will succeed!

Gideon could not win the battle because he had too many soldiers—the faint-hearted had to be sent away, but still there were too many troops remaining! And when the whole army was reduced to 300 and they had no weapons but earthen vessels and trumpets—*then* it was that the Midianites were conquered! When we are weak then we are strong. Oh, Brother, renounce this excuse and labor on, fainting not! God keep you from fainting.

III. Now, for a moment or two, I am going to mention the REAL CAUSES OF FAINTING. The first is an actual decline in spiritual strength. When a working Believer suddenly becomes a loitering *professor*, you may gather from it that his spiritual constitution has gray hairs upon it here and there, though he knows it not. It is not, dear Brother, merely that you do not *do* so much—it is that you are *not* so much—you have not the amount of life in you which you once had.

And is not this a sad thing? Ought not this to be an indicator to you of *spiritual sickness* and drive you at once to the Good Physician to seek healing at His hands? There is, if you would look a little into your spirit, I am quite sure of it, a falling off in your love to Jesus. Holy work is no harder, but you do not love Christ so well. You have, in truth, no more enemies than you had, but you have forgotten your best Friend. Oh, if you had been in the banqueting house with Him and His banner of love had waved over you—and you had been made to drink of the spiced wine of His pomegranate in sweet communion with His blessed Person, you would

not have fainted—for he who is on fire with love will burn his way through difficulties.

I am afraid, too, there is coming over your spirit a great deal of deadness to spiritual and eternal things. You are now more moved and actuated by the things that are *seen*, and less by the things that are unseen. It is a very easy thing for us to get to enjoy the world and to give our hearts up to its troubles and cares. It needs the Spirit of God to make us sensitive to the Divine touch so that we feel *eternity*—so that we know the value of other men's *souls*, so that we put before us the great day in which actions shall be revealed—so that we estimate life aright as it will weigh in the balances of infinite justice! Oh, to be dead to these spiritual realities in any degree is a dreadful death and to be callous to holy things is a terrible hardness! May God keep us from spiritual insensibility and may we be tender and sensitive to the faintest motion of the Holy Spirit.

It is to be feared, also, that those who faint have lost their reliance upon Divine power, at least in a degree. The man who labors for God aright never works in his own strength. He who works aright acts because he believes that God works through him—and can a man faint when he feels *that*? When we fight for God's Truth it is not *our* arm but the arm of the Eternal which deals the blow! When we bear testimony to His Word it is not *we* that speak, but God's Spirit speaks through us! Let the man of God go forth to any enterprise and hear the sound of his Master's feet behind him and he will march to the tune of Miriam's timbrel! But let him go alone and he will moan and murmur, and pine and fail, and die. Confidence in God makes us strong, but by turning away from our great unseen Helper we straightaway begin to faint.

Moreover, I am afraid that we forget that the Lord requires of us an unselfish dedication to His service and that we do not serve Him at all unless His Glory is our chief object. When I hear of a fainting Sunday school teacher who gives as a reason for fainting that he does not think the other Sunday school teachers are as kind to him as they ought to be, I ask him whether his main object was that he should be loved of men—for if he loved his God, what would it be to him how his fellow men regarded him? When I hear a man saying, "I shall give up that post, or that service"—(of course I am not mentioning those who have justifiable reasons, and there are such cases), but when I hear of a man's retiring because he is faint-hearted, I say to him, "You have met with difficulties—did you not know you would meet with difficulties? You have gained no honor—did you not serve for another motive, namely, God's Glory?"

"If you looked for ease and contentment and pleasure, and have not gained them, what wonder? You ought not to have looked for them. Oh, Brother, you have made a mistake! You must get into a better state of heart before God can use you! You must feel that you would have the *Lord* use you just as in His infinite wisdom He sees fit to do. You should be a piece of iron on the Almighty's anvil to be welded into a scepter if He chooses you to break the potter's vessels—to be beaten into a plowshare and plunged into the earth, if by you He means to turn up the furrows of the fallow ground—or fashioned into a spear-point, if by you He intends to strike His enemies."

Whatever He wishes to make us, that we should desire to be. We know not what it is to serve God fully until we come to perfect submission to His will.

IV. I have a little medical business to do in closing this sermon. Four sorts of persons are very common among us. There are, first, those who neither labor nor faint. Next, those who faint but never labor. Then, those who *did* labor once, but have fainted. And, fourthly, those who labor still but are ready to faint. To each of these four I desire to administer a little medicine.

Let the first come here. There are some who neither labor nor faint. I do not mean outsiders, now! Those God shall judge. I mean members of the Church. Labor? No. The greatest labor they ever do is to walk from home to the Meeting House to hear a sermon and some of them are hardly able to keep awake during the time of hearing the discourse. They are slumbering hearers like Eutychus and it is a great mercy God does not make an example of them as He did of that sleepy Brother. We have Church members who never labor and, therefore, never faint. What would they faint about? They have never done enough to come anywhere near an approach to that state of exhaustion.

They never draw the Gospel coach but they are delighted to ride on the top of it! They especially prize the box seat if they can get it. They never go into the Lord's vineyard to trim the vines but they are very fond of eating the clusters, though, indeed, even these they will, at times, call sour and destitute of the flavor of the older vintages. They do *nothing*, nothing whatever and, therefore they find fault with those who do! I am very thankful that very few of this class are among us, yet there are too many.

Now, I would prescribe for them a taste of the gall of bitterness. It might be beneficial to them if they had the flavor of it in their mouths, for I am very much afraid that unless they repent it will be their eternal portion. A Church member who brings forth no fruit, what did the Lord say about him? He said, "Every tree that brings not forth fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." How would you like that, you idle Church members? Every branch in the true vine that bears no fruit He takes away. What do you say to this? How do you like the looks of that threat, you fruitless members?

I speak not to you that are sick and whose fruit is *patience*—God bless you—you are good fruit-bearing branches. I speak not to you who are feeble in health, poor, obscure and with little gifts who, nevertheless, do what you can—the Lord accepts and blesses you—He counts your mite a greater gift than the rich man's larger portion! He calls your little word that you are able to speak for Jesus truer service than many an eloquent discourse.

But I mean you who *could* and do not! You who *should* and do not! You who eat the fat and drink the sweet in Zion and yet let men die and be damned while you take no care of their souls and do not even give them a tract, or write them a letter to tell them the way to Heaven or give them a warning. Believing that you are saved yourselves, you button yourselves up and are perfectly content to sneak into Heaven alone! A pretty Heaven it would be if it were full of selfish spirits like yourselves!

Oh, that we may be stirred up to escape from such an unholy spirit! I loathe the very thought of living here merely to get into Heaven myself—going to Christ to be washed from my own sins and for daily mercy—and then never doing a hand's turn towards the building of His Temple, but just sitting down and caring for none besides. You idlers need to have a taste of salutary bitterness! May it be kept in your mouths till it is rinsed out with a glass of repentance and may it lead you to Jesus to ask Him to save you from all indolence and selfishness.

The next sort of persons to be dealt with are those who faint but do not labor. "Who are they?" you ask. I remember one in the days of Solomon who had to go down a street upon an errand, but did not go. Dear man, he would not venture out for there was a lion in the way. Now, truth to say, there was no lion that any man could see, but his imagination had invented the bloodthirsty animal. We know persons of the same family who would say, "Oh, do not attempt to do anything that has not been done before, it would be hazardous! Our forefathers were content to have sermons preached down back streets where nobody could find the Meeting Houses—let us keep to our obscurity."

Yet men of bolder heart have pushed to the front and mean to keep there. But hear how these cowards talk. "Do not go down that court! There are Catholics there! Do not think of going to that lodging house—they are sure to mock at you! Do not introduce religion to such a man, it will be of no use—he will only turn again and tear you apart! Do not cast pearls before such swine." These are excellent wet blankets and the stock is large. We have some of them in all congregations.

What advice shall I give to them but this—My dear Brothers and Sisters, just stand aside, please—get out of the way and let others come forward and serve God if you do not mean to do it yourselves. If you do not like to be so ignominiously put on one side, I would suggest to you the following medicine. Take every morning a few drops of the essential oil of "try," and you do not know what an effect it may have upon you! Powers now dormant would be awakened and things impossible would be achieved. Add to this a strong draught of the wine of "must"—necessity is laid upon me—yes, woe is me unless I serve my Master! And I think you might be brought back into a tolerably healthy condition and yet, after all, labor and not faint.

Our third patient is one who did labor once, but has fainted. If he has fainted because he thinks he has done enough let me prescribe for him a strong potion of the salts of fear. They may be useful to him. He that puts his hand to the plow and looks back is not worthy of the kingdom. "Remember Lot's wife." Shall I repeat that prescription, for it is a very useful one to those who leave off working for Christ! "Remember Lot's wife." If her fate is recollected perhaps your heart will be stirred up to renewed diligence.

But there are some who labor and *are* ready to faint. To them I would prescribe the "wines on the lees well-refined," the rich promises of God's Word, the sweet prospect of an eternal reward! I would recommend them to take the spirit of confidence in large quantities, yes, to be filled with it! Confide in God—He will not suffer you to labor in vain, or spend your

strength for nothing! To you, my fellow Soldiers in this Church, I have these words to say—These are not times for fainting, these are not times for idling. All the world is active—the wheels of commerce are revolving at a greater rate than ever—events everywhere march with a giant stride! We have seen what our fathers dreamed not of! Now, if ever, the Church of God ought to be awake! The demands of souls require our utmost diligence. The enemy is active in deceiving—we must be active in instructing and saving.

Now, by the precious blood of Christ who bought you, oh, you Believers in Christ, bestir yourselves! If, indeed, you are legitimately born from above! If the imperial blood is in your veins and if you are soldiers of that great Captain who unto death strove against sin! And if you expect to wear the white robe and wave the palm of victory—in the name of the eternal and ever-living One, seek His Spirit and the Divine energy that you may labor yet more abundantly and faint not! I am longing to have this Church all in working order for the campaign on which we are about to enter. The long evenings of Fall are our time of hope!

Oh, Brothers and Sisters, help us, that by the power of the Holy Spirit, between now and next spring we may have many conversions and a large increase to our numbers! If the whole Church should be awakened throughout we might expect far greater blessings than we have ever received before! Oh, Spirit of the living God, come upon us! Come upon pastors and officers and members—and upon the whole congregation—and all the glory shall be unto Your name forever and forever! Amen.

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DECLENSION FROM FIRST LOVE

NO. 217

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, SEPTEMBER 26, 1858,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“Nevertheless I have somewhat against you, because
you have left your first love.”
Revelation 2:4.***

IT is a great thing to have as much said in our commendation as was said concerning the Church at Ephesus. Just read what “Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness,” said of them—“I know your works and your labor and your patience and how you can not bear them which are evil: and you have tried them which say they are Apostles and are not and have found them liars: and have borne and have patience and for My name’s sake have labored and have not fainted.” Oh my dear Brothers and Sisters, we may feel devoutly thankful if we can humbly, but honestly say that this commendation applies to us. Happy the man whose works are known and accepted of Christ. He is no idle Christian, he has practical godliness. He seeks by works of piety to obey God’s whole Law, by works of charity to manifest his love to the brotherhood and by works of devotion to show his attachment to the cause of his Master. “I know your works.”

Alas, some of you cannot get so far as that. Jesus Christ Himself can bear no witness to your works, for you have not any. You are Christians by profession but you are not Christians as to your practice. I say again, happy is that man to whom Christ can say, “I know your works.” It is a commendation worth a world to have as much as that said of us. But further, Christ said, “and your labor.” This is more still. Many Christians have works but only few Christians have labor. There were many preachers in Whitfield’s day that had works, but Whitfield had labor. He toiled and travailed for souls. He was “in labors more abundant.” Many were they in the Apostle’s days who did works for Christ. But pre-eminently the Apostle Paul did labor for souls. It is not work merely, it is anxious work—it is casting forth the whole strength and exercising all the energies for Christ. Could the Lord Jesus say as much as that of you—“I know your labor”? No. He might say, “I know your loitering. I know your laziness. I know your shirking of the work. I know your boasting of what little you do. I know your ambition to be thought something of, when you are nothing.” But ah, Friends, it is more than most of us dare to hope that Christ could say “I know your labor.”

But further, Christ says “I know your patience.” Now there are some that labor and they do it well. But what hinders them? They only labor for a little season and then they cease to work and begin to faint. But this Church had labored on for many years. It had thrown out all its energies—not in some spasmodic effort but in a continual strain and unabated zeal for the glory of God. “I know your patience.” I say again, Beloved, I tremble to think how few out of this congregation could win such praise as this. “I know your works and your labor and your patience and how you can not bear them which are evil.”

The thorough hatred which the Church had of evil doctrine, of evil practice and its corresponding intense love for the pure Truth of God and pure practice—in that I trust some of us can bear a part. “And you have tried them which say they are Apostles and are not and have found them liars.” Here, too, I think some of us may hope to be clear. I know the difference between the Truth of God and error. Arminianism will never go down with us. The doctrine of men will not suit our taste. The husks, the bran and the chaff, are not things that we can feed upon. And when we listen to those who preach another Gospel, a holy anger burns within us, for we love the Truth of God as it is in Jesus. And nothing but that will satisfy us.

“And have borne and have patience and for My name’s sake have labored and have not fainted.” They had borne persecutions, difficulties, hardships, embarrassments and discouragements, yet had they never flagged, but always continued faithful. Who among us here present could lay claim to so much praise as this? What Sunday-School teacher have I here who could say, “I have labored and I have borne and have had patience and have not fainted.” Ah, dear Friends, if you can say it, it is more than I can. Often have I been ready to faint in the Master’s work. And though I trust I have not been tired of it, yet there has sometimes been a longing to get from the work to the reward—to go from the service of God, before I had fulfilled, as a hireling, my day. I am afraid we have not enough of patience, enough of labor and enough of good works, to get even as much as this said of us.

But it is in our text, I fear, the mass of us must find our character. “Nevertheless I have somewhat against you because you have left your first love.” There may be a preacher here present. Did you ever hear of a minister who had to preach his own funeral sermon? What a labor that must have been, to feel that he had been condemned to die and must preach against himself and condemn himself! I stand here tonight, not in that capacity, but in one somewhat similar. I feel that I who preach shall this night condemn myself. And my prayer before I entered this pulpit was that I might fearlessly discharge my duty, that I might deal honestly with

my own heart and that I might preach knowing myself to be the chief culprit. But you each in your own measure have offended in this respect, even though none of you so grievously as I have done. I pray that God the Holy Spirit, through His renewing, may apply the Word, not merely to your hearts, but to mine—that I may return to my first love and that you may return with me.

In the first place, *what was our first love?* Secondly, *how did we lose it?* And thirdly, *let me exhort you to get it again.*

I. First, WHAT WAS OUR FIRST LOVE? Oh, let us go back—it is not many years with some of us. We are but youngsters in God’s ways and it is not so long with many of you that you will have very great difficulty in remembering it. Then if you are Christians, those days were so happy that your memory will never forget them and therefore you can easily return to that first bright spot in your history. Oh, what love was that which I had to my Savior the first time He forgave my sins. I remember it. You remember each for yourselves, I dare say, that happy hour when the Lord appeared to us, bleeding on His Cross, when He seemed to say and did say in our hearts, “I am your Salvation, I have blotted out like a cloud your iniquities and like a thick cloud your sins.”

Oh, how I loved Him! Passing all loves except His own was that love which I felt for Him then. If beside the door of the place in which I met with Him there had been a stake of blazing fire wood, I would have stood upon them without chains, glad to give my flesh and blood and bones to be ashes that should testify my love to Him. Had He asked me, then, to give all my substance to the poor, I would have given all and thought myself to be amazingly rich in having beggared myself for His name’s sake. Had He commanded me then to preach in the midst of all His foes, I could have said—

***“There’s not a lamb among Your flock
I would disdain to feed,
There’s not a foe before whose face
I’d fear Your cause to plead.”***

I could realize then the language of Rutherford, when he said, being full of love to Christ, once upon a time, in the dungeon of Aberdeen—“Oh, my Lord if there were a broad Hell between me and You, if I could not get at You except by wading through it, I would not think twice but I would plunge through it all, if I might embrace You and call You mine.”

Now it is *that* first love that you and I must confess I am afraid we have, in a measure, lost. Let us just see whether we have it. When we first loved the Savior, how earnest we were. There was not a single thing in the Bible that we did not think most precious. There was not one command of His that we did not think to be like fine gold and choice silver. Never were the

doors of His house open without our being there. If there were a Prayer Meeting at any hour in the day we were there. Some said of us that we had no patience, we would do too much and expose our bodies too frequently—but we never thought of that. “Do yourself no harm,” was spoken in our ears. But we could have done anything then.

Why there are some of you who cannot walk to the Music Hall on a morning, it is too far. When you first joined the Church, you would have walked twice as far. There are some of you who cannot be at the Prayer Meeting—business will not permit. Yet when you were first baptized, there was never a Prayer Meeting from which you were absent. It is the loss of your first love that makes you seek the comfort of your bodies instead of the prosperity of your souls. Many have been the young Christians who have joined this Church and old ones, too, and I have said to them, “Well, have you got a ticket for a seat?” “No, Sir.” “Well, what will you do? Have you got a preference ticket?” “No, I cannot get one, but I do not mind standing in the crowd an hour, or two hours. I will come at five o’clock so that I can get in. Sometimes I don’t get in, Sir. But even then I feel that I have done what I ought to do in attempting to get in.”

“Well,” but I have said, “you live five miles off and there is coming and going back twice a day—you cannot do it.” “Oh, Sir,” they have said “I can do it. I feel so much the blessedness of the Sabbath and so much enjoyment of the presence of the Savior.” I have smiled at them. I could understand it, but I have not felt it necessary to caution them—and now their love is cool enough. That first love does not last half so long as we could wish. Some of you stand convicted even here, you have not that blazing love, that burning love, that ridiculous love, as the worldling would call it, which is after all the love to be most coveted and desired. No, you have lost your first love in that respect. Again, how obedient you used to be. If you saw a commandment, that was enough for you—you did it. But now you see a commandment and you see profit on the other side and how often do you dally with the profit and choose the temptation, instead of yielding an unsullied obedience to Christ?

Again—how happy you used to be in the ways of God. Your love was of that happy character that you could sing all day long. But now your religion has lost its luster, the gold has become dim, you know that when you come to the Sacramental table, you often come there without enjoying it. There was a time when every bitter thing was sweet. Whenever you heard the Word, it was all precious to you. Now you can grumble at the minister. Alas, the minister has many faults, but the question is, whether there has not been a greater change in *you* than there has been in *him*. Many there are who say, “I do not hear Mr. So-and-So as I used to”—when the fault lies in their own ears. Oh, Brethren, when we live near Christ and are in

our first love, it is amazing what little it takes to make a good preacher to us!

Why, I confess I have heard a poor illiterate Primitive Methodist preach the Gospel and I felt as if I could jump for joy all the while I was listening to him. And yet he never gave me a new thought or a pretty expression, nor one figure that I could remember. But he talked about Christ! And even his common things were to my hungry spirit like dainty meats. And I have to acknowledge and, perhaps, you have to acknowledge the same—that I have heard sermons from which I ought to have profited, but I have been thinking of the man's style, or some little mistakes in grammar. When I might have been holding fellowships with Christ in and through the ministry, I have instead been getting abroad in my thoughts even to the ends of the earth. And what is the reason of this, but that I have lost my first love?

Again—when we were in our first love, what would we do for Christ! Now how little will we do. Some of the actions which we performed when we were young Christians, but just converted, when we look back upon them, seem to have been wild and like idle tales. You remember when you were a lad and first came to Christ? You had a half-sovereign in your pocket. It was the only one you had and you met with some poor saint and gave it all away. You did not regret that you had done it, your only regret was that you had not a great deal more, for you would have given all. You remembered that something was wanted for the cause of Christ. Oh, we could give anything away when we first loved the Savior! If there was a preaching to be held five miles off and we could walk with the lay preacher to be a little comfort to him in the darkness, we were off. If there was a Sunday-School, however early it might be, we would be up so that we might be present. Unheard-of feats—things that we now look back upon with surprise—we could perform them. Why cannot we do them now? Do you know there are some people who always live upon what they have been?

I speak very plainly now. There is a Brother in this Church who may take it to himself. I hope he will. It is not very many years ago since he said to me, when I asked him why he did not do something—"Well, I have done my share. I used to do this and I have done the other. I have done so-and-so." Oh, may the Lord deliver him and all of us from living on "has-beens"! It will never do to say we have done a thing. Suppose, for a solitary moment, the world should say, "I have turned round. I will stand still." Let the sea say, "I have been ebbing and flowing all these many years. I will ebb and flow no more." Let the sun say, "I have been shining and I have been rising and setting so many days. I have done this enough to earn me a goodly name. I will stand still." And let the moon wrap her-

self up in veils of darkness and say, "I have illuminated many a night and I have lighted many a weary traveler across the moors. I will shut up my lamp and be dark forever."

Brethren, when you and I cease to labor, let us cease to live. God has no intention to let us live a useless life. But mark this. When we leave our first *works* there is no question about our having lost our first *love*. That is sure. If there is strength remaining, if there is still power mentally and physically, if we cease from our office, if we abstain from our labors, there is no solution of this question which an honest conscience will accept, except this, "You have lost your first love and, therefore, you have neglected your first works." Ah, we were all so very ready to make excuse for ourselves. Many a preacher has retired from the ministry long before he had any need to do so. He has married a rich wife. Somebody has left him a little money and he can do without it. He was growing weak in the ways of God, or else he would have said—

***"My body with my charge lay down,
And cease at once to work and live."***

And let any man here present who was a Sunday-School teacher and who has left it, who was a tract distributor and who has given it up, who was active in the way of God but is now idle, stand tonight before the bar of his conscience and say whether he is not guilty of this charge which I bring against him, that he has lost his first love.

I need not stop to say also that this may be detected in the closet as well as in our daily life. For when first love is lost, there is a want of that prayerfulness which we have. I remember the day I was baptized, I was up at three o'clock in the morning. Till six, I spent in prayer, wrestling with God. Then I had to walk some eight miles and started off and walked to the Baptism. Why, prayer was a delight to me then. My duties at that time kept me occupied pretty well from five o'clock in the morning till ten at night and I had not a moment for retirement. Yet I would be up at four o'clock to pray and though I feel very sleepy nowadays and I feel that I could not be up to pray, it was not so then, when I was in my first love.

Somehow or other, I never lacked time then. If I did not get it early in the morning, I got it late at night. I was compelled to have time for prayer with God. And what prayer it was! I had no need, then, to groan because I could not pray. For love, being fervent, I had sweet liberty at the Throne of Grace. But when first love departs, we begin to think that ten minutes will do for prayer instead of an hour and we read a verse or two in the morning, whereas we used to read a portion, but never used to go into the Word without getting some marrow and fatness. Now, business has so increased that we must get into bed as soon as we can. We have not time to pray. And then at dinner time, we used to have a little time for commun-

ion—that is dropped. And then on the Sabbath-Day, we used to make it a custom to pray to God when we got home from His House, for just five minutes before dinner, so that what we heard we might profit by. That is dropped.

And some of you that are present were in the habit of retiring for prayer when you went home. Your wives have told that story. The messengers have heard it when they have called at your houses, when they have asked the wife—“Where is your husband?” “Ah,” she has said, “He is a godly man. He cannot come home to his breakfast but he must slip upstairs alone. I know what he is doing—he is praying.” Then when he is at table he often says—“Mary, I have had a difficulty today, we must go and have a word or two of prayer together.” And some of you could not take a walk without prayer, you were so fond of it you could not have too much of it. Now where is it? You know more than you did. You have grown older. You have grown richer, perhaps. You have grown wiser in some respects. But you might give up all you have got, to go back to—

**“Those peaceful hours you once enjoyed,
How sweet their memory still!”**

Oh, what would you give if you could fill—

**“That aching void
The world can never fill,”**

but which only the same love that you had at *first*, can ever fully satisfy!

II. And now, Beloved, WHERE DID YOU AND I LOSE OUR FIRST LOVE if we have lost it? Let each one speak for himself, or rather, let me speak for each. Have you not lost your first love in the world, some of you? You used to have that little shop once—you had not very much business. But, you had enough and a little to spare. However, there was a good turn came in business, you took two shops and you are getting on very well. Is it not marvelous, that when you grew richer and had more business, you began to have less grace?

Oh, Friends, it is a very serious thing to grow rich! Of all the temptations to which God’s children are exposed it is the worst because it is one that they do *not dread* and therefore it is the more subtle temptation. You know a traveler, if he is going on a journey, takes a staff with him—it is a help to him. But suppose he is covetous and says, “I will have a hundred of these sticks,” that will be no help to him at all. He has only got a load to carry and it stops his progress instead of assisting him. But I do believe there are many Christians that lived near to God when they were living on a pound a week that might give up their yearly incomes with the greatest joy if they could have now the same contentment, the same peace of mind, the same nearness of access to God that they had in times of poverty. Ah, too much of the world is a bad thing for any man! I question very much

whether a man ought not sometimes to stop and say, "There is an opportunity of doing more trade, but it will require the whole of my time and I must give up that hour I have set apart for prayer. I will not do the trade at all. I have enough. And therefore let it go. I would rather do trade with Heaven than trade with earth."

Again—do you not think also that perhaps you may have lost your first love by getting too much with worldly people? When you were in your first love, no company suited you but the godly. But now you have got a young man that you talk with, who talks a great deal more about frivolity and gives you a great deal more of the froth and scum of levity than he ever gives you of solid godliness. Once you were surrounded by those that fear the Lord, but now you dwell in the tents of "Freedom," where you hear little but cursing. But, Friends, he that carries coals in his bosom must be burned. And he that has ill companions cannot but be injured. Seek, then, to have godly friends, that you may maintain your first love.

But another reason. Do you not think that perhaps you have forgotten how much you owe to Christ? There is one thing, that I feel from experience I am compelled to do very often, that is, to go back to where I first started—

***"I, the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me."***

You and I get to talking about our being saints. We know our election, we rejoice in our calling, we go on to sanctification. And we forget the hole of the pit from where we were dug. Ah, remember my Brothers and Sisters, you are nothing now but a sinner saved through grace—remember what you would have been—if the Lord had left you. And surely, then, by going back continually to first principles and to the great foundation stone, the Cross of Christ, you will be led to go back to your first love. Do you not think, again, that you have lost your first love by neglecting communion with Christ? Now Preacher, preach honestly and preach at yourself. Has there not been, sometimes, this temptation to do a great deal *for* Christ, but not to live a great deal *with* Christ? One of my besetting sins, I feel, is this—if there is anything to be done actively for Christ, I instinctively prefer the active exercise to the passive quiet of His presence.

There are some of you, perhaps, that are attending a Sunday-School, who would be more profitably employed to your own souls if you were spending that hour in communion with Christ. Perhaps, too, you attend the means so often that you have no time in secret to improve what you gain in the means. Mrs. Bury once said that if "all the twelve Apostles were preaching in a certain town and we could have the privilege of hearing them preach, yet if they kept us out of our closets and led us to ne-

glect prayer, better for us never to have heard their names, than to have gone to listen to them.”

We shall never love Christ much except we live near to Him. Love to Christ is dependent on our nearness to Him. It is just like the planets and the sun. Why are some of the planets cold? Why do they move at so slow a rate? Simply because they are so far from the sun. Put them where the planet Mercury is and they will be in a boiling heat and spin round the sun in rapid orbits. So, Beloved, if we live near to Christ, we cannot help loving Him. The heart that is near Jesus must be full of His love. But when we live days and weeks and months without personal prayer, without real fellowship, how can we maintain love towards a *stranger*? He must be a Friend and we must stick close to Him, as He sticks close to us—closer than a brother—or else, we shall never have our first love.

There are a thousand reasons that I might have given, but I leave each of you to search your hearts, to find out why you have lost, each of you, your first love.

III. Now, dear Friends, just give me all your attention for a moment, while I earnestly beseech and implore of you TO SEEK TO GET YOUR FIRST LOVE RESTORED. Shall I tell you why? Brothers and Sisters, though you are a child of God, if you have lost your first love, there is some trouble near at hand. “Whom the Lord loves, He chastens,” and He is sure to chasten you when you sin. It is calm with you tonight, is it? Oh, but dread that calm, there is a tempest lowering. Sin is the harbinger of tempest—read the history of David. All David’s life, in all his troubles, even in the rocks of the wild goats and in the caves of Engedi, he was the happiest of men till he lost his first love. And from the day when his lustful eye was fixed upon Bathsheba, even to the last, he went with broken bones sorrowing to his grave. It was one long string of afflictions—take heed it be not so with you.

“Ah, but,” you say “I shall not sin as David did.” Brother, Sister, you cannot tell—if you have lost your first love, what should hinder you but that you should lose your first purity? Love and purity go together. He that loves is pure. He that loves little shall find his purity decrease, until it becomes marred and polluted. I should not like to see you, my dear Friends, tried and troubled. I do weep with them that weep. If there is a child of yours sick and I hear of it, I can say honestly, I do feel something like a father to your children and as a father to you. If you have sufferings and afflictions and I know them, I desire to feel for you and spread your griefs before the Throne of God. Oh, I do not want my heavenly Father to take the rod out for you at all. But He will do it, if you fall from your first love. As sure as ever He is a Father, He will let you have the rod if your love cools. Bastards may escape the rod. If you are only base-born profes-

sors you may go happily along. But the true-born child of God, when his love declines, must and shall smart for it.

There is yet another thing, my dear Friends, if we lose our first love—what will the world say of us if we lose our first love? I must put this, not for *our* name's sake, but for *God's* dear name's sake. O what will the world say of us? There was a time and it is not gone yet, when men would point at this Church and say of it, "There is a Church that is like a bright oasis in the midst of a desert, a spot of light in the midst of darkness." Our Prayer Meetings were Prayer Meetings, indeed, the congregations were as attentive as they were numerous. Oh, how you did drink in the Word, how your eyes flashed with a living fire, whenever the name of Christ was mentioned! And what, if in a little time it shall be said, "Ah, that Church is quite as sleepy as any other, look at them when the minister preaches, why they can sleep under him, they do not seem to care for the Truth of God.

"Look at the Spurgeonites! They are just as cold and careless as others. They used to be called the most pugnacious people in the world, for they were always ready to defend their Master's name and their Master's Truth and they got that name in consequence! But now you may swear in their presence and they will not rebuke you. How near these people once used to live to God and His House, they were always there. Look at their Prayer Meetings, they would fill their seats as full at a Prayer Meeting as at an ordinary service—now they are all gone back."

"Ah," says the world, "just what I said. The fact is, it was a mere spasm—a little spiritual excitement and it has all gone down." And the worldling says, "Ah, ah, so would I have it, so would I have it!" I was reading only the other day of an account of my ceasing to be popular. It was said my Chapel was now nearly empty, that nobody went to it. I was exceedingly amused and interested. "Well, if it come to that," I said, "I shall not grieve or cry very much. But if it is said the Church has left its zeal and first love, that is enough to break any honest pastor's heart." Let the chaff go, but if the wheat remain we have comfort. Let those who are the outer-court worshippers cease to hear, what does that prove? Let them turn aside, but O, you soldiers of the Cross, if *you* turn your backs in the day of battle, where shall I hide my head? What shall I say for the great name of my Master, or for the honor of His Gospel? It is our boast and joy, that the old-fashioned doctrine has been revived in these days and that the Truth of God that Calvin preached, that Paul preached and that Jesus preached, is still mighty to save and far surpasses in power all the neologies and new-fangled notions of the present time.

But what will the heretic say, when he sees it is all over? "Ah," he will say, "that old Truth urged on by the fanaticism of a foolish young man did

wake the people a little. But it lacked marrow and strength and it all died away!" Will you thus dishonor your Lord and Master, you children of the heavenly king? I beseech you do not—but endeavor to receive again as a rich gift of the Spirit your first love.

And now, once again, dear Friends, there is a thought that ought to make each of us feel alarmed, if we have lost our first love. May not this question arise in our hearts—was I ever a child of God at all? Oh, my God, must I ask myself this question? Yes, I will. Are there not many of whom it is said, they went out from us because they were not of us? For if they had been of us, doubtless they would have continued with us. Are there not some whose goodness is as the morning cloud and as the early dew—may that not have been my case? I am speaking for you all. Put the question—may I not have been impressed under a certain sermon and may not that impression have been a mere carnal excitement? May it not have been that I thought I repented but did not really repent? May it not have been the case, that I got a hope somewhere but had not a right to it? And I never had the loving faith that unites me to the Lamb of God? May it not have been that I only thought I had love to Christ and never had it, for if I really had love to Christ, should I be as I now am?

See how far I have come down? May I not keep on going down until my end shall be perdition and the never-dying worm and the fire unquenchable? Many have gone from heights of a profession to the depths of damnation and may not I be the same? May it not be true of me that I am as a wandering star for whom is reserved blackness of darkness forever? May I not have shone brightly in the midst of the Church for a little while and yet may I not be one of those poor foolish virgins who took no oil in my vessel with my lamp and therefore my lamp will go out? Let me think, if I go on as I am, it is impossible for me to stop, if I am going downwards I may go on going downwards. And O my God, if I go on backsliding for another year—who knows where I may have backslidden to? Perhaps into some gross sin. Prevent, prevent it by Your grace! Perhaps I may backslide totally. If I am a child of God I know I cannot do *that*. But still, may it not happen that I only *thought* I was a child of God and may I not so far go back that at last my very name to live shall go because I always have been dead?

Oh! How dreadful it is to think and to see in our Church members who turn out to be dead members! If I could weep tears of blood, they would not express the emotion that I ought to feel and that you ought to feel when you think there are some among us that are dead branches of a living vine. Our deacons find that there is much of unsoundness in our members. I grieve to think that because we cannot see all our members there are many who have backslidden. There is one who says, "I joined the

Church, it is true, but I never was converted. I made a profession of being converted, but I was not and now I take no delight in the things of God. I am moral, I attend the house of prayer, but I am not converted. My name may be taken off the books. I am not a godly man.” There are others among you who perhaps have gone even further than that—have gone into sin and yet I may not know it. It may not come to my ears in so large a Church as this. Oh! I beseech you, my dear Friends, by Him that lives and was dead, let not your good be evil spoken of, by losing your first love.

Are there some among you that are *professing* religion and not *possessing* it? Oh, give up your profession, or else get the Truth of God and sell it not. Go home, each of you and cast yourselves on your faces before God and ask Him to search you and try you and know your ways and see if there is any evil way in you and pray that He may lead you in the way everlasting. And if up to now you have only professed, but have not *possessed*, seek the Lord while He may be found and call upon Him while He is near. You are warned, each one of you. You are solemnly told to search yourselves and make short work of it. And if any of you are hypocrites, at God’s great day, guilty as I may be in many respects, there is one thing I am clear of—I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God. I do not believe that any people in the world shall be damned more terribly than you shall if you perish, for of this thing I have not shunned to speak—the great evil of making a profession without being sound at heart.

No, I have even gone so near to personality, that I could not have gone further without mentioning your names. And rest assured, God’s grace being with me, neither you nor myself shall be spared in the pulpit in any personal sin that I may observe in any one of you. But oh, do let us be sincere! May the Lord sooner split this Church till only a tenth of you remain, than ever suffer you to be multiplied a hundred-fold unless you be multiplied with the living in Zion and with the holy flock that the Lord Himself has ordained and will keep unto the end. Tomorrow morning, we shall meet together and pray that we may have our first love restored. And I hope many of you will be found there to seek again the love which you have almost lost.

And as for you that never had that love at all, the Lord breathe it upon you now for the love of Jesus. Amen.

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LOVE'S COMPLAINING

NO. 1926

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

“Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember, therefore, from where you are fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come to you quickly and will remove your lamp stand from its place—unless you repent.”
Revelation 2:4, 5.

IT was the work of the priest to go into the Holy Place and to trim the seven-branched lamp of gold—see how our Great High Priest walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks—His work is not occasional, but constant. Wearing robes which are at once royal and priestly, He is seen lighting the holy lamps, pouring in the sacred oil and removing impurities which would dim the light.

Hence our Lord's fitness to deal with the Churches, which are these golden lamp stands, for no one knows so much about the lamps as the person whose *constant* work it is to watch them and trim them. No one knows the Churches as Jesus does, for the care of all the Churches daily comes upon Him. He continually walks among them and holds their ministers as stars in His right hand. His eyes are perpetually upon the Churches, so that He knows their works, their sufferings and their sins—and those eyes are as flames of fire, so that He sees with a penetration, discernment and accuracy to which no other can attain. We sometimes judge the condition of religion too leniently, or else we err on the other side and judge too severely. Our eyes are dim with the world's smoke, but His eyes are as flames of fire. He sees the Churches through and through and knows their true condition much better than they know themselves. The Lord Jesus Christ is a most careful Observer of Churches and of individuals—nothing is hid from His observant eyes.

As He is the most *careful* Observer, so He is the most candid. He is always “the faithful and true Witness.” He loves much and, therefore, He never judges harshly. He loves much and, therefore, He always judges jealously. Jealousy is the sure attendant of such love as His. He will neither speak smooth words nor bitter words, but He will speak the Truth of God—the Truth in love, the Truth as He, Himself, perceives it and as He would have us perceive it. Well may He say, “He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the Churches,” since His sayings are so true, so just, so weighty!

Certainly no observer can be so *tender* as the Son of God. Those lamps are very precious to Him—it cost Him His life to light them. “Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it.” Every Church I, to our Lord, a more sublime thing than a constellation in the heavens—as He is precious to His saints, so are they precious to Him. He cares little for empires, kingdoms, or republics. His heart is set on the Kingdom of Righteousness of which His Cross is the royal standard. He must reign until His foes are vanquished and this is the great thought of His mind at this present, “From this day on expecting till His enemies be made His footstool.” He ceases not to watch over His Church—His Sacrifice is ended, but not His service in caring for the golden lamps! He has completed the redemption of His bride but He continues her preservation.

I therefore feel, at this time, that we may well join in a prayer to our Lord Jesus to come into our midst and put our light in order. Oh for a visit from Him such as He paid in vision to the seven Churches of Asia! With Him is the oil to feed the living flame and He knows how to pour it in according to due measure. With Him are those golden snuffers with which to remove every superfluity of naughtiness so that our lights may so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in Heaven! Oh for His Presence, now, to search us and to sanctify us—to cause us to shine forth to His Father’s praise! We would be judged of the Lord that we may not be condemned with the world! We would pray, this morning, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there is any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.” All things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do and we delight to have it so! We invite you, O Great High Priest, to come into this, Your sanctuary, and look to this, Your lamp, this morning!

In the text, as it is addressed to the Church at Ephesus and to us, we note three things. First, we note that *Christ perceives*—“I know your works...nevertheless I have this against you.” Secondly, *Christ prescribes*—“Remember, therefore, from where you are fallen and repent,” and so forth. Thirdly, *Christ persuades*—persuades with a threat—“I will remove your candlestick out of its place”—persuades, also, with a promise, “To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” If the Lord, Himself, is here at this time, our plan of discourse will be a river of life. But if He is not among us by His Holy Spirit, it will be as the dry bed of a torrent which bears the name of, “river,” but lacks the living stream! We expect our Lord’s Presence—He will come to the lamps which His office calls upon Him to trim—it has been His custom to be with us! Some of us have already met Him this morning and we have constrained Him to tarry with us!

I. First, then, we notice that HE PERCEIVES.

Our Lord sorrowfully perceives the faults of His Church—“Nevertheless I have this against you,” but *He does not so perceive those faults as to be forgetful of that which He can admire and accept*, for He begins His letter with commendations, “I know your works, and your labor, and your pa-

tience, and how you cannot bear them which are evil." Do not think, my Brothers and Sisters, that our Beloved is blind to the beauties of His Church. On the contrary, He delights to observe them. He can see beauties where she, herself, cannot see them. Where we observe much to deplore, His loving eyes see much to admire. The Graces which He, Himself, creates, He can always perceive. When we, in the earnestness of self-examination, overlook them and write bitter things against ourselves, the Lord Jesus sees, even, in those bitter self-condemnations, a life and earnestness and sincerity which He loves. Our Lord has a keen eye for all that is good. When He searches our hearts, He never passes by the faintest longing, or desire, or faith, or love of any of His people. He says, "I know your works."

But this is our point at this time, that while Jesus can see all that is good, *yet in very faithfulness He sees all that is evil*. His love is not blind! He does not say, "As many as I love I commend," but, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." It is more necessary for us that we should make a discovery of our *faults* than of our virtues. So notice in this text that Christ perceives the flaw in His Church, even in the midst of her earnest service. The Church at Ephesus was full of work. "I know your works and your labor, and for My name's sake you have labored, and have not fainted." It was such a laborious Church that it pushed on and on with diligent perseverance and never seemed to flag in its Divine mission. Oh that we could say as much of all our Churches! I have lived to see many brilliant projects lighted and left to die out in smoke. I have heard of schemes which were to illuminate the world—but not a spark remains. Holy perseverance is a great desire!

In these 33 years, we thank God He has enabled us to labor and not to faint. There has been a continuance of everything attempted and no drawing back from anything. "This is the work, this is the labor," to hold out even to the end. Oh how I have dreaded lest we should have to give up any holy enterprise or cut short any gracious effort! Until now the Lord has helped us. With men and means, liberality and zeal, He has supplied us. In this case the angel of the Church has been very little of an angel from Heaven, but very much of a human angel, for in the weakness of my flesh and in the heaviness of my spirit have I pursued my calling, but I have pursued it by the help of God! By His Grace I continue to this day and this Church, with equal footsteps, is at my side—for which the whole praise is due to the Lord who faints not, neither is weary! Having put my hands to the plow, I have not looked back, but have steadily pressed forward, making straight furrows—but it has been only by the Grace of God!

Alas, under all the laboring, the Lord Jesus perceived that the Ephesians had left their first love—and this was a grievous fault. So it may be in this Church—every wheel may continue to revolve and the whole machinery of ministry may be kept going at its normal rate—and yet there may be a great secret evil which Jesus perceives that may be marring all.

But this Church at Ephesus was not only laborious, it was patient in suffering great persecution. He says of it, "I know your works and your pa-

tience, and how you have borne, and have patience, and have not fainted." Persecution upon persecution visited the faithful but they bore it all with holy courage and constancy—and continued still—confessing their Lord. This was good and the Lord highly approved it. But yet, underneath it, He saw the tokens of decline—they had left their first love. So there may seem to be all the patient endurance and dauntless courage that there should be and yet, as a fair apple may have a worm at its core, so may it be with the Church when it looks best to the eyes of friends.

The Ephesian Church excelled in something else, namely, in its discipline, its soundness in the faith and fidelity towards heretics, for the Lord says of it, "how you cannot bear them which are evil." They would not have it! They would not tolerate false doctrine. They would not put up with unclean living. They fought against evil not only in the common people, but in prominent individuals. "You have tried them which say they are Apostles and are not and have found them liars." They had dealt with the great ones; they had not flinched from the unmasking of falsehood. Those who seemed to be Apostles, they had dragged to the light and discovered to be deceivers. This Church was not honeycombed with doubt. It laid no claim to breadth of thought and liberality of view. It was honest to its Lord. He says of it, "This you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate." This was grand of them—it showed a backbone of truth.

I wish some of the Churches of this age had a little of this holy decision about them, for nowadays, if a man is clever, he may preach the vilest lie that was ever vomited from the mouth of Hell and it will go down with some! He may assail every doctrine of the Gospel; he may blaspheme the Holy Trinity; he may trample on the blood of the Son of God and yet nothing shall be said about it if he is held in repute as a man of advanced thought and liberal ideas! The Church at Ephesus was not of this mind. She was strong in her convictions; she could not yield the faith nor play the traitor to her Lord. For this her Lord commended her and yet He says, "I have this against you, because you have left your first love."

When love dies, orthodox doctrine becomes a corpse, a powerless formalism. Adhesion to the Truth of God sours into bigotry when the sweetness and light of love to Jesus depart. Love Jesus and then it is well to hate the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, but mere hate of evil will tend to evil if love of Jesus is not there to sanctify it! I need not make a personal application, but that which is spoken to Ephesus may be spoken at this hour to ourselves. As we hope that we may appropriate the commendation, so let us see whether the expostulation may not also apply to us. "I have this against you, because you have left your first love." Thus I have shown you that Jesus sees the evil beneath all the good—He does not ignore the good—but He will not pass over the evil.

So, next, *this evil was a very serious one*. It was love declining—"You have left your first love." "Is that serious?" asks one. It is the most serious evil of all, for the Church is the bride of Christ and for a bride to fail in love is to fail in all things! It is idle for the wife to say that she is obedient

and so forth, if love to her husband has evaporated. Her wifely duty cannot be fulfilled—she has lost the very life and soul of the marriage state. So, my Brothers and Sisters, this is a most important matter, our love to Christ, because it touches the very heart of that communion with Him which is the crown and essence of our spiritual life. As a Church we *must* love Jesus or else we have lost our reason for existence! A Church has no reason for being a Church when she has no love within her heart, or when that love grows cold. Have I not often reminded you that almost any disease may be hopefully endured except disease of the heart? But when our sickness is a disease of the heart, it is full of danger and it was so in this case—“You have left your first love.” It is a disease of the heart, a central, fatal disease, unless the Great Physician shall interpose to stay its progress and to deliver us from it. Oh, in any man, in any woman, any child of God here, let alone in the Church as a whole, if there is a leaving of the first love, it is a woeful thing! Lord have mercy upon us! Christ have mercy upon us! This should be our solemn litany at once. No peril can be greater than this! Lose love, lose all! Leave our first love, we have left strength, peace, joy and holiness!

I call your attention, however, to this point, that *it was He that found it out*. “I have this against you, because you have left your first love.” Jesus Himself found it out! I do not know how it strikes you, but as I thought it over, this fact brought tears to my eyes. When I begin to leave off loving Christ, or love Him less than I did, I would like to find it out *myself* and, if I did so, there would soon be a cure for it. But for my Master to find it out, oh, it seems so hard, so sad a thing! That we should keep on growing cold, and cold, and cold and never care about it till the Beloved points it out to us! Why even the angel of the Church did not find it out—the *minister* did not know it! But He saw it who loves us so well that He delights in our love and pines when it begins to fail.

To Him we are unutterably dear. He loved us up out of the Pit into His bosom. He loved us up from the dunghill among beggars to sit at His right hand upon His Throne—and it is sorrowful that He should have to complain of our cooling love while we are utterly indifferent to the matter! Does Jesus care more about our love than we do? He loves us better than we love ourselves! How good of Him to care one jot about our love! This is not a complaint of an enemy, but of a dear wounded Friend.

I notice that *Jesus found it out with great pain*. I can hardly conceive a greater grief to Him as the Husband of His Church than to look her in the face and say, “You have left your first love.” What can she give Him but love? Will she deny Him this? A poor thing is the Church in herself—her Lord married her when she was in beggary—and if she does not give Him love, what has she to give Him? If she begins to be unfaithful in heart to Him, what is she worth? Why, an unloving wife is a foul fountain of discomfort and dishonor to her husband! O Beloved, shall it be so with you? Will you grieve Emmanuel? Will you wound your Well-Beloved? Church of God, will you grieve Him whose heart was pierced for your redemption? Brother, Sister, can you and I let Jesus find out that our love is departing,

that we are ceasing to be zealous for His name? Can we wound Him so? Is not this to crucify the Lord afresh? Might He not hold up His hands, this morning, with fresh blood upon them, and say, "These are the wounds which I received in the house of my Friends. It was nothing that I died for them, but evil it is that, after having died for them, they have failed to give Me their hearts"? Jesus is not so sick of our sin as of our lukewarmness. It is a sad business to my heart. I hope it will be sad to all whom it concerns, that our Lord should be the first to spy out our declines in love.

The Savior, having thus seen this with pain, now points it out. As I read this passage over to myself, I noticed that the Savior had nothing to say about the sins of the *heathen* among whom the Ephesians dwelt—they are alluded to because it must have been the heathen who persecuted the Church and caused it to endure and exhibit patience. The Savior, however, has nothing to say against the heathen and He does not say much more than a word about those who were evil. These had been cast out and He merely says, "You cannot bear them which are evil." He denounced no judgment upon the Nicolaitanes, except that He hated them and, even the apostles which were found to be liars, the Master dismisses with that word. He leaves the ungodly in their own condemnation. But what He has to say is against *His own Beloved*—"I have this against you." It seems as if the Master might pass over sin in a thousand others, but He cannot wink at failure of love in His own espoused one! "The Lord your God is a jealous God." The Savior loves, so that His love is cruel as the grave against cold-heartedness! He said of the Church of Laodicea, "I will spue you out of My mouth." This was one of His own Churches, too—and yet she made Him sick with her lukewarmness! God grant that we may not be guilty of such a crime as that!

The Savior pointed out the failure of love and when He pointed it out, *He called it by a lamentable name.* "Remember, therefore, from where you are fallen." He calls it a *fall* to leave our first love! Brothers, Sisters, this Church had not been licentious, it had not gone aside to false doctrine, it had not become idle, it had not been cowardly in the hour of persecution! But this one sin summed up the whole—she did not love Christ as she once loved Him and He calls this a fall. A fall, indeed, it is! "Oh, I thought," says one, "that if a member of the Church got *drunk*—that was a fall." That is a grievous fall, but it is also a fall if we become intoxicated with the world and lose the freshness of our devotion to Jesus. It is a fall from a high estate of fellowship to the dust of worldliness. "You are fallen." The word sounds very harshly in my ears—no, not harshly, for His love speaks it in so pathetic a manner—but it thunders deep down in my soul. I cannot bear it! It is so sadly true. "You are fallen." "Remember from where you are fallen." Indeed, O Lord, we have fallen when we have left You, our first love.

The Master evidently counts this decline of love to be a personal wrong done to Himself. "I have this against you." It is not an offense against the king, nor against the judge, but against the Lord Jesus as the Husband of the Church—an offense against the very heart of Christ, Himself. "I have

this against you.” He does not say, “Your neighbor has something against you; your child has something against you; your God has something against you,” but, “I, I, your Hope, your Joy, your Delight, your Savior—I have this against you.” The word is somewhat of an intruder here. Our translators put it in italics and well they might, for it is a bad word, since it seems to make a small thing of a very grave change. The Lord has this against us and it is no mere “something.” Come, Brothers and Sisters, if we have not broken any law, nor offended in any way so as to grieve anybody else, this is sorrow enough, if our love has grown in the least degree chill towards Him, for we have done a terrible wrong to our Best Friend! This is the bitterness of our offense! Against You, You only, have I sinned and done this evil in Your sight, that I have left my first love! The Savior tells us this most lovingly. I wish I knew how to speak as tenderly as He does and yet, I feel at this moment, that I can and must be tender in this matter, for I am speaking about myself as much as about anybody else! I am grieving, grieving over some here present, grieving for all of us, but grieving most of all for myself, that our Well-Beloved should have cause to say, “I have this against you, that you have left your first love.”

So much for what our Lord perceives. Holy Spirit, bless it to us!

II. And now, secondly, let us note what THE SAVIOR PRESCRIBES. The Savior’s prescription is couched in these three words—“Remember.” “Repent.” “Return.”

The first word is *Remember*. “You have left your first love.” Remember, then, what your first love was and compare your present condition with it. At first, nothing diverted you from your Lord. He was your life, your love, your joy. Now you look for recreation somewhere else and other charms and other beauties win your heart. Are you not ashamed of this? Once you were never wearied with hearing of Him and serving Him. Never were you overdone with Christ and His Gospel—many sermons, many Prayer Meetings, many Bible readings—and yet none too many! Now sermons are long, services are dull and you must have your jaded appetite excited with novelties. How is this? Once you were never displeased with Jesus, whatever He did with you. If you had been sick, or poor, or dying, you would still have loved and blessed His name for all things. He remembers this fondness and regrets its departure. He says to you, today, “I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your espousals, when you went after Me in the wilderness.” You would have gone after your Lord anywhere in those days—across the sea, or through the fire you would have pursued Him—nothing would have been too hot or too heavy for you then! Is it so now? Remember! Remember from where you are fallen. Remember the vows, the tears, the communing, the happy raptures of those days! Remember and compare them with your present state.

Remember and consider that when you were in your first love, that love was none too warm. Even then, when you did live *to* Him and *for* Him and *with* Him, you were none too holy, none too consecrated, none too zealous! If you were not too forward, then, what are you now—now that you have come down, even, from that poor attainment? Remember the past

with sad forebodings of the future! If you have come down from where you were, who is to tell you where you will cease your declining? He who has sunk so far may fall much farther. Is it not so? Though you say in your heart like Hazael, "Is your servant a dog?" you may turn out worse than a dog—yes, prove yourself a very wolf! Who knows? You may even, now, be a devil! You may turn out a Judas, a son of perdition and deny your Master, selling Him for 30 pieces of silver! When a stone begins to fall, it falls with an ever-increasing rate—and when a soul begins to leave its first love, it quits it more and more, and more and more till, at last, it falls terribly. Remember!

The next word of the prescription is, "*Repent.*" Repent as you did at first. The word so suitable to sinners is suitable to you, for you have grievously sinned. Repent of the wrong you have done your Lord by leaving your first love of Him. Could you have lived a seraphic life, only breathing His love, only existing for Him, you had done little enough—but to quit your first love—how grievously have you wronged Him! That love was well deserved, was it not? Why, then, have you left it? Is Jesus less fair than He was? Does He love you less than He did? Has He been less kind and tender to you than He used to be? Say, have you outgrown Him? Can you do without Him? Have you a hope of salvation apart from Him? I charge you, repent of this, your ill-doing towards One who has a greater claim upon your love than ever He had! He ought to be, today, loved *more* than you loved Him at your very best! O my Heart, is not all this most surely true? How evil you are behaving! What an ingrate you are! Repent! Repent!

Repent of much good that you have left undone through lack of love. Oh, if you had always loved your Lord at your best, what might you not have known of Him by this time! What good deeds you might have done by force of His love! How many hearts might you have won for your Lord if your own heart had been more full of love, if your own soul had been more on fire! You have lived a poor beggarly life because you have allowed such poverty of love. Repent! Repent! To my mind, as I thought over this text, the call for repentance grew louder and louder because of the occasion of its utterance. Here is the glorious Lord, coming to His Church and speaking to her angel in tones of tender kindness. He condescends to visit His people in all His Majesty and Glory, intending nothing but to manifest Himself in love to His own elect as He does not to the world.

And yet He is compelled, even then, to take to chiding and to say, "I have this against you, because you have left your first love." Here is a love-visit clouded with upbraiding—necessary upbraiding! What mischief sin has done! It is a dreadful thing that when Jesus comes to His own dear bride, He should have to speak in grief and not in joy. Must holy communion, which is the wine of Heaven, be embittered with the tonic of expostulation? I see the upper springs of nearest fellowship, where the Waters of Life leap from their first source in the heart of God! Are not these streams most pure and precious? If a man drinks of them, he lives forever! Shall it be that even at the Fountainhead they shall be dashed

with bitterness? Even when Christ communes personally with us, must He say, "I have this against you"? Break, my Heart, that it should be so! Well may we repent with a deep repentance when our most choice joys are flavored with the bitter herbs of regret, that our Beloved should have something against us!

But then He says, in effect, *Return*. The third word is this—"Repent and do the first works." Notice, that He does not say, "Repent and get back your first love." This seems rather amazing, but then love is the chief of the first works and, moreover, the first works can only come of the first love! There must be in every declining Christian a *practical repentance*. Do not be satisfied with regrets and resolves. Do the first works—do not strain after the first *emotions*—but do the first works. No renewal is so valuable as the practical cleansing of our way. If the life is made right, it will prove that the love is so. In doing the first works, you will prove that you have come back to your first love. The prescription is complete because the doing of the first works is meant to include the feeling of the first feelings, the sighing of the first sighs, the enjoying of the first joys—these are all supposed to accompany returning obedience and activity.

We are to get back to these first works at once. Most men come to Christ with a leap and I have observed that many who come back to Him usually do so at a bound. The slow revival of one's love is almost an impossibility—as well expect the dead to rise by degrees! Love to Christ is often love at first sight—we see Him and are conquered by Him. If we grow cold, the best thing we can do is to fasten our eyes on Him till we cry, "My soul melted while my Beloved spoke." It is a happy circumstance if I can cry, "Before I was aware my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib." How sweet for the Lord to put us back, again, at once, into the old place, back, again, in a moment! My prayer is that it may be so this morning with any declining one. May you so repent as not merely to feel the old feelings, but instantly to do the first works and be once more as eager, as zealous, as generous, as prayerful as you used to be! If we should again see you breaking the alabaster box, we should know that the old love had returned. May the Good Master help us to do as well as ever, yes, much better than before!

Notice, however, that this will require much of effort and warfare, for the promise which is made is "to him that overcomes." Overcoming implies conflict. Depend upon it, if you conquer a wandering heart, you will have to fight for it. "To him that overcomes," says He, "will I give to eat of the Tree of Life." You must fight your way back to the Garden of the Lord. You will have to fight against lethargy, against an evil heart of unbelief, against the benumbing influence of the world. In the name and power of Him who bids you repent, you must wrestle and struggle till you get the mastery over self and yield your whole nature to your Lord.

So I have shown you how Christ prescribes and I greatly need a few minutes for the last part, because I wish to dwell with solemn earnestness upon it. I have no desire to say a word by which I should show myself off as an orator, but I long to speak a word by which I may prove myself a

true Brother pleading with you in deep sympathy, because in all the evil which I rebuke, I mourn my own personal share. Bless us, O Spirit of the Lord!

III. Now see, Brothers and Sisters, HE PERSUADES. This is the third point—the Lord Jesus persuades His erring one to repent.

First, He *persuades with a warning*—“I will come unto you.” “Quickly” is not in the original—the Revised Version has left it out. Our Lord is generally very slow at the work of judgement—“I will come unto you and will remove your candlestick out of its place—unless you repent.” This He must do. He cannot allow His Light to be apart from love and if the first love is gone, the Church shall be left in darkness. The Truth of God must always shine, but not always in the same place. The place must be made fit by love, or the Light shall be removed.

Our Lord means, first, I will take away the comfort of the Word. He raises up certain ministers and makes them burning and shining lights in the midst of His Church. And when the people gather together they are cheered and enlightened by their shining. A ministry blessed of the Lord is a singular comfort to the Church of God. The Lord can easily take away that light which has brought comfort to so many—He can remove the good man to another sphere, or He can call him Home to his rest. The extinguisher of death can put out the candle which now gladdens the house. The Church which has lost a ministry by which the Lord's Glory has shone forth, has lost a good deal and if this loss has been sent in chastisement for decline of love, it is all the harder to bear. I can point you to places where once was a man of God and all went well—but the people grew cold and the Lord took away their leader—and the place is now a desolation! Those who now attend those courts and listen to a modern ministry cry out because of the famine of the Word of the Lord! O Friends, let us value the light while we have it and prove that we do so by profiting by it! But how can we profit if we leave our first love? The Lord may take away our comfort as a Church if our first zeal shall die down.

But the candlestick also symbolizes usefulness—it is that by which a Church shines. The use of a Church is to preserve the Truth, with which to illuminate the neighborhood, to illuminate the world! God can soon cut short our usefulness and He will do so if we cut short our love. If the Lord is withdrawn, we can go on with our work as we used to do, but nothing will come of it—we can go on with Sunday schools, Mission stations, daughter Churches and yet accomplish nothing! Brothers and Sisters, we can go on with the Orphanage, the College, the Colportage, the Evangelistic Society, the Book Fund—and everything else—and yet nothing will be effected if the arm of the Lord is not made bare!

He can, if He wills, even take away from the Church her very existence as a Church! Ephesus is gone—nothing but ruins can be found. Rome once held a noble Church of Christ, but has not her name become the symbol of Antichrist? The Lord can soon take away candlesticks out of their places if the Church uses her light for her own glory and is not filled

with His love. God forbid that we should fall under this condemnation! Of Your mercy, O Lord, forbid it! Let it not so happen to any one of us!

And this may occur to us as *individuals*. You, dear Brother or Sister, if you lose your first love, may soon lose your joy, your peace, your usefulness! You who are now so bright, may grow dull. You who are now so useful, may become useless. You were once an instructor of the foolish and a teacher of babes—but if the Lord is withdrawn, you will instruct nobody, you will be in the dark yourself—alas, you may come to lose the very name of Christians, as some have done who once seemed to be burning and shining lights! They were foolish virgins and, before long, they were heard to cry, “Our lamps have gone out!” The Lord can and will take away the candlestick out of its place if we put Him out of His place by a failure in our love to Him.

How can I persuade you, then, better than with the warning words of my Master? My Beloved, I persuade you from my very soul not to encounter these dangers, not to run these terrible risks, for as you would not wish to see either the Church or yourself left without the Light of God, to pine in darkness, it is necessary that you abide in Christ and go on to love Him more and more.

The Savior holds out a promise as His other persuasive. Upon this I can only dwell for a minute. It seems a very wonderful promise to me—“To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” Observe, those who lose their first love, fall, but those who abide in love are made to stand. In contrast to the Fall which took place in the Paradise of God, we have man eating of the Tree of Life and so living forever! If we, through Grace, overcome the common tendency to decline in love, then shall we be confirmed and settled in the favor of the Lord. By eating of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, we fell. By eating of the fruit of a better tree we live and stand fast forever! Life proved true by love shall be nourished on the best of food—it shall be sustained by fruit from the garden of the Lord, Himself, gathered by the Savior’s own hands!

Note again, those who lose their first love wander far, they depart from God. “But,” says the Lord, “if you keep your first love you shall not wander, but you shall come into closer fellowship. I will bring you nearer to the center. I will bring you to eat of the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” The inner ring is for those who grow in love—the center of all joy is only to be reached by much love. We know God as we love God! We enter into His Paradise as we abide in His love. What joy is here! What a reward has love!

Then notice the mystical blessing which lies here, waiting your meditation. Do you know how we fell? The woman took of the fruit of the forbidden tree and gave to Adam, and Adam ate and fell. The reverse is the case in the promise before us—the Second Adam takes of the Divine fruit from the Tree of Promise and hands it to His spouse. She eats and lives forever! He who is the Father of the age of Grace hands down to us immortal joys which He has plucked from a tree which never withers! The reward of love

is to eat the Fruit of Life. "We are getting into mysteries," says one. Yes, I am intentionally lifting a corner of the veil and no more. I only mean to give you a glimpse at the promised gift! Into His innermost joys, our Lord will bring us if we keep up our first love and go from strength to strength in it!

Marvelous things are locked up in the cases of which Love holds the key. Sin set the angel with a flaming sword between us and the Tree of Life in the midst of the garden—but Love has quenched that sword and now the angel beckons us to come into the innermost secrets of Paradise. We shall know as we are known when we love as we are loved. We shall live the life of God when we are wholly taken up with the love of God. The love of Jesus answered by our love to Jesus makes the sweetest music the heart can know! No joy on earth is equal to the bliss of being all taken up with love to Christ. If I had my choice of all the lives that I could live, I certainly would not choose to be an emperor, nor to be a millionaire, nor to be a philosopher, for power, wealth and knowledge bring with them sorrow and travail. But I would choose to have nothing to do but to love my Lord Jesus—nothing, I mean, but to do all things for His sake and out of love to Him. Then I know that I should be in Paradise, yes, in the midst of the Paradise of God, and I should have meat to eat which is all unknown to men of the world!

Heaven on earth is abounding love to Jesus! This is the first and last of true delight—to love Him who is the First and the Last. To love Jesus is another name for Paradise! Lord, let me know this by continual experience! "You are soaring aloft," cries one! Yes, I admit it. Oh that I could allure you to a heavenward flight upon wings of love! There is bitterness in declining love—it is a very consumption of the soul and makes us weak, faint and low. But true love is the savor of Glory! See the heights, the glittering heights, the glorious heights, the everlasting hills to which the Lord of Life will conduct all those who are faithful to Him through the power of His Holy Spirit! See, O Love, your ultimate abode! I pray that what I have said may be blessed by the Holy Spirit to the bringing of us all nearer to the Bridegroom of our souls! Amen.

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HOLDING FAST THE FAITH

NO. 2007

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 5, 1888,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON**

***“And to the angel of the Church in Pergamos write: These things says He which has the sharp sword with two edges. I know your works and where you dwell, even where Satan’s seat is: and you hold fast My name and have not denied My faith.”
Revelation 2:12, 13.***

YOUR attention will be principally asked to these words—“You hold fast My name and have not denied My faith.”

Specially note, dear Friends, at the opening of this morning’s meditation the character under which the Lord Jesus Christ presents Himself to the Church at Pergamos. “These things says He which has the sharp sword with two edges.” Does the Lord Jesus come to His Church in that way? Does He, at the door of the Church, bear a sword? A sword un-sheathed? A sharp sword? A sharp sword with two edges? Yes, even to His visible Church this is how our Lord Jesus Christ appears. To His own spiritual and faithful ones He is to each one a husband full of unutterable tenderness and love.

But to the visible Church, which at its best estate is never altogether pure, He appears in severer form. To a Church He comes as Captain of the Lord’s host and He wields a sharp sword with two edges. It is the parallel of that passage where John the Baptist says of Him—“His fan is in His hand and He will thoroughly purge His floor and He will gather His wheat into His garner. But He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” That winnowing fan is never out of His hand for it is always needed. Even though our Lord is full of Divine Grace, He is also full of Truth. His love to His servants manifests itself in a burning jealousy which will not endure evil.

“He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver.” We think of the coming of our Lord as a joy and a blessing. But, oh, remember that question, “But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appears?” The Lord bears the sword and He bears it not in vain. Time has not blunted its edge, it is “sharp.” And it has two edges, as of old. But what will He do with that sword in reference to a Church? We are not left in any doubt upon that point. Having mentioned some whose doctrines and lives were unclean, the Lord says, “Repent. Or else I will come unto you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.”

He turns the sword against those within the Church who have no right to be there. It is no trifling thing to be a Church member. I could earnestly wish that certain professors had never been members of a Church at all.

For if they had been outside the Church, they might have been in far less peril than they are within its bounds. Outside, their conduct might have been tolerated. But it is not consistent with an avowal of discipleship towards Jesus. I say this with deep sorrow. O false Professors, you may go down to Hell readily enough without increasing your damnation by coming into Christ's Church with a lie in your right hand. Alas for those who are not Christians in heart and yet profess to be so!

Such ought to be startled by the vision of the Lord Himself drawing near to a Church with a sharp sword in His hand. Surely, "The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness has surprised the hypocrites." Yet is there comfort to the sincere in this glorious Man of War? He will smite those who are the enemies of His holy cause but He will also beat off those who attack His people from without. His sword is for the defense of the faithful. It is drawn from its sheath to protect the timid and the trembling. Jesus is come as our Joshua, to chase the enemy before us and lead us onward, conquering and to conquer. The sword with two edges is the defender of the least of those whose hearts are right before the Lord.

I introduce the subject as the Spirit Himself introduces it. I would make the sermon sweet to the saints but the preface needs to be sharp lest any seize upon comforts to which they have no right. The Paschal Lamb is always to be eaten with bitter herbs—those bitter herbs I have set upon the table. The name of Jesus, which is the song of angels and the treasure of saints, has terror in it to those who refuse Him. For He who bears that name shall judge the quick and dead and pronounce condemnation on the unrighteous. Notice that this blessed Savior watches His Church with an observant eye. He looks at the Church in Pergamos and He says, "I know your works and where you dwell, even where Satan's seat is."

The Lord sees the position and the peril of the Church at Pergamos, "where Satan dwells." Probably there were horrible idolatries with obscene orgies in the city or it may have been a place of peculiar licentiousness—or of special persecution. We cannot, at this distance, of time tell exactly what it was. But the Lord regarded it as the citadel of Satan. There are places in the world at this day where sin has so much the upper hand or where error and unbelief reign so supreme that the devil would seem to have there taken up his residence and to have made it his capital city. This is a trying neighborhood for a Church of Christ and yet it is the place where it is most wanted.

You, dear Friend, may be living in society where the Evil One rules with undisputed sway. You are not favored to dwell with your fellow Christians but you go home to be met with blasphemies at the door. And all the week fights and sounds assail your eyes and ears which make you feel like Lot in Sodom. I am sorry for you. But let it comfort you that your Lord knows all about it and He can either remove you from the trying position or else He can still more glorify His Divine Grace by supporting you in it and enabling you to overcome the enemy. He knows that "Satan desires to have you, that he may sift you as wheat." And Jesus Christ prays for you that your faith fail not.

He knows your perils and He considers your trials. Right well He perceives the way in which Satan would first mislead you and then accuse you. The subtlety of the old serpent He understands. He sees your struggles, your failures and your desperate endeavors to hold fast the faith. He knows how at night you are grieved as you make confession before Him of your shortcomings. But He knows, also, the peculiar circumstances in which you are placed and He judges you in great mercy. If you are holding fast His name and have not denied the faith—even that may be to Him a surer proof of your truthfulness of heart than works of labor and patience might be in other instances.

You have borne fewer clusters than another vine but Jesus knows that you grow in a very barren bit of ground and He thinks well of your little fruit. Your day's work does not look like much when it is done but when horses plow a rock so hard that it breaks the plowshare, no farmer expects so much to be done as when a light loam has to be gently turned over. The Lord Jesus takes all our surroundings into consideration. He loves us too well to make excuse for our sins, yet He Himself mentions the circumstances which make our act to be rather failure than fault, even as He did for the first disciples when He found them asleep and He said, "The spirit truly is willing but the flesh is weak."

O dear Children of God, if you are placed in positions of peculiar trial and difficulty, and if your hindrances are so many that you cannot accomplish one-tenth as much as you desire—then hear how Jesus puts it—"I know where you dwell, even where Satan's seat is." If you are faithful to your Lord and firm in His Truth, He will commend you and say, "Yet you hold fast My name and have not denied My faith." I wonder whether this word of comfort is meant for somebody here, or for some friend who will read the sermon. I feel that it must be so.

Many of our Lord's beloved ones are, in God's sight, now doing much more, under distressing circumstances, than they used to do in happier days. When they had ten pounds entrusted to them, they brought in two by way of interest. And now that they have only one pound, they bring in one pound of interest—thus you see that they produce a far larger percentage than they used to do. And this is the Lord's way of calculating—for it is according to righteousness. When we have little strength and are placed in positions of great difficulty, then the Lord thinks all the more of what we produce and regards it as all the surer proof of fidelity.

In the text it is commendation enough for Pergamos, under the circumstances that dwelling so close to Beelzebub's own capital, close under the shadow of the throne of Hell—that Church could earn this praise—"You hold fast My name and have not denied My faith." Let us give earnest attention to this commendation. Oh, that we may earn it ourselves. And if we have already earned it, may we be helped by the Holy Spirit to hold it fast, so that no man take our crown!

I. The first head will be, LET US CONSIDER THIS FACT. I hope it is a fact with many here present as surely as it was a fact with Pergamos. I

trust it can be said of this Church and of its members—"You hold fast My name and have not denied My faith."

Notice, dear Friends, that the *name* of Christ is here made to be identical with the *faith* of Christ. "You hold fast *My name* and have not denied *My faith*." The faith of Scripture has Christ for its center, Christ for its circumference and Christ for its substance. The name—that is, the Person, the Character, the work, the teaching of Christ—this is the faith of Christians. The great doctrines of the Gospel are all intimately connected with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself—they are the rays and He is the sun. We never hold the faith correctly except as we see the Lord Jesus to be the center of it. From our election onward to our glorification—Christ is All and in all.

To the Jews the Law was never in its proper place until it was laid in the ark and covered with the Mercy Seat. And I am sure Believers never see the Law aright till they see it fulfilled in Christ Jesus. If it is so with the Law, how much more is it so with the Gospel? The Gospel is the gold ring, but Christ Jesus is the diamond which is set in it. Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith—He is the Sum and Substance, the top and bottom of it. When we hold fast the name of our Lord then we have not denied the faith.

But how may the faith be denied? In several ways this may be done. Let me say it very tenderly but very solemnly—some deny the faith and let go the name of Jesus by never confessing it. Remember how the Lord puts this matter in the gospels—"Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God. But he that denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God." Here it is clear that to deny is the same thing as not confessing. I know people who almost boast of their neutrality. They say, "I hold my tongue. Though the conflict should lie between Christ and Belial, yet I would go quietly on and never involve myself."

Is that what *you* say? Then permit me to remind you of our Lord's own words. "He that is not with Me is against Me. And he that gathers not with Me scatters abroad." Again He says, "Whosoever does not bear his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple." This text must bear hard upon those who have tried not exactly to hold with the hare and run with the hounds but neither to hold with the hare nor yet to run with the hounds. These have hoped to find in their discretion the better part of valor. But, believe me, it is a valor which will be rewarded with everlasting contempt. This way you hope to lead an easy life. An easy life of such a kind will end in a very uneasy death. A life in which we have shunned the Cross of Christ will lead to a state in which we shall miss the crown of glory.

Christ is also denied by false doctrine. If we espouse error as to His Person, work, or doctrine and believe what Jesus *did not* teach and refuse to believe what Jesus *did* teach, then we have denied His name and His faith. One of the main points of a Christian—without which the rest of his life will not be acceptable with God—is that Jesus shall be to him "the Way, the Truth and the Life." The practical, the doctrinal, the experimen-

tal must all be found by us in Jesus Christ our Lord or else we have not placed Him in His right position. And we cannot be right anywhere unless the center is right and unless Jesus is that center. God grant that we may never turn aside from the faith once for all delivered to the saints. But may we resist all false philosophies—steadfast and immovable!

But then it is very possible to deny the name and the faith by unholy living. Let none of us imagine that an orthodox creed can be of any use to us if we lead a heterodox life. No, Christ Jesus is to be obeyed as a Master as well as to be believed as a Teacher. The disciple is to be practically obedient, as well as attentively teachable. “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” The Apostle Paul somewhere says, “He that cares not for his own household has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel (or unbeliever).” So a moral fault may be a denial of the faith and may make a man worse than if he had never professed to believe at all. God save us from an unholy life!

Alas, we can deny the faith by actually forsaking it and quitting the people of God. Some do so deliberately and others because the charms of the world overcome them. We are told of some who went away from our Lord because of what He had taught. They cried, “This is a hard saying; who can bear it?” My Friends, if you are not prepared to accept hard sayings, you need not profess to be disciples of Jesus. “Horrible doctrine!” cried one the other day. Granted that it is horrible, may it not also be true? Many horrible things take place around us and yet none can deny the facts. You cannot exclude from your knowledge many things which are true by merely crying, “Horrible!”

It is not ours to judge of our Lord’s teaching by our sentiment—we are to receive it by faith. He speaks terribly of the doom of the wicked and He is not capable of exaggeration. What the Lord Jesus says is certain, for “He is the faithful and true witness,” and therefore we will not turn from Him, whatever His teaching may be. Oh for grace to persevere to the end! Oh for fidelity and constancy so that neither gain nor loss, exaltation nor depression may induce us to quit our Savior! Let us hold fast His sacred name and never deny the faith, come what may. May the Holy Spirit hold us fast that we may hold fast the name of Jesus!

In what way may we be said to hold fast the name of Christ and the faith of Christ? I answer, by the full consent of our intellect, yielding up our mind to consider and accept the things which are assuredly believed among us. We hold fast the form of sound words and accept whatsoever God has revealed because He has revealed it. Our motto is, “Let God be true but every man a liar.” When Christ speaks, we assent with our minds and consent with our hearts to all He declares.

If we hold fast the name of Jesus, we must hold the faith in the love of it. We must store up in our affections all that our Lord teaches. His Words are found and we do eat them—they are as honey to the taste. Let Jesus speak and I will reply, “Yes, Lord, You say it is so and I know it is so. I consent to Your teaching and from my soul I love You and accept all that You do reveal.” For the doctrines revealed in Holy Scripture the true Be-

liever would live or die. This love of the heart is that which causes us to hold fast the name of Christ.

We also hold it fast by holding it forth in the teeth of all opposition. We must confess the faith at all proper times and seasons and we must never hide our colors. There are times when we must dash to the front and court the encounter when we see that our Captain's honor demands it. Let us never be either ashamed or afraid. Our Lord Jesus deserves that we should yield ourselves as willing sacrifices in defense of His faith. Ease, reputation, life itself, must go for the name and faith of Jesus. If in the heat of the battle our good name or our life must be risked to win the victory, then let us say, "In this battle some of us must fall—why should not I? I will take part and lot with my Master and bear reproach for His sake."

Only brave soldiers are worthy of our great Lord. Those who sneak into the rear, that they may be comfortable, are not worthy of the kingdom. What will our Captain say of cowards in that day when He distributes rewards to all faithful ones? Brethren, we must be willing to bear ridicule for Christ's sake, even that peculiarly envenomed ridicule which "the cultured" are so apt to pour upon us. We must be willing to be thought great fools for Jesus' sake. Some of us have forgotten more than many of our opponents ever knew, and yet they style us ignorant. We are bearing shame because we have the courage of our convictions and yet they call us cowards.

For my part, I am willing to be ten thousand fools in one for my dear Lord and Master and count it to be the highest honor that can be put upon me to be stripped of every honor and loaded with every censure for the sake of the grand old Truth of God which is written on my very heart. Those ships which sail with Jesus as their Lord High Admiral must look for tempests. For His boat was filled with the waves and began to sink.

Does that man love his Lord who would be willing to see Jesus wearing a crown of thorns, while for himself he craves a chaplet of laurel? Shall Jesus ascend to His Throne by the Cross, and do we expect to be carried there on the shoulders of applauding crowds? Be not so vain in your imagination. Count the cost and if you are not willing to bear Christ's Cross, go away to your farm and to your merchandise and make the most of them—only let me whisper this in your ear—"What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

II. In the second place, having considered the fact, LET US FURTHER ENLARGE UPON IT.

What do we mean by holding fast the name of Christ? I reply, first, we mean holding fast the Deity of that name. We believe in our Lord's real Godhead. "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God." One of the names by which He is revealed to us is Immanuel. The word "El" is one of the great Oriental names of God. You get in Hebrew Elohim and in Arabic "Allah." Our Lord Jesus is Immanuel, that is, God With Us. And we believe Him to be so. He is as truly man as anyone among us—born of a virgin without taint of original sin. But He is also

most surely God without the least diminishing of the perfections and glories of Godhead.

We put our finger into the print of the nails, but as we do so we cry, "My Lord and my God." "Let all the angels of God worship Him." "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in Heaven and things in earth and things under the earth. And every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." We can never give up our belief in the Godhead of our Lord Jesus—we must, and will, hold fast the faith of the Deity of Christ.

We also hold fast the name of Jesus and the faith of Jesus, as to the *royalty* of His name. He was born King of the Jews and He is also "King of kings and Lord of lords." That which Pilate wrote over His Cross is true—"Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." But God also has highly exalted Him and made Him to have dominion over all the works of His hands. The Father has committed all judgment unto the Son. He shall put down all rule and all authority and power, for He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. "The Lord shall reign forever and ever—Hallelujah"! When we bow the knee in prayer and say, "Your kingdom come," we mean the kingdom of God and we mean also the kingdom of Christ Jesus.

He it is that as a Lamb is seen in the midst of the Throne where saints and angels pay adoring homage. Soon shall the seventh angel sound his trumpet and great voices shall be heard in Heaven saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. And He shall reign forever and ever." O Jesus, we bow before You! "Just and true are Your ways, You King of saints." He reigns in our hearts over the triple kingdom of our nature. He is King in our families. We desire to see him King in this city, King in this nation, King over all the earth. And we shall never be satisfied till, with all the redeemed of our race, we crown Him Lord of all. We hold fast the royalty of the name of Jesus Christ.

Moreover, we believe in the *grandeur* of that name as being the first and the last. Open the New Testament and read the first verse of Matthew. How does it begin? "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David." The book of the New Covenant begins with Jesus. Now look at the last verse, see how the Testament ends—"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." Jesus Christ appears in the first verse and He appears in the last verse. Did He not say, "I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End"?

The first line of the Covenant of Grace is Jesus Christ. The last line of the Covenant of Grace is Jesus Christ. And all in between is the Lord Jesus Christ. Begin with him as A, go right through to B, C, D, E, F, and so on, till you end with Z and it is all Christ Jesus. He is All—yes, He is All in All. Oh what blessings have come to us through Jesus Christ! Through His name we have received remission of sins. In His name we are justified. In His name we are sanctified. In His name we shall be glorified even as in Him we were chosen from before the foundation of the world. My tongue can never tell you even the commencement of His greatness. Who shall

declare His generation? The fringe, the hem of His infinite glories, who can touch?

He is unspeakable. As for His glory, I may say, “O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth! Who has set Your glory above the heavens?” All glory and honor be unto Him in whom are comprehended all the blessings whereby God has enriched His people in time and in eternity.

We hold fast the name of Christ as we believe in its *saving power*. “You shall call His name Jesus—for He shall save His people from their sins.” We hold fast the belief that Jesus saves us from the guilt of sin by having borne it in His own body on the tree. We are assured that He makes us just before God by that righteousness of His, which is ours, because we are one with Him. He saves us from the punishment of sin because “the chastisement of our peace was upon Him.” He died as a victim in our place. He saves us from the power of sin by His Spirit and by faith in His death—we overcome sin by the blood of the Lamb. Salvation in every department—salvation from its hopeful dawning to its glorious perfection—is all of Christ Jesus.

He is Savior and He alone. “There is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” He is the unique Savior, there is no other possible salvation now or in the world to come. Do you believe Christ? Then you have salvation. “But he that believes not shall be damned.” Pronounce the word hard or soft as you will, it will come to the same thing in the end—you shall be condemned and condemned hopelessly if you believe not in Jesus Christ, the one sole Propitiation for the sins of men. This we hold fast. I know you are established in these Truths of God, my Beloved, and you mean to hold them as long as you breathe and not to deny the faith which the Lord Himself has delivered to you.

Once more, we hold fast this name in its *immutability*. We are told today that this is an age of progress and therefore we must accept an improved Gospel. Every man is to be his own lawyer and every man his own savior. We are getting on in the direction of every man putting away his own sin, just as every chimney should consume its own smoke. But, dear Friends, we do not believe these idle dreams. We want no new Gospel, no modern salvation. Our conviction is that Jesus Christ is, “the same yesterday, today and forever.” The way that Paul went to Heaven is good enough for me—

**“The way the holy Prophets went,
The road that leads from banishment,”**

is broad enough and safe enough for me. When I remember my dear Brethren in Christ who have fallen asleep—whom I saw die with triumph lighting up their faces—I feel quite content with the salvation which saved them and I am not going to try experiments or speculations.

To talk of improving upon our perfect Savior is to insult Him. He is God’s Propitiation. Would you want more? My blood boils with indignation at the idea of improving the Gospel. There is but one Savior and that one Savior is the same forever. His doctrine is the same in every age, and is

not, “yes and no.” What a strange result we should obtain in the general assembly of Heaven if some were saved by the Gospel of the first century and others by the Gospel of the second and others by the Gospel of the seventeenth and others by the Gospel of the nineteenth century!

We should need a different song of praise for the clients of these various periods and the mingled chorus would be rather to the glory of *man’s culture* than to the praise of the one Lord. No such spotted Heaven and no such discordant song shall ever be produced. There is one Church and one Savior. We believe in one Lord, one faith and one Baptism. To eternal glory there is but one way. To walk therein we must hold fast one Truth and be quickened by one life. We stand fast by the unaltered, unalterable, eternal name of Jesus Christ our Lord. This is what we mean by holding fast the name and the faith of Jesus.

III. Thirdly, dear Friends, to lead you a step further in the same road, LET ME SHOW THE PRACTICAL PLACE OF THE NAME AND OF THE FAITH WITH US.

The practical place of it is this—first of all, it is our personal comfort—

***“Jesus, the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
It is music in the sinner’s ears,
It is life and health and peace.”***

The faith which we hold is our daily and hourly joy and hope. The doctrines which I believe in connection with the Divine Person in whom I trust are the pillow of my weariness, the relaxation of my care, the rest of my spirit. Jesus gives me a lookout for years to come which is celestial and at the same time I can look back with thankfulness on the years which are past. For all time the Lord Jesus is our heart’s content.

Nothing can separate us from His love and therefore nothing can deprive us of our confident hope. Through this blessed name and this blessed faith Believers are themselves made glad and strong. On the name of Jesus we feed and in that name we wrap ourselves. It is strength for our weakness, yes, life for our death.

And then, dear Friends, this name, this faith—these are our message. Our only business here below is to cry, “Behold the Lamb.” Are any of you sent of God with any other message? It cannot be. The one message which God has given to His people to proclaim is salvation through the Lamb—salvation by the blood of Jesus. It is by His blood that cleansing comes to the polluted. He is the one great Propitiation. To tell of Jesus is our occupation—we have nothing to say which is not comprised in the revelation made to us by God in Christ Jesus. He who is our one comfort is also our one theme.

He also is our Divine authority for holy work. We preach the Gospel in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. If we preached it in any other name men would have a right to reject it. If the spiritually sick are healed, it is His name which makes them strong. If devils flee before us, we cast them out in His name. Oh, that we did more often remember that all our teaching and preaching must be done in the name of Jesus! In His name we

gather for worship. In His name we go forth to service. If we go in our own name we go in vain. But if we are ambassadors for God, as though He did beseech men by us, then we pray them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God and we are hopeful that our labor will not be in vain in the Lord.

This also is our power in preaching. Indeed, it is our power, our only power, in living before God. Brethren, the devil will never be cast out by any other name—let us hold it fast. If we conjure by eloquence, talent, music, or what not, the Evil One will say, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know—but who are you?” It is only His name that makes the legions of Hell quit the bosoms of the possessed and fly howling down into the deep. This is the name high over all—there is none other which has such power in it. Spiritual diseases, yes, death itself, will yield to this name. It is His name that makes Lazarus come forth from the grave and the young man sit upright on the bier.

Use this name and nothing can stand before you. I said that it is our power in life and so, indeed, it is. When we draw near to God, what is our strength wherewith to prevail in prayer? Is it not that we ask in the name of Jesus? If you leave out the name of Jesus, what are your prayers but a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal? Prayer without the name of Jesus has no wings with which to fly up to God. This is that golden ladder whereby we climb up to the Throne of God and take unspeakably precious things out of the hand of the Eternal. That name prevails with God concerning everything and so enables us to prevail with man. Therefore, hold it fast and deny not the faith. For what can you do if the Truth and the name of Jesus are given up?

This name is our one hope of victory. As Constantine, in his dream, saw the Cross and took it for his emblem, with the motto, “By this sign I conquer,” so today our only hope of victory for the Gospel is that the Cross of Christ displays it and the name of Jesus is in it. His name is named on us and in His name we will cast out devils and do many mighty works till His name shall be known and honored wherever the sun pursues its course, or the moon cheers the watches of the night.

III. Now, in closing, I will URGE REASONS FOR HOLDING FAST THE NAME AND FAITH OF JESUS. I hope we hold it so fast that we can never give it up while reason holds its throne. There is an old Christian legend concerning Ignatius—that he never spoke without mentioning the name of Jesus whom he loved. His speech seemed saturated with love to his Lord, and when he died, the name of Jesus was found to be stamped on his heart. It may not have been so literally but no doubt it was true spiritually.

The name of Jesus is, I hope, written in our hearts so as to be inseparable from our lives. Whatever else may go, the name of Jesus can never depart from our thoughts. Dying men have been known to forget everything but this. The man has forgotten his wife, his children, his bosom friend and has turned away oblivious from them all as if they were strangers. And yet when the name of Jesus has been whispered in his ear, his

eyes have brightened and his countenance has responded to that precious name. O memory, leave no other name than His recorded upon your tablets! Happy forgetfulness which clears all else away but leaves that name in solitary glory!

That it may be so I will put the question thus—Why should we give up the faith? I fail to see a reason. Why should I change my belief, or cease to hold fast the name of Christ Jesus, my Lord? It is an irrational suggestion. “I am open to conviction,” said a man who knew his ground, “I am open to conviction, but I should like to see the man that could convince me.” I am in very much the same condition with regard to the Gospel of my Lord Jesus—I am open to conviction—but I shall never see the man that can convince me out of my experience, my conviction, my consciousness, my hope, my all.

Before I could quit my faith in the substitutionary work of the Lord Jesus Christ and my confidence in the Everlasting Covenant ordered in all things and sure, I should have to be ground to powder and every separate atom transformed. What would they give us in exchange for the faith? That is a question which it is easy to ask but impossible to answer. Suppose the Doctrines of Grace could be obliterated and our hope could be taken away—what would they give us in the place of them—either for this life or the next? I have never seen anything proposed in the place of the Gospel that was worth considering for a second. Have you? Uncertainty, doubt, glitter, mockery, darkness—all these have been offered—but who wants them? They offer us either bubbles or filth according to the different shade of the speculator’s character. But we are not enamored of either. We prefer gold to dross.

We must *defend* the faith. For what would have become of us if our fathers had not maintained it? If confessors, Reformers, martyrs and Covenanters had been indifferent to the name and faith of Jesus, where would have been the Churches of today? Must we not play the man as they did? If we do not, are we not censuring our fathers? It is very pretty, is it not, to read of Luther and his brave deeds? Of course, everybody admires Luther! Yes, yes. But you do not want anyone else to do the same today. When you go to the Zoological Gardens you all admire the bear. But how would you like a bear at home, or a bear wandering loose about the street?

You tell me that it would be unbearable and no doubt you are right. So, we admire a man who was firm in the faith, say four hundred years ago. The past ages are a sort of bear-pit or iron cage for him. But such a man today is a nuisance and must be put down. Call him a narrow-minded bigot, or give him a worse name if you can think of one. Yet imagine that in those ages past, Luther, Zwingle, Calvin and their compeers had said, “The world is out of order. But if we try to set it right we shall only make a great row and get ourselves into disgrace. Let us go to our chambers, put on our night-caps and sleep over the bad times and perhaps when we wake up things will have grown better.”

Such conduct on their part would have entailed upon us a heritage of error. Age after age would have gone down into the infernal deeps and the infectious bogs of error would have swallowed all. These men loved the faith and the name of Jesus too well to see them trampled on. Note what we owe them and let us pay to our sons the debt we owe our fathers. It is today as it was in the Reformers' days. Decision is needed. Here is the day for the man—where is the man for the day? We who have had the Gospel passed to us by martyr's hands dare not trifle with it—nor sit by and hear it denied by traitors who pretend to love it but inwardly abhor every line of it.

The faith I hold bears upon it marks of the blood of my ancestors. Shall I deny their faith, for which they left their native land to sojourn here? Shall we cast away the treasure which was handed to us through the bars of prisons, or came to us charred with the flames of Smithfield? Personally, when my bones have been tortured with rheumatism, I have remembered Job Spurgeon, doubtless of my own stock, who in Chelmsford Jail was allowed a chair because he could not lie down by reason of rheumatic pain. That Quaker's broad-brim overshadows my brow. Perhaps I inherited his rheumatism. But that I do not regret if I have his stubborn faith which will not let me yield a syllable of the Truth of God.

When I think of how others have suffered for the faith, a little scorn or unkindness seems a mere trifle, not worthy of mention. An ancestry of lovers of the faith ought to be a great plea with us to abide by the Lord God of our fathers and the faith in which they lived. As for me, I must hold the old Gospel—I can do no other. God helping me, I will endure the consequences of what men think my obstinacy.

Look you, Sirs, there are ages yet to come. If the Lord does not speedily appear, there will come another generation and another and all these generations will be tainted and injured if we are not faithful to God and to His Truth today. We have come to a turning point in the road. If we turn to the right, maybe our children and our children's children will go that way. But if we turn to the left, generations yet unborn will curse our names for having been unfaithful to God and to His Word. I charge you, not only by your ancestry but by your posterity, that you seek to win the commendation of your Master—that though you dwell where Satan's seat is—you hold fast His name and do not deny His faith.

God grant us faithfulness for the sake of the souls around us! How is the world to be saved if the Church is false to her Lord? How are we to lift the masses if our fulcrum is removed? If our Gospel is uncertain, what remains but increasing misery and despair? Stand fast, my Beloved, in the name of God! I, your Brother in Christ, entreat you to abide in the Truth of God. Conduct yourselves like men, be strong. The Lord sustain you for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

A SOLEMN WARNING FOR ALL CHURCHES NO. 68

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 24, 1856,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“You have a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments.
And they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.”
Revelation 3:4.***

MY learned and eminently pious predecessor, Dr. Gill, is of opinion that the different Churches spoken of in the Book of Revelation are types of different states through which the Church of God shall pass until it comes into the Philadelphian state, the state of love, in which Jesus Christ shall reign in its midst. And afterwards, as he thinks, the Church shall pass into the state of Laodicea, in which condition it shall be when suddenly the Son of Man shall come to judge the world in righteousness and the people in equity. I do not go along with him in all his suppositions with regard to these seven Churches as following each other in seven periods of time. But I do think he was correct when he declared that the Church in Sardis was a most fitting emblem of the Church in his days, as also in these. The good old doctor says, “When shall we find any period in which the Church was more like the state of Sardis as described here, than it is now?” And he points out the different particulars in which the Church of his day (and I am sure it is yet more true of the Church at the present day) was exactly like the Church in Sardis. I shall use the Church in Sardis as a figure of what I conceive to be the sad condition of Christendom at the present moment. My first point will be general defilement—there were but “a few names” in Sardis who had not “defiled their garments.” Secondly, special preservation—there were a few who had not defiled their garments and thirdly, a peculiar reward—“And they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.”

I. GENERAL DEFILEMENT. The holy Apostle, John, said of the Church in Sardis. “These things says He that has the Seven Spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your works, that you have a name that you live and are dead. Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die. For I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember, therefore, how you have received and heard and hold fast and repent. If, therefore, you shall not watch, I will come on you as a thief and you shall not know what hour I will come upon you. You have a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments.”

The first charge of general defilement He brings against the Church in Sardis was that they had a vast deal of open profession but little of sincere religion. "I know your works, that you have a name that you live and are dead." That is the crying sin of the present age. I am not inclined to be morbid in my temperament, or to take a melancholy view of the Church of God. I would wish at all times to exhibit a liberality of spirit and to speak as well as I can of the Church at large. But God forbid that any minister should shrink from declaring what he believes to be the truth! In going up and down this land, I am obliged to come to this conclusion—that throughout the Churches there are multitudes who have "a name to live and are dead." Religion has become fashionable. The shopkeeper could scarcely succeed in a respectable business if he were not united with a Church. It is reckoned to be reputable and honorable to attend a place of worship and hence men are made religious in shoals. And especially now that Parliament, itself, does, in some measure, sanction religion, we may expect that hypocrisy will abound yet more and more—and formality everywhere to take the place of true religion! You can scarcely meet with a man who does not call himself a Christian, and yet it is equally difficult to meet with one who is—in the very marrow of his bones—thoroughly sanctified to the good work of the Kingdom of Heaven. We meet with professors by hundreds! But we must still expect to meet with *possessors* by units. The whole nation appears to have been Christianized in an hour! But is this real? Is this sincere? Ah, we fear not. How is it that professors can live like other men? How is it that there is so little distinction between the Church and the world? Or, that if there is any difference, you are frequently safer in dealing with an ungodly man than with one who is professedly righteous? How is it that men who make high professions can live in worldly conformity, indulge in the same pleasures, live in the same style, act from the same motives, deal in the same manner as other people do? Are not these days when the sons of God have made affinity with the sons of men? And may we not fear that something terrible may yet occur unless God shall send a voice which shall say, "Come out of them, My people, lest you be partakers of their plagues"? Take our Churches at large—there is no lack of names, but there is a lack of life! Otherwise, how is it that our Prayer Meetings are so badly attended? Where is the zeal or the energy shown by the Apostles? Where is the Spirit of the living God? Is He not departed? Might not, "Ichabod," be written on the walls of many a sanctuary? They have a name to live, but are dead. They have their societies, their organisms, but where is the life of godliness? Where is inward piety? Where is sincere religion? Where is practical godliness? Where is firm, decisive, Puritanical piety? Thank God there are a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments, but charity, itself, will not allow us to say that the Church generally possesses the Spirit of God!

Then the next charge was that there was *a lack of zeal* throughout the Church of Sardis. He says, "Be watchful." He looked on the Church and saw the bishops slumbering, the Elders slumbering and the people slumbering. They were not, as once they were, watchful for the faith, striving together and earnestly contending for it, not wrestling against the enemy of souls, not laboring to spread their Master's Kingdom. The Apostle saw sleepiness, coldness, lethargy—therefore he said, "Be watchful." Oh, John, if from your grave you could start up and see the Church as you did at Sardis, having your eyes anointed by the Spirit, you would say it is even so now! Ah, we have abundance of cold, calculating Christians—multitudes of professors—but where are the zealous ones? Where are the leaders of the children of God? Where are your heroes who stand in the day of battle? Where are your men who "count not their lives dear unto them," that they might win Christ and be found in Him? Where are those who have an impassioned love for souls? How many of our pulpits are filled by earnest, enthusiastic preachers? Alas, look, at the Church—she has built herself fine palaces, imitating popery! She has girded herself with vestments. She has gone astray from her simplicity. She has lost the fire and the life which she once had. We go into our Chapels, now, and we see everything in good taste—we hear the organ play. The Psalmody is in keeping with the most correct ear, the gown and the noble vestments are there and everything is grand and goodly and we think that God is honored! Oh for the days when Whitefields would preach on tubs, once more, when their pulpits would be on Kennington Common and their roofs the ceiling of God's sky! Oh for the time when we might preach in barns, again, or even in catacombs, if we might but have the life of God that once they had in such places! What is the use of garnishing the shell when you have lost the kernel? Go and whitewash the outside of your father's tomb, but know it is a tomb of whitewash, for the life is gone. Garnish the outside of your cups and platters. But you have lost the pure Word of God! You have it not, now, preached to you in simple, earnest, pleading tones. But men enter the ministry for a piece of bread! They flinch to speak the whole Truth of God, or if they seem to speak it, it is with cold meaningless passionless words, as if it were nothing whether souls were damned or saved, whether Heaven were filled or Heaven depopulated, or whether Christ should see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied! Do I speak fierce things? I can say as Irving once did—I might deserve to be broken on the wheel if I did not believe what I say to be the truth! For the utterance of such things I might deserve the stake! But God is my witness, I have endeavored to judge and to speak impartially!

With all that universal cant of charity, now so prevalent, I am at arm's length, I care not for it! Let us speak of things as we find them! We believe that the Church has lost her zeal and her energy. But what do men

say of us? “Oh, you are too excited.” Good God! Excited? When men are being damned? *Excited?* When we have the mission of Heaven to preach to dying souls? *Excited?* *Preaching too much* when souls are lost? Why should it come to pass that one man should be perpetually laboring all the week, while others are lolling upon their couches and preach only upon the Sabbath? Can I bear to see the laziness, the slothfulness, the indifference of ministers and of Churches without speaking? No! There must be a protest entered and we enter it now! Oh, Church of God, you have a name to live and are dead! You are not watchful. Awake! Awake! Arise from the dead and Christ shall give you light!

The third charge which John brought against Sardis was that they *did not* “*look to things that remained and were ready to die.*” I take it that this may relate to the poor feeble saints, the true children of God, who were sorrowing, mourning and groaning in their midst. They were so oppressed with sorrow on account of the state of Sardis, that they were, “ready to die.” And what does the Church do now? Do the shepherds go after those that are wounded and sick and those that are weary? Do they carry the lambs in their bosom and gently lead those who are with young? Do they see to poor distressed consciences and speak to those who feel their deadness in trespasses and sins? Yes, but how do they speak? They tell them to do things they cannot do—to perform impossible duties—instead of “strengthening the things that remain and are ready to die.” In how much contempt are the truly newborn children of God held in these times! They are called peculiar men, taunted as Antinomians, hissed at as being oddities, High Doctrine men who have departed from the usual mode of pulling down God’s Word to men’s fancies! They are called bigots, narrow-minded souls and their creed is set down as dry, hard, rough, severe Calvinism! God’s Gospel called hard, rough and severe? The things for which our fathers died are now called infamous things! Mark whether, if you stand out prominently in the Truth of God, you will not be abhorred and taunted! If you go into a village and hear of poor people who are said to be doing a deal of mischief, are they not the people who understand most of the Gospel? Go and ask the minister who are the persons who he most dislikes and he will say, “We have a nasty lot of Antinomians here.” What does he mean by that? Men who love the Truth of God, the whole Truth of God and nothing but the Truth of God—and will have it—and are, therefore, called a nasty set of Antinomians. Ah, we have lost what once we had! We do not, now, “strengthen the things that remain and are ready to die.” They are not looked after as they ought to be. They are not beloved, not fostered. The salt of the earth are now the offscouring of all things! Men whom God has loved and who have attained a high standing in godliness—these are the men who will not bow the knee to Baal and who, therefore, are cast into “the fiery furnace of persecution and slander.” O Sardis! Sardis! I see you

now. You have defiled your garments! Thank God there are a few who have not followed the multitude to do evil and who shall “walk in white for they are worthy.”

Another charge which God has brought against the Church is that *they were careless about the things that they heard*. He says, “Remember, therefore, how you have received and heard and hold fast. And repent.” If I am wrong upon other points, I am positive that the sin of this age is impurity of Doctrine and laxity of faith. Now you know you are told every Sunday that it does not matter what you believe—that all sects and denominations will be saved—that Doctrines are unimportant things. You are told that as to the Doctrines of God’s Grace, they are rather dangerous than otherwise and the less you inquire about them the better. They are very good things for the priests but you common people cannot understand them! Thus they keep back a portion of the Gospel with cautious reserve. But having studied in the devil’s new Jesuitical College, they understand how to call themselves, Particular Baptists, and then preach general Doctrines, to call themselves Calvinists! And they preach Arminianism—telling the people that it does not matter whether they preach damnable heresies of the Truth of God. And what do the congregations say? “Well, he is a wise man and ought to know.” So you are going back into as bad a priestcraft as ever! Presbyter has become, PRIEST, written large—and minister, has become, PRIEST, in many a place because persons do not search for themselves and endeavor to get hold of the Truth of God. It is everywhere proclaimed that we are all right. That though one says God loved His people from before the foundation of the world and the other that He did not—though one says that God is changeable and turns away from His people and the other that He will hold them fast to the end—though the one says that the blood of Christ avails for all for whom it was shed and the other that it is inefficacious for a large number of those for whom He died! Though one says that the works of the Law are, in some measure, necessary, or at any rate that we must endeavor to improve what we have and then we shall get more—and the other says, that, “by Grace we are saved through faith and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God”—yet both are right! A new age, this, when lies and truth can kiss each other! New times, these, when fire and water can become friendly! Glorious times, these, when there is an alliance between Hell and Heaven! Lies and errors are linked hand in hand—“we are all Brethren,” is the cry now, though God knows we are of vastly different families! Ah, now, who cares for the Truth of God except a few narrow-minded bigots as they are called? Election—*horrible!* Predestination—*awful!* Final Perseverance—*desperate!* Yet, turn to the pages of the Puritans and you will see that these Truths of God were preached every day! Turn to the Fathers. Read Augustine and you will see that these were the Truths for which he would have bled and

died! Read the Scriptures and if every page is not full of them, I have not read them aright, or any child of God either! Yes, laxity of Doctrine is the great fault now. We solemnly protest against it! You may fancy that I am raising an outcry about nothing at all. Ah, no! My anxious spirit sees the next generation—what will that be? *This* generation—Arminianism. What next? Palagianism? And what next? Popery? And what next? I leave you to guess. The path of error is always downward! We have taken one step in the wrong direction. Only God knows where we shall stop! If there had not been sturdy men in ages gone by, the Lord would not have left to us a remnant even now. All Grace would have died and we had become like Sodom and Gomorrah! Oh, Church of the living God, awake! Awake! Once more write, Truth, upon your Banner! Stamp *Truth* upon your sword! And for God and for His Word, charge home! You knights of Truth, charge home! Spare not, but slay. Let error die before you until the Truth of God and the Truth of God, alone, shall sit king over the whole world!

But now I have lifted up the whip, I must have another lash. Look on any section of the Church you like to mention, not excepting that to which I belong. And let me ask you whether they have not defiled their garments. Look at the Church of England. Her articles are pure and right in most respects. Yet see how her garments are defiled—he has made the Queen, her Head, instead of God! She bows before the State and worships the golden calf that is set up before her. Look at her abominations, her pluralities, her easy-living bishops doing nothing! Look at her ungodly clergymen in the country, living in sin! The Churchman who does not know that his Church has defiled her garments is partial to his mother, as indeed he ought to be, but he is too partial to speak the Truth! But good Churchmen, themselves, weep because what I say is true! Then look at John Wesley's body. Have not they defiled their garments? See how they have lately been contending with a despotism as accursed as any that ever brooded over the slaves in America! See how they have been torn in two and how imperfect in Doctrine they are, too, after all, professedly at least, not holding the Truth of God! Look into what denomination you please, Independent, or Baptist, or any other—have they not all defiled their garments in some way or other? Look at the Churches around and see how they have defiled their garments by giving Baptism to those for whom it was never intended and degrading a holy Church ordinance to become a mere sop with which they feed their babies! And see how they have taken away Christ's honor, how they have taken the bread that was meant for the children and cast it to ungodly persons. Look at our own denomination—see how it has deserted the leading Truths of the Gospel. For a proof hereof, I refer you to hundreds of our pulpits. Oh Church of God! I am but a voice crying in the wilderness, but I must still cry, "How are you fallen from Heaven, you son of

the morning! How are you fallen!” “Remember how you have received and heard and hold fast and repent.” If you do not watch, your Master will come upon you as a thief and you shall not know in what hour He will come unto you.

II. But now we come to far easier work. Not because we would shun what we conceive to be our duty, even at the expense of offending many now present, but because we always delight to speak well if we can. “You have a few names even in Sardis that have not defiled their garments.” Here we have SPECIAL PRESERVATION. Mark—“You have a few names.” Only a few. Not so few as some think, but not as many as others imagine! A few compared with the mass of professors. A few compared, even, with the true children of God, for many of them have defiled their garments. They were but a few and those few were even in Sardis! There is not a Church on earth that is so corrupt but has “a few.” You who are always fighting so much for your denomination, you think other denominations are Sardis—but there are a few even in Sardis. Even if the denomination is the worst of all Protestant sections, there are a few in Sardis. And perhaps that is as much as we can say of *our* denomination—so we will treat them all alike. There are a few in Sardis—mark that. Not in what you conceive to be Philadelphia, your own blessed Church, but in Sardis—there are a few there. Where there is heresy and false doctrine, where there are many mistakes about rites and ceremonies, there are a few there. And even where they cringe before the State, there are a few there—yes and a goodly few, too, a few whom we love, with whom we can hold communion! This makes us severe against the whole body, but it makes us very loving towards all the dear people of God everywhere. There are a few even in Sardis! Well, when I meet a Brother who lives in Sardis, I will hope he is one of the few. And when you meet such, do you say, “Ah, well, I know my Brother comes out of a bad Church, but there are a few in Sardis and very likely he is one of them”? That is the kind of charity God loves. Not the universal charity which says Sardis is all right—but that which says some in her are sincere. We stand this morning like old Elijah, when he stood before God and said, “I, only I, am left and they seek my life.” But God whispers, “I have yet reserved unto Myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” Take heart, Christian, there are a few in Sardis—do not forget that—who have not defiled their garments! Take heart. It is not yet all rotten! There is soundness in the eye after all. There is “a remnant according to the election of Grace.” There is “a salt” and for the sake of that salt, many who have defiled their garments in a measure will be saved. They will enter into Heaven even as these few will! And unto the few there will be special honor and special blessing. Take heart, then.

And whenever you go to your chamber and mourn over the sad condition of the Church, think of those good old women in their closets groan-

ing and crying! Think of those ministers faithfully dispensing the Word! Think of those valiant deacons standing up for God's Truth! Think of those young men and women strong in the midst of temptation! Think of these few in Sardis and they will cheer you! Do not be quite downcast. Some heroes have not turned their backs in the day of battle! Some mighty men still fight for the Truth. Be encouraged. There are a few in Sardis. But be careful, for perhaps *you* are not one of the few! Since there are but a few, there ought to be great searching of heart. Let us look to our garments and see whether they are defiled. If they are not, we shall walk in white, for we are worthy through Jesus. Be active. Be prayerful. The fewer the workmen to do the work, the greater reason is there that you should be active. Be instant in season and out of season because there are so few. Oh, if we had hundreds behind us, we might say, "Let them do the work." But if we stand with only a few, how should each of those few rush here and there! A city is besieged—it is full of inhabitants—half of them are asleep! The others watch the walls and thus they relieve each other. Another city has but a few defenders—see how that champion rushes first to that breach and routs the enemy. Now he brings his might to another place. A bastion is assaulted and he is there. Now a rear gate is attacked—there he is with all his force behind him! He is here, he is there, he is everywhere because he feels there is but a handful of men who can gather round him. Take courage, take heart! Stir yourselves up to the sternest activity for verily there are but a few in Sardis who have not defiled their garments! Above all, be prayerful! Put up your earnest cries to God that He would multiply the faithful, that He would increase the number of chosen ones who stand fast! That He would purify the Church with fire in a furnace seven times heated, so that He might bring out her third part through the fire! Cry unto God that the day may come when the much fine gold shall be no longer dim, when the glory shall again return unto Zion! Beg of God to remove the cloud, to take away "the darkness that may be felt." Be doubly prayerful, for there are but a few in Sardis who have not defiled their garments!

III. This brings us to the third point, which is a PECULIAR REWARD. "They shall walk in white, for they are worthy." The attentive reader will observe that in quoting the passage, just now, I left out two of the sweetest words in the passage. It reads—"They shall walk *with Me* in white, for they are worthy." That is the very pith of the honor! If the rest of it is gold, this is the jewel. "They shall walk *with Me* in white." That is to say, communion with Christ on earth shall be the special reward of those who have not defiled their garments! Now, I must say a very hard thing again but it is a true one. Go into what company you please, do you meet with many men who hold communion with Christ? Though they may be godly men, upright men, ask them if they hold communion with Christ and will they understand you? If you give them some of those sweetly spiritual

books that those who hold fellowship love to read, they will say they are mystical and they do not love them. Ask them whether they can spend an hour in meditation upon Christ, whether they ever rise to Heaven and lay their head on the breast of the Savior, whether they ever know what it is to enter into rest and get into Canaan. Whether they understand how He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus—whether they can often say—

**“Abundant sweetness while I sing
Your love, my ravished heart overflows!
Secure in You my God and King
Of glory that no period knows”?**

Ask them that and they will say, “We don’t understand you.” Now the reason for it, is in the first part of my sermon—they have defiled their garments and, therefore, Christ will not walk with them. He says, “Those who have *not* defiled their garments shall walk *with Me*.” Those who hold fast the Truth, who take care to be free from the prevailing sins of the times, “these,” He says, “shall walk *with Me*.” They shall be in constant fellowship *with Me*. I will let them see that I am bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh—I will bring them into the banqueting house. My banner over them shall be love. They shall drink wine on the lees well refined. They shall have the secrets of the Lord revealed unto them because they are the people who truly fear Me—“they shall walk *with Me* in white.” Oh, Christian, if you would have communion with Christ, the special way to win it is by not defiling your garments as the Church has done!

But we must dwell on the rest of the passage. “They shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.” A good old author says there is a reference, here, to that fact that the rabbis allowed persons to walk in white who could trace their pedigree without a flaw. But if they found any blot on their escutcheon and could not trace their birth up to Abraham, they were not allowed to walk in white on certain days. Well, he says he thinks the passage means that those who have not defiled their garments will be able to prove their *adoption* and will walk in white garments as being sure that they are the sons of God. If we could be certain that we are the people of God, we must take care that we have no blots on our garments, for each one of those splatterings of the mire of this earth will cry out and say, “Perhaps you are *not* a child of God!” Nothing is such a father of doubts as *sin*. Sin is the very mother of our distress. He who is covered with sin must not expect to enjoy full assurance, but he who lives close to his God and keeps his garments unspotted from the world—he shall walk in white, knowing that his adoption is sure!

But chiefly we should understand this to refer to justification. “They shall walk in white.” That is, they shall enjoy a constant sense of their

own justification by faith. They shall understand that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to them, that they have—

**“A matchless robe which far exceeds
What earthly princes wear”—**

that they have been washed and made whiter than snow and purified and made more clean than wool!

Again—it refers to *joy and gladness*—for white robes were holiday dresses among the Jews. They who have not defiled their garments shall have their faces always bright. They shall understand what Solomon meant when he said, “Go your way, eat your bread with joy and drink your wine with a merry heart. Let your garments be always white, for God has accepted your works.” He who is accepted of God shall wear white garments, being received by the Father—garments of joy and gladness! Why so many doubts, so much distress and misery and mourning? It is because the Church has defiled her garments! They do not, here below walk, in white because they are not worthy!

And lastly it refers to *walking in white before the Throne of God*. Those who have not defiled their garments, here, shall most certainly walk in white up yonder, where the white-robed hosts sing perpetual hallelujahs to the Most High! If you have not defiled your garments, you may say, “I know whom I have believed,” and you may cry, “when this earthly house of my tabernacle is dissolved, I know I have a mansion of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” Not for my works, not by way of merit but as the reward of Divine Grace! If there are joys inconceivable, happiness beyond a dream, bliss which imagination knows not, blessedness which even the stretch of desire has not reached—you shall have all these—you shall walk in white, since you are worthy! Christ shall say to you, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter you into the joy of your Lord.”

But what shall be done with such persons as live in the Church, but are not of it?—“Having a name to live, but are dead.” What shall be done with mere professors who are not possessors? What shall become of those who are only outwardly religious, but inwardly are in the gall of bitterness? We answer, as good Calvin did once—“They shall walk in black, for they are unworthy.” They shall walk in black—the blackness of God’s destruction! They shall walk in black—the blackness of hopeless despair! They shall walk in black—the blackness of incomparable anguish! They shall walk in black—the blackness of damnation! They shall forever walk in black because they were found unworthy! O professors, search yourselves! O ministers, search yourselves! O you who make a profession of religion, put your hands within your hearts and search your souls! You live in the sight of a rein-trying God. Oh, try your own reins and search your own hearts. It is not a matter of half-importance for which I plead, but a matter of double importance! I beseech you ex-

amine and cross-examine your own souls and see whether you are in the path, for it will go ill with you if you shall find, at last, that you were in the Church but not of it—that you made a profession of religion but it was only a cloak for your hypocrisy—if you should have entered into His courts below and be shut out of the courts above! Remember, the higher the pinnacle of profession, the direr your fall of destruction. Beggared kings, exiled princes, crownless emperors are always subjects of pity. Professor, what will you think of yourself when your robes are taken from you, when your crown of profession is taken from your head and you stand the hiss of even vile men, the scoff of blasphemers, the jeer of those who, whatever they were, were not hypocrites, as you are? They will cry to you, “Have you become like one of us? You professor, you high-flying man—have you become like one of us?” And you will hide your guilty heads in the dark pit of Hell but all in vain, for you never will be able to avoid that hiss which shall always greet you! “What? *You?*” the drunkard whom you told to drink no more, will say. “Have *you* become like one of us?” And the harlot whom you scorned and the young debauched man whom you warned, will stare you in the face and say, “What? You? You who talked of religion? A pretty fellow you were! Have you become one of us?”

Oh, I think I hear them saying in Hell, “Here’s a parson! Come here! Here’s a deacon! Here’s a Church member—here’s a man who has had the sacramental wine within his lips! Here’s a man who has had the baptismal water on his garments.” Ah, take care. There are but a few names in Sardis who shall walk in white. Be you of that few! May God give you Grace that you be not reprobates but may be accepted of the Lord in that day! May He give you mercy that when He severs the chaff from the wheat, you may abide as the good corn and may not be swept away into unquenchable fire! The Lord in mercy bless His warning and hear our supplication, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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

COMMENDATION FOR THE STEADFAST NO. 1814

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

***“I know your works: behold, I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it: for you have a little strength, and have kept My Word, and have not denied My name. Because you have kept the Word of My patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”
Revelation 3:8, 10.***

THIS is a message to the angel of the Church at Philadelphia and it is full of instruction to Churches and ministers at this present time. “He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the Churches.” The Philadelphian Church was not great, but it was good. It was not powerful, but it was faithful. The Spirit says, “You have a little strength.” Every band of Believers has *some* strength—weak as we are in *ourselves*—the very fact of our possessing faith proves that we have a portion of strength. Still, that strength is a matter of degrees, and certain Churches have a little strength—but only a little. I suppose that the Philadelphian Church had but little strength in the following respects—the number of its members would be small and it had, therefore, but little strength for undertaking any extensive enterprise which would call for numerous bands of workers.

The Brethren needed all their strength concentrated on their *home* work, for they were few, and the miss of one or two from home evangelization and edification would be greatly felt. A Church may have a very short muster roll and yet it may be very dear to God, who thinks more of *quality* than of quantity, more of *obedience* than of numbers. They had also little strength in the direction of talent. They were not like that famous Church at Corinth, where everybody could teach everybody, but where nobody cared to learn of anyone. They had but small ability to speak with tongues, or work miracles, or teach the Word—but they adhered faithfully to what they had been taught by the Apostles of the Lord. They were not brilliant, but they were sound.

Churches with few men of learning or eloquence in them may yet be greatly approved of the Lord, who cares more for Grace than learning, more for faith than talent. In all probability they were, like most of the Churches of that day, possessed of very little pecuniary strength. They could do but little where money would be required. They were a company of poor people with no man of means among them, but there are many such Churches that are peculiarly precious to the heart of God, who cares nothing for gold and everything for sincerity. Possibly they were little, too, in those things which go side by side with Grace—I mean in knowledge

and in power to utter what they knew. This was a pity, but as it was their misfortune and not their fault, they were not blamed for it.

The Lord does not blame us for having little strength, but for having little love, little faith, little zeal, little consecration. The Philadelphian saints, like the limpet, which has but little strength, stuck firmly to the rock, and they are commended for it. They had little strength, but they kept God's Word and they did not deny His name. Possibly if they had felt stronger, they might have presumptuously quit the Word of the Lord for the opinions of men, as the Galatians did—and then they would have lost their reward. May every Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, whether it has little strength or much, be concerned to be steadfast in the faith—loyal to King Jesus—firm in the Truths which Christ has taught us by the Holy Spirit.

But, dear Friends, as this expression was used to the angel of the Church at Philadelphia, whom I suppose to be the minister of the Church, I do not feel that I shall be doing any violence to the text if I take it in reference to each *individual*. And I have no doubt that there will be individual Christians present at this time who, though they have but little strength, have kept God's Word. If so, they will receive a reward for it, according to the Grace of God. They have been firm and steadfast in their confession of the faith, once delivered unto the saints and the Lord who gave them the Grace to be so, will give them yet more Grace as the recompense of their fidelity.

We will speak upon the text, tonight, with a view to that, and we shall notice, first, that there is *a word of praise*—God praises this faithful messenger of the Church. Secondly, He gives him *a word of prospect*. He says, "I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it: for you have a little strength, and have kept My Word." And then, thirdly, we shall speak upon *a word of promise* which is in the text in the 10th verse—"Because you have kept the Word of My patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Oh that my words might call out some faithful ones in these evil days! We need pillars in the house of our God! Where are they to be found?

I. First I would remind you that our text has in it A WORD OF PRAISE. I do not think that we should be so slow as we sometimes are in praising one another. There is a general theory abroad that it is quite right and proper to point out to a Brother all his imperfections, for it will be a salutary medicine to him and prevent his being too happy in this vale of tears. Is it supposed that we shall cheer him on to do better by always finding fault with him? If so, some people ought to be very good by this time, for they have had candid friends in plenty! Find fault with a Brother and he will be kept from growing too proud and he will, no doubt, go forward blessing you very much for your kind consideration in promoting his humility. Remember, also, that it is much to the increase of brotherly love to have a clear eye to see the imperfections of our friends. Does anyone in his senses really think so?

I should suppose that after having given a sufficient trial to that manner of procedure, it would be quite as well, at times, to try another, and to rejoice in everything which we see of Grace in our Brothers and Sisters!

And sometimes to thank God in their *hearing* for what we perceive in them that we are sure is the fruit of the Spirit. If they are what they should be, they will not think so much of our little praises as to be unduly exalted, but they will be sometimes so encouraged as to be nerved to higher and nobler things! If a man deserves my commendation, I am only paying a debt when I give it to him—and it is dishonest to withhold it under the pretence that he would not use the payment rightly. Men who deserve praise can bear it and some of them even need it!

I should not wonder that the kindly words of God's people may be but a rehearsal of that, "Well done, good and faithful servant," which will one day sound in their ears. And it may be a useful rehearsal, too, helping them on their weary way. Good men have many conflicts—let us minister to their comfort. At any rate, the great Head of the Church did not think it unwise to say to the Church at Philadelphia that He thought well of it because it had kept His Word. Let us give honor to whom honor is due and encourage those who are aiming to do right.

What had these Philadelphian Believers done that they should be praised? What they did was this—they kept the Word of God. "You have kept My Word and you have not denied My name." What does this mean? Does it not mean, first, that *they had received the Word of God*, for if they had not *heard* it and held it, they could not have kept it! It was theirs! They heard it and had no wish to hear anything else. It was theirs! They read it and searched it and made it their own. They hoarded up Divine knowledge in their memories, preserved it in their affections, used it in their experience and practiced it in their lives. They were not ashamed of revealed Truths of God but, on the contrary, they took it for their possession, their heritage, their treasure, their all! I trust that many of us can say that the Doctrines of Grace are our jewels, our estate, yes, our very life. God has put us in trust with the Gospel and we will sooner part with all that we have than be false to our trust! It is no small privilege to be taught of the Holy Spirit as to have a taste for the Gospel, a deep attachment to the Truths of the Covenant.

Next, we may be sure that *they loved the Word of God*. They had an intense delight in it. They appreciated it—they fed upon it. They stored it up as bees store away honey and they were as ready to defend it as bees are to guard their stores. They meditated upon it. They sought to understand it. They took delight in everything which came from the mouth of God. Men do not keep things which they consider to be valueless! If men in our day had a higher opinion of the Truth of God, they would be more valiant for it. People are always ready to part with that for which they have no esteem and, for this very reason, many are quite willing to give up the Bible to critics and philosophers—those thieves and burglars of faith. But he that keeps God's Word, we may be sure, is deeply in love with it!

Oh, dear child of God, you may be very little in Israel, but if you love the Word of God there is a something about you in which God takes delight! He sees you at your Bible-reading. He marks you in your endeavors to get at the meaning of His Word. He notes you when you sit down and meditate upon His Divine thoughts. And He takes pleasure in your eagerness to know what the will of the Lord is. He says, "I know your works."

And though you may be one of little influence and little ability, yet He is pleased with you because you are pleased with His Word.

More, however, is meant than simply loving the Word of God, though that is no small thing. It means that *they believed it*, believed it most thoroughly, and so kept it. I am afraid that there are great Truths in God's Word which we do not intelligently believe, but take for granted. We say, "Yes, yes, these doctrines are in the Creed," and we put them up on the top shelf—and by that very act we lay them aside and do not heartily believe in them for ourselves! We grow very vexed if anybody denies them, but if there is no controversy over them, we forget them. Is this wise? We call our opponents heterodox and our zeal for orthodoxy comes to the front—and yet, after all, it may be that we have never exercised a personal faith about those doctrines so as to think them out for ourselves!

It is a grand thing to work your passage to a Truth of God, to mine your way to the golden ore by digging and clearing! True Believers may be likened to those mites in the cheese which eat their way into it and penetrate into the center by feeding upon all that lies in their way as they advance. We eat our way into the Word of God! We live upon what we learn, tunneling through the Truth with receptive minds. The Truth of God is too great for us ever to absorb it all, but daily and hourly we live upon it! We so believe it as to treat it as a matter of *fact*, valuable for everyday use. This is the surest way to keep it, even to the end.

Now, dear child of God, as I have said before, you may have but very little strength. You may often be tempted and tried and cast down. But if you believe the Word of God, there is more for the pleasing of God in a child-like faith than there is in the most glittering profession or in the most showy deeds! Faith is the prize among jewels—the queen of the virtues! Believe God's Word and you have worked a God-like work! Believe it when others contradict it and you are a conqueror over them all! Believe it when circumstances seem to make it questionable. Believe it when your own heart fails you. Believe it when your sin and corruption rise within you like a fountain of foul waters and thus shall you give glory to the God of Truth! Still hold on to the promise made to you in the Word of God and to the manifestation of God which is seen in Christ Jesus—and you will be doing your God the honor which He deserves at your hands! And He will say, "I know your works: for you have a little strength, but you have kept My Word."

Furthermore, in addition to the inner possession and the hearty belief of the Truth, we must be *ready to adhere to it at all times*. That, perhaps, is the central thought here—"You have kept My Word." Why, there are great folk among us that never care to believe according to God's Word at all. They have thought out what they believe—their theology is made out of their own substance, as spiders spin their webs out of their own bowels. But, surely, in everything which concerns the doctrines of our most holy faith, we must make reference to a, "Thus, says the Lord." It is not what *I* think. It is not what some greater man may think. It is not what may be the consensus of all the enlightened minds of the period! The decision lies with what the *Lord has spoken*.

God's thoughts are as high above ours as the heavens are above the earth! Dare we drag them down and sit in judgment on them? If the thought of the age happens to be right, well and good, but it is not upon temporary opinion that we rest. Our faith stands not in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God! What is taught in Holy Scripture is sure Truth to us and every other statement must bow to it. Chillingworth said what ought to be true, though I am afraid that it is not—"The Bible and the Bible, alone, is the religion of Protestants." I should like to see a few more of such Protestants! Many say that we ought to keep "abreast of the times"—whatever that may mean—and that there is a certain "spirit of the age," to which we should be subject. This, to me, is *treason* against the Sovereign Truth of God. I know of one only spirit to whom I desire to be subject and that is the Spirit of all the ages who never changes. By His teaching we are not only 19 centuries behind the present age, but we come in at the back of all the ages of human history! If we have but little strength, we mean to let the times and the spirits go where they like—we shall keep to the Holy Spirit and to His eternal teachings!

Supposing that we have not such big heads as some have and cannot excogitate or multiply sophisms and inventions as they do, it will be no small thing to be commended at the last, in these terms—"You have a little strength, but you have kept My Word." Brothers and Sisters, cling to God's Word! Cling to Infallible and Immutable Revelation! Whatever novelty comes up, keep to the Word of Jesus! Whatever discovery may be made by the wise men of the age, let Christ be wisdom unto you! Regard the new teachers no more than you would the wise men of Gotham, for those who oppose themselves to God's Word are fools! Let them cry, "Lo here, or lo there," but believe them not! The Word of God is your anchor! The Book is our ultimatum!—

***"Within this sacred volume lies
The mystery of mysteries!
Happiest they of human race
To whom our God has given Grace
To read, to mark, to think, to pray,
To know the right, to learn the way.
But better they had never been born
Who read to doubt, or read to scorn."***

That which is not in Holy Scripture is not to be received as matter of faith in the Christian Church. But that which is there is to be received and held with that stern steadfastness, that incorruptible faith which no more changes than the unchanging Truths of God which it has grasped! Woe be to the man who is first a Calvinist, then an Arminian, then a Pelagian, then a Unitarian, never finding rest for the sole of his feet—keeping nothing because he has nothing to keep! This Philadelphian Church had won the commendation, "You have kept My Word." Dear Hearer, see that you win it, too!

And, no doubt, it was also intended in this sense—that *they had obeyed the Word of God*. "You have a little strength." There are very few of you, but you have been observant of all precepts and ordinances. Some think it a great thing to be members of a popular sect—but when the great curtain rolls up and all things are seen as they *are* and not as they *seem*—do you not think that that Church will be most commended which

was truest to the teaching of the Holy Spirit in everything? Christian chivalry should make you feel it better to be a member of a Church of six doing the Lord's work conscientiously than to be a member of a Church of six millions which has turned aside from it! I could not be in communion with a church whose chief guide and authority is another book than God's Word and whose acknowledged Head is other than the Lord Jesus Christ!

I had sooner stand alone than yield with a crowd to an Act of Parliament which was passed to dictate to me the form in which I may worship God! There shall come a day when it will be found that the minorities have generally saved both the world and the Church. A struggling few may reckon themselves to be the majority when they stand alone *with* God, for He counts for more than all the myriads of the earth put together! The faithful, staunch, God-fearing men that would not budge an inch, or change a letter, or shape a syllable to please all the kings and princes of the earth, shall be found to praise and honor in the day of the Lord's appearing! These are the men that Christ shall stoop from His Throne to honor! They that have trifled with His Word shall be lightly esteemed. They that have willfully broken one of the least of His Commandments—and have taught men to do so—shall be least in the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed and happy shall he be who follows the Lamb wherever He goes. Blessed shall he be who only wanted to know the Lord's will that he might do it unquestioningly, caring nothing what the will of other people might be in the matter.

I shall put it home to you, dear Friends, again. You may have but little strength, but *do you keep God's Word?* You may never become more numerous, or more influential, but let it be true of you that you have kept God's Word. Be students of God's Word and adherents of it! Take no notice of anything I say if it cannot be supported by the Word of Divine Truth. Take equally little notice of what *any* man says, be he orator, thinker, bishop, or whatever he may be. There is no value in all the brass counters which circulate among the many—they are current with the world, but the Kingdom of God does not know them! The words of men are trifling in value—it takes a mass of them to come to the value of a farthing. But any one Word of the Lord is worth a mint of gold! If a doctrine is of God, if it has come out of the loving lips of the Lord Jesus—hold it fast, as for dear life. Let men call you bigot, but never mind—hold on with all your might and your Lord will smile upon you.

Thus have I explained what the Philadelphians did. They did it under great disadvantages, but that only helped to increase the weight of praise measured out to them. They had little talent, but they kept God's Word. Oh, that men who have 10 talents would not be so anxious to be original in their teaching! Oh that they would cease to display their own thought, their own cleverness and individuality! If you have little talent, it is a pity you have not more, but still, it is for your praise if you quit yourselves like men and stand fast in the faith! It may be you have little strength of mind, but I hope, even then, Divine Grace enables you to be firm for the Truth of God. In other things you may be easily persuaded and readily talked over, but be you doubly firm in the things of God! There make your mark and put your foot down. Let it be seen that you do not go to be stirred in those

vital points, till your friends say of you, "Oh, you can twist William anywhere, but not in his religion. On that point he is a regular Puritan—there is no moving him." May it always be so! Even if you have but little strength, see to it that you keep Christ's Word.

Possibly you have not much strength as to influence—your sphere may be very narrow, and your power in it very slight. That does not matter. But it does matter that you are faithful to your Lord. If you have kept God's Word, you may be wielding an influence far beyond what you imagine. Good men in the dark days of Popery discovered the Truth of God but they only lived, perhaps, in some quiet village, or shut up in a monastery—and the most they could do was to write down what they knew and so keep it. We have met with instances where they wrote out part of the Word of God and hid it away in a wall and, afterwards, when the wall was pulled down, the priceless record was discovered and used. The Truth of God does not die through being buried.

Some taught the Gospel very quietly in their own family circle and so kept it. Some would get a few copies of the New Testament and go about and sell them in their baskets—and so they kept the Truth. Those men of old time whose influence upon their own age seemed so little, nevertheless prepared the way for those braver spirits who, by-and-by, shone forth like the stars of the morning! Hold fast God's Word and never mind what comes of it for the moment—God's seed may not grow in a day, but it will grow! If you only influence one child, who can tell what that child may be? If you only help to strengthen one solitary Christian woman, who knows what may come to pass by her means? We see the telegraph wires, but we do not see what messages they carry. The ropes hang down in our belfry, but the glorious chime is aloft. We cannot see the big bells, but it is ours to pull the ropes that are near our hands and do what God bids us to do—music will come of it somewhere! Above all, if we have but little strength of *any kind*, let us keep God's Word.

Now, why should God's Word be kept in this way? What is there to praise about keeping God's Word? I answer, because it is a holy thing to treasure up God's Word. I have gone into churches on the Continent and I have seen gold and silver plates in the sacristy, understood to be worth up to three millions of money. These were said to be the treasures of the church. But these are the treasures of *men* and they shall pass away. The solid Truth of Revelation, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit—a Divine experience given to you by that Holy Spirit—all this is the treasure of the Church! And you are doing a holy thing when you guard it against every adversary. To this purpose are saints sent into the world—to keep this treasure of the Church against all adversaries. Truth is the jewel for which all Believers must be ready to *die*.

Solomon made shields of gold which were borne before the king when he went into the house of the Lord, but Rehoboam took away the shields of gold and put shields of brass in their place. It is to be feared many are doing the same at this moment. Let us bear our protest—the gold is good enough for us. Do not throw away the best for the sake of getting something that may be newer, but that must be far inferior. I hold one single

sentence out of God's Word to be of more certainty and of more power than all the discoveries of all the learned men of all the ages!

I might have seen the Alexandrian library burned without losing a night's rest, for the mass of its contents must have been mere rubbish. But were there one single verse of the New Testament which it were possible to blot out from human memory and record, one might be willing to lay down his life to save the glorious sentence! The mind of man sends forth pure and impure water—and it is hard to discern between the two—but from the heart of God there wells up, undiluted and unmingled, a stream of Living Truth which is more for man's benefit than all else out of Heaven! Warriors guard kings, crowns and thrones, but the Living Truth of the living God is infinitely more worthy of our watch! Oh for 10,000 valiant men to stand about the bed of the Truth of God, each man with his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night. Therefore, as it is a holy thing, a heavenly thing, a priceless thing, keep God's Word!

Besides, *it is a wise thing*, for you that have but little strength, to keep God's Word. The feebler you are, the more closely should you keep to the Scriptures. Remember what Solomon says—"The conies are a feeble folk," but he puts them down as wise people, for they have their habitation in the rocks. If a disputer can once get you away from the Bible, he can swallow you alive, but if you will keep to Scripture and handle this weapon, "It is written. It is written," the disputer may be the arch-fiend, himself, but he cannot possibly get the victory over you! Your wisdom is not to try to gain keenness of mind that you may emulate the critic, but to lay hold upon God's Word and cling to it, for therein shall be your safety and your victory!

Again, dear Friends, we ought to hold fast to the Truth of God because if we have little strength, *it is there that we shall get more strength*. We shall never grow stronger by leaving the eternal Word of God! No, but as we cling to God in feebleness, the Divine strength of the Word of God is infused into our souls. Besides, God's Word is a supporting thing and he who quits it leaves his chief Helper. He that receives it shall live, but without it there is no spiritual life. Therefore let us hold it. If men would take away from us certain dainties which are sweet but which are not necessary, we might be content to let them rid us of such superfluities. But if they come to take away bread and water from the poor and needy, then we cannot accept it. For this we must stand up and fight to the death!

The Word that comes out of Christ's mouth is the daily manna of our heavenly life and it behooves every Christian, however feeble or however strong, to keep the Word of God with all his might against all comers, since it is his life. I am at this pass—I will sooner die than yield the Gospel! I may be a fool and an old-fashioned bigot, but I am not a turncoat, and I cannot quit the Word of the Lord. If I must be the last of the Puritans, I will not be ashamed of it. My Lord will revive His buried Truth as sure as He is God—the present madness will cease with its own short hour. So much, then, with regard to this word of praise.

II. I will not be long on the next point, while I just remind you that there is A WORD OF PROSPECT—"Behold, I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it: for you have a little strength, and have kept

My Word.” It seems to me to mean just this—“You have been faithful; therefore I will *use* you. You have been steadfast; therefore I will employ you.” For a considerable period of human life, it may be God does not give to all of us a field of usefulness, but He provides a field of *trial*. There are some to whom He opens the gate of usefulness early because He sees in them a spirit that will bear the temptation of success. But in many other cases it is questionable whether they could bear promotion and, therefore, the Lord permits them to be tried in different ways until He sees that they are found faithful—and then He puts them into His service and gives them an opportunity of bearing witness for Him.

Now, dear Friend, perhaps up to now you have been perfectly satisfied with holding the Truth of God with all your might and being faithful to it in private and in your own daily life. I want to suggest to you that if you have done this for some time, the time has now arrived when you may go forward to something more. There are opportunities before you, now, which were not there before—these are placed before *you*, especially, because you have been tried and have been proved faithful. If you will now begin to talk to others about that which you love so well, you will be astonished to find how gladly they will receive it from you.

You have been a *receiver* until now and that is well and good. But, now that you have become filled, overflow to others and let them receive of your joy! “How do I know that they will accept it?” you ask. I know it from this fact—that, as a general rule, the man that keeps God’s Word has an open door before him. If you have been vacillating and shifty and tricky—and have believed everything and nothing—nobody will take any particular notice of what you say, except to shut the door against your uncertain prattle. But when they have observed how you stand to the Truth of God—how solid and steadfast you are—they will give up disputing with you and come to inquire what your views really are. People do not care about knocking their heads against brick walls, or fighting against pillars of iron! And when they see that you are firm and unmoved, they will say, “We must let him have his own way.”

When a man begins his Christian life in a kind of dubious, half-hearted way, his friends do not know whether he is really going to carry it out or not. At any rate, as he endeavors to avoid all persecution, they do not know what to think of him and so, they feel encouraged to treat him as one who can be pressed and squeezed at pleasure. If there is a secret entrance to Heaven, he prefers it—he means to go round about and climb over the wall somewhere, or sneak in at the back gate. This poor creature has no power or influence! He is rather *ridiculous* than useful. Nobody ever respects him. Nobody cares a button about him. The devil, himself, does not trouble him much, for he knows that he will do no harm to his kingdom, let him talk as he likes.

But the man who says, “I am going straight for Glory and if anybody gets in my way, so much the worse for him, for I am bound to take the right road”—such a man will find a pretty clear track. Mr. Moody would say, “Make a bee line for Heaven.” A bee knows the nearest way and keeps to it with all its force. Let me hear each one of you say, “I am not going to take any corners, or twists, or windabouts but, straight away, by God’s

Grace, what He bids me do, I am going to do! What He bids me believe, I am going to believe. And if there is anything to be suffered for it, all right. I have added it all up and I count the reproach of Christ to be greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt.” This is the right kind of resolution. God help you to keep to it.

Before you, my Brother, the Lord God has set an open door. Go ahead! Do not be afraid! People will be willing to hear what you have to say and, what is more, people will be *converted* by what you say, for God has set before you this open door and no man can shut it! It is amazingly easy to go through a door when it is wide open and it will be very easy for you—much easier than you think! Now that you have been schooled, by God’s Spirit, into steadfastness of character to say, in God’s name, dependent upon God’s strength, what He has taught you, you will bring many to Christ because you, yourself, abide in Christ! Come, Brother, you did not reckon that such usefulness would ever fall to your lot, did you? Cheer up and get to work! Wake up to holy energy!

In the Sunday school there are little children that you will be the means of bringing to Christ if you lead a class! And out at the street corners there are folks that you will turn to the Savior if you have but the courage to stand up and preach! Out in the villages, or in the crowded city, many hearts await you. I say not this of you all, but only of confirmed and faithful ones. If you feel, “I never can give up the Bible. I can never forsake the Truths of God that I have learned from it—they are stamped on my heart, they are cut into the very center of my soul,” then you are the man who may safely go forth to publish the Truth! There is an open door before you which no man can shut! Gird up your loins and enter it! Rush to the front! Victory lies before you!

God means to use you. You are a vessel fit for the Master’s use and there never was a vessel fit for His use that He did not use one day or other. The hour needs its man quite as much as the man needs the hour. Take time by the forelock and honor your God! The Lord help you to keep His Word and then to go in for public testimony!

III. Our last point was to be A WORD OF PROMISE for, according to the 10th verse, it is written, “Because you have kept the Word of My patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.” Those who keep God’s Word, shall, themselves, be kept from temptation. The Lord returns into His servants’ bosoms that which they render to Him—He gives keeping for keeping.

Now, I shall speak for myself and for you—and I know that we can bear witness that this promise is true. One says to me, “Are you not perplexed about the prevalence of modern thought—the new phase of divinity that has come up of late, and the general progress that is being made towards a new theology? Does it not trouble you?” Not a bit! Modern ideas do not affect me in the slightest. If all men that live or ever shall live should throw away the old Calvinism, there remains *one* that will hold it, for this reason—that he could not hold any other—I must be crushed out of existence before my convictions of the truth of the Doctrines of Grace in the old-fashioned form can ever be taken from me! I am miserable, wretched,

lost, if the Doctrines of Grace are not true! I am joyous, glad, strong, happy if these doctrines are true. I cannot give them up—and especially because as I read, and the more I read—I perceive these things to be written in the Word of God and, therefore, I must hold them.

In this Church we feel very little of the temptation which tries all the world. Very seldom are any of our friends unsettled in their minds, or tormented with these hornets of heresy. “Alas,” said one minister to me, “I see some of my best people becoming skeptical! Are you not worried by seeing the thoughtful ones drifting off into new views?” “No, not at all.” “Why not?” “Because the Grace of God keeps our people to their moorings. They know what they believe and they have no desire to change.” If a man does not believe the Doctrines of Grace, he comes to hear me once and he says, “I am not going *there* any more.” He talks to some of you and you are so dogmatic and firmly rooted, he calls you pig-headed and says it is no use arguing with such bigots! And so he goes to argue somewhere else! This is exactly as we would have it!

When a bushel is full of wheat, the good corn keeps the chaff out of the measure. This is the Lord’s way of delivering those who keep His Word—thus He shuts them away from the temptation that comes upon others. He seems to say, “Dear child, since you will not go beyond My written Word, you shall not be tempted to go beyond it. I will cause the enemies of the Truth of God to leave you alone. You shall be offensive to them, or they to you and you shall soon part company.” Remember how Mr. Bunyan pictures it? When Talkative came up to gossip with Christian and Hopeful, he chattered away upon all sorts of topics and they were wearied with him. To get rid of him, Christian said to Hopeful, “Now we will talk a little about experimental godliness.” And when they began to speak about what they had tasted and handled of Divine Truth, Mr. Chatterbox dropped behind. He did not like spiritual conversation—neither do any of the breed! The holy pilgrims were not so rude as to tell him to go—they only talked about heavenly things which he did not understand—and he went of his own accord!

I believe that results are sure to follow holy conversation and sound preaching. Keep to the Truth of God and the modern school will give you a wide berth. But if any of you try the double-shuffle in religion—the plan of trying to believe a little of everything and not much of anything—if you try to hold with the hare and run with the hounds, you will be tempted to deadly error and it will serve you right! In the temptation you will fall, for, indeed, you are fallen already! Keep the Word of God and the Word of God will keep you! You will be shielded from half the temptations that fret and worry professors if you take your place and keep it against all comers.

Or perhaps the text may mean that if the temptation shall come, you shall be preserved from it. The deliberately-formed conviction that the Word of God is the standard of our faith—and the unwavering habit of referring everything to it and standing and falling by it may not deliver us from every error, but will save us from that which is the substance of every error—that is, the habit of trusting to our own understanding or relying upon the understandings of our fellow men. I value more a solid confidence in the Word of God than even the knowledge that comes out of it,

for that faith is a saving habit, a sanctifying habit and, in every way, a strengthening and confirming and preserving habit. May God grant to us that whatever form of temptation may come upon the face of the earth, we may stand fast for His Truth, so that none of us may perish like Judas, the son of perdition!

All this I have spoken to the people of God, but I am not ignorant that there are some here who do not know God's Word, nor love it. They have never embraced it and, to them, no blessing can come through it. But why should you not receive it? Does it not strike you as being reasonable that if God has spoken, His creatures ought to believe what He has spoken—that after He has laid down the Law there should remain no room for questioning?—

***“This is the judge that ends the strife,
When wit and reason fail.”***

Come, then, and search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life and they are they which testify of Christ. And let it not be said that you will not come unto Him that you might have life. As God bears testimony in His Word to His own dear Son, believe that testimony! Accept the Savior whom He has given and find immediate salvation—find it to-night!

Go out of this place saying, “I believe it.” “He that believes has everlasting life,” for, “this is life eternal, to know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.” I guarantee you if you get faith into your soul and the Word of God becomes your joy and comfort, you will never let it go! You will sing as we did, just now, and as I sang very heartily—

***“Let all the forms that men devise
Assault my soul with treacherous art,
I'll call them vanity and lies,
And bind the Gospel to my heart.”***

So may God bless you! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—John 17.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—669, 667, 486.**

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THE AMEN

NO. 679

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 4, 1866,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

**“The Amen.”
Revelation 3:14.**

THE word, “Amen,” is much more full of meaning than may be supposed, and as a title of our Lord Jesus Christ it is eminently suggestive. As you know the word is a Hebrew one which has been very properly conveyed not only into our language, but into most, if not all the languages of Christendom. It is a happy circumstance that some of these words should have had vitality enough in them to be transplanted into other tongues and still flourish. It gives some faint foreshadowing of the united worship of celestial spirits, and it indicates the Lord’s will that the Hebrew race shall not be forgotten by His Church—and that the language of His well-beloved Israel still sounds sweetly in His ear.

AMEN signifies, true, faithful, certain—but its sense will be better seen by carefully noting its *uses*. It had at least three forms of practical meaning. First, it was used in the sense of *asserting*—when a person would give peculiar authority to his words he either commenced or concluded with the word, “Amen.” And thus he declared as with the solemn “yes, yes,” of an honest, truth-loving man—certainly, assuredly, so it is. Our Savior uses the term frequently. The word which we translate, “Verily, verily,” is this word “Amen.”

You must have observed that John, who has a quick eye for the Divine moods of the Lord Jesus, notes with unerring fidelity the repetition of the asserting word. Whenever our blessed Lord was about to say something peculiarly solemn into which He would throw the full weight of His authority, He asserted it by the doubling of the word “Amen, amen,” or “Verily, verily,” at the commencement of it.

The second sense of the word, Amen, slightly varies from asserting, and may be more properly described as *consenting*. There is a memorable instance of this in the case of the woman who drank the water of jealousy (Num. 5:22). When she drank the water of jealousy it was enacted that if she had been guilty of the crime laid to her door, certain terrible results should follow as the effect of this water. She, at the time she drank it, said, “Amen, amen,” that is, she gave her consent that such-and-such pangs should fall upon her if she had been really guilty of adultery.

A more memorable instance, still, is that of the people assembled upon Mount Ebal and Gerizim. When the threats and the blessings were both read in their hearing, the people said “Amen, amen.” So let it be. Of the

like character is the case in the book of Nehemiah. When Ezra blessed Jehovah, the great God, all the people answered, Amen, with lifting up of their hands. A third meaning of the word Amen is what we may call *petitionary*. In this sense we use it at the close of our prayers. "Our Father who are in Heaven" is not a complete model of public prayer till it concludes with, "Amen."

In the ancient Church it was customary for the entire congregation to say Amen. Paul alludes to this custom in that expression in the Corinthians where he speaks of persons praying in an unknown tongue—he says, "How should he that occupies the room of the unlearned say Amen at your giving of thanks, seeing he understands not what you say?" We have it put on record by Jerome that at Rome the people were accustomed to say Amen in the gatherings of the early Christians so heartily—I might add, so lustily—that it was like the dash of a cataract, or a clap of thunder!

I could wish that we more uniformly and universally said Amen at the close of public prayer. I am sure it would be Scriptural and Apostolic, and I believe it would be useful to you all. Perhaps the custom was dropped on account of the irregular way in which the brethren said Amen. I have heard the same regularity in certain rustic Methodist congregations when I have thought that the Amen was put in the wrong place, and could have wished the custom to be discontinued altogether, because certain illiterate, rash, but zealous Brethren said Amen when there was nothing to say Amen to! They rather created ridicule than reverence, and showed as much folly as fervor. However, a judicious revival of the custom would, I doubt not, be useful in the Church of God.

It also signifies, "So be it, so let it be," and is virtually the consent of the entire congregation to the prayer which has been put up. Observe the devout Amen of Benaiah, at the close of David's dying prayer, with the remarkable addition, "The Lord God of my lord the king say so too" (1 Kings 1:36). Notice also how the Psalmist closes several of the Psalms, such as the forty-first and the seventy-second with the emphatic conclusion, "Amen and Amen."—

***"Let every creature rise and bring
Peculiar honors to our King;
Angels, descend with songs again,
And earth, repeat the long AMEN."***

Should you desire still further to enquire into the use and meaning of this remarkable word, there is a valuable sermon upon it in the works of Abraham Booth which you may read, as I have done, to great advantage. If anything should lead to the revival of its use more generally in public worship it will be a matter of great congratulation.

It strikes me that I might have divided my discourse this morning very fairly under these three heads—asserting, consenting, petitioning—for in each of these our adorable Lord Jesus Christ is certainly "the Amen." He asserts the will of God—He asserts God Himself. God the Son is con-

stantly called the Logos, the Word—He who asserts, declares and testifies God.

In the second place, we know that Jesus Christ consents to the will, design, and purpose of Jehovah. He gives an Amen to the will of God—is, in fact, the echo—in His life and in His death, of the eternal purposes of the Most High. And, thirdly, he is “the Amen” in the petitionary sense, for to all our prayers He gives whatever force and power they have. It is His Amen to our supplication which makes it prevalent at the Throne of the Most High. In these three senses Christ may well be called “THE AMEN.”

But we have preferred to divide the discourse another way. Our blessed and ever-to-be-adored Lord Jesus is, first, “the Amen” in reference to God. Secondly, “the Amen” as viewed in Himself. And, thirdly, I trust some of us have distinctly trusted Him to be “The Amen” in regard to ourselves.

I. Refresh your memories upon the great Truth of God, our LORD IS SUPERLATIVELY GOD’S AMEN. Let us review the various points in which He is “the Amen” of God. We must speak, of course, of God after the manner of men. Let that grain of salt be understood to savor all that we say. Jesus is “the Amen” of the Divine purposes. There was a day before all days when there was no day but the Ancient of Days—a time before all times when He who made all time dwelt alone.

Then in His august mind He conceived the plan of redemption. He foresaw the world ruined by sin. He determined that a number whom no man could number should be redeemed unto Himself to be forever His children, the beloved of His soul. These purposes He made, and fixed them fast—there should be a people who should show forth His praise forever and ever. These purposes were but *purposes* until God said Amen to them, and made them valid and sure decrees by determining to give His own dear Son. If God had not resolved to give the Lord Jesus Christ to be a redeemer, the purpose of redemption would have had no Amen. If He had not appointed Christ to be the Head of the body, His purpose concerning the body would have lacked the Amen.

The giving of our souls to Christ according to the Scriptures was a most ancient covenant transaction—and the gift of the Son to us was of equally ancient date—for He is regarded by God as the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. That gift of Christ to us in the Everlasting Covenant was the mighty Father’s virtually stamping His decree and making it valid and good. Long before you and I had a being—before this great world was made by God out of nothingness—God had made every purpose of His eternal counsel to stand fast and firm by the gift of His dear Son to us. He was then God’s Amen to His eternal purpose.

When our Lord actually came upon the earth He was then God’s Amen to the long line of prophecies. One by one the servants of God had testified concerning the coming Messiah. Some had spoken evangelically as Isaiah—others with a more legal savor as Moses. But their testimony was to the same effect, that in due time a Prophet should be raised up, and

that there should be born of a virgin a Man who should at the same time be “the Wonderful, the Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father.”

These promises followed thick and fast, all of them cohering, each one manifesting the self-same coming One. But there was no Amen to them—they were things hoped for, but not the *substance*—till at last, in the silence of midnight, angels sweetly sang His advent, “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill toward men! For unto you is born this day in Bethlehem a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.” That Babe among the horned oxen. That carpenter’s son, was God’s declaration that prophecy was the voice of Heaven! Now, you Prophets, sleeping in your tombs, it is witnessed that you lied not! Now has God Himself come forth and set to His seal that you are true! In the blessed form of Mary’s Child, God’s Amen appears both to shepherds and to wise men.

In the same sense, also, Christ was God’s Amen to all the Levitical types. The morning and the evening lamb, the red heifer, the turtle doves, and the two young pigeons whose blood stained the altar, the sacrificial bullock, the scapegoat, the plentiful sprinklings of blood—all these were man’s avowal that he believed in God—and at the same time God declaring to man that He had provided a Sacrifice. Yonder smoking bullock offered by Aaron and his sons is nothing yet, it is but a figure, it lacks the Amen to give it body, force, substance. That uplifted knife, that priest clad in fair white linen, that blood spilt upon the altar—all these are nothing—they need a soul put into them!

When Jesus Christ came, and especially when up to the Cross as to the altar He went as a victim and was laid on it, then it was that God solemnly put an Amen into what otherwise was but typical and shadowy. “It is finished,” said the Savior, and then was, as our poet puts it—

“Finished all the types and shadows

Of the ceremonial law!

Finished all that God had promised;

Death and Hell no more shall awe:

It is finished! Saints, from here your comfort draw.”

“The Amen” is set to the purposes, to the prophecies, and to the types. It is exceedingly worthy of your regard that Christ is God’s Amen to the Majesty of His Law.

That was a very solemn Amen which God gave on the top of Sinai when He came with ten thousand of His holy ones, and the mountain smoked beneath His feet. As I hear those words, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength,” that blast of the trumpet waxing exceedingly loud and long, that crack of thunder, and yon mighty flashes of great lighting were God’s Amen! AMEN rolled in peals along the wilderness of Kadesh, made the tents of Kedar tremble, and made the hinds to calve, and broke even the lofty cedars of Lebanon! It was such a terrible Amen that the people begged that they might hear it no more—their hearts were subdued with the terror of the

dread appearances of God's Law though He revealed it in the hands of a mediator by angels.

But, dear Friends, I can point you to a more solemn Amen than that! More terrible than Sinai although you can better bear the sight. God has said, "The soul that sins it shall die." "Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them." There stands the Son of God. He has not sinned Himself, but He has the sins of all His people imputed to Him. He has never broken the Law, but all our breaches were laid on Him. Now what will God say to Him? God meets Him as He once met Adam in the garden, but Jesus did not hide Himself as Adam did, He met stern Justice face to face.

There He is, the sinner's Substitute—what will the infinitely just Jehovah say now? The Law says He is accursed, for He has sin upon Him. Will the Father consent that His own Beloved shall be made a curse for us? Hearken and hear the Lord's Amen. "Awake, O sword, against the Man that is My Fellow, said the Lord." What? Does God the Father say Amen? Can it be? It is even so! He says Amen. And what an awful Amen, too, when the streaming sweat of blood leapt from every pore of His most blessed and immaculate body and fell in terrible clots upon the frosty ground! O God, You did say Amen, indeed, to all the terror of Your Law when Christ had to cry, "I am exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death."

Yet louder still is that Amen at Golgotha where stands the Savior, mocked, despised, rejected. He is at the Roman column, torn with scourges and in the seat of mockery crowned with thorns. There the Law seemed to say, "The sinner is to be despised and rejected, the sinner is a shameful thing, worthy to be spit upon, the sinner deserves to be crowned with thorns." And God says, Amen, and His own dear Son, who stood in the sinner's place, was made to set forth God's awful assent to the demands of Justice. Yonder along the streets of Jerusalem, over stones as hard as the hearts of Jerusalem's sons and daughters—harder they could not be—He leaves a trail of blood up to Calvary's mound!

And then His hands and feet are pierced and His soul pierced with something worse than nails. And then His heart is made to drink of draughts more bitter than wormwood mixed with gall, and His soul the subject of worse temptations than the mere thrusting out of the tongue or the jeer and the jibe of the multitude! There where His soul died within Him because God forsook Him, He shrieked "Eloi! Eloi! Lama Sabachthani?" There it was that God said sternly and dreadfully, "Amen," to that sentence, "Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree."

Beloved, if you want to see to the fullest degree how God hates sin, and with what vengeance He pursues iniquity, you must see Him hunt that sin right into the shelter which it sought to find in His own dear Son! Though it never was His sin, but *our* sin laid upon Him, yet God spared not His own Son. You have only to see how He was smitten of God and afflicted—because the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with

His stripes we are healed—and you will see at once that Jehovah does not reckon sin to be a trifle.

It must have been a very grand sight to stand in the valley between Ebal and Gerizim to hear the Law read, and then to have heard the six tribes upon Gerizim all say to the blessings solemnly, Amen—like a peal of thunder it must have started from the ten thousand lips of the children of Israel! And then how dreadful, in what subdued awe-stricken tones, like the low murmur of a threatening tempest, must have sounded the dreadful Amen from Ebal, when all the threats were read. “Cursed is he that confirms not all the words of this Law to do them. And all the people shall say Amen.”

But mark this word, it was a far more solemn thing when God spoke than when the tribes spoke, and He did speak upon Calvary in tones, the thunder of which reverberate throughout all ages, and are heard in dreadful mutterings in the abyss of Hell! Jehovah, whom cherubs sing as, “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts,” then said, “Amen, so let it be! Vengeance, take your fill! Justice, slay the Victim! Let the innocent Substitute bleed for men.” Our Lord Jesus, so far from destroying the Law, came to be God’s Amen to its penalty and to sanction and to establish it as the Law of God forever!

We have not, however, exhausted this topic. Jesus Christ is, as you know, very blessedly God’s Amen to all His Covenant promises, for is it not written that “all the promises of God in Him are yes and in Him Amen”? The Apostle Paul seems to have hit upon the very spirit of Christ’s name, Amen, when he says, “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” When God gave His Son He did virtually give all Covenant blessings to His people. The gift of Jesus Christ was God’s making every promise which had ever gone before the coming of Christ sure and certain. Christ was the wax melted in the fire upon which God set the stamp of His own honor that He would be true to the Covenant engagements which He had made.

Brothers and Sisters, if the saying of Amen upon Mount Gerizim to the blessing of the Law had something delightfully cheering and comfortable about it, how much more divinely sweet was Jehovah’s Amen when Jesus Christ rose from the dead triumphant?! How much more when up the everlasting hills He rode in glorious triumph, leading captivity captive?! Devout Spirits, come here and mark God’s Amen to the blessings of the Covenant! See yonder the mighty throng of angels and hear their song as they sing, “Lift up your heads, O you gates. And be you lift up, you everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in.”

Do you desire to hear God’s Amen? Hear it as He bids His Son, amidst universal acclamations, sit upon His Throne and reign with Him, expecting till His enemies be made His footstool! Oh, greatly blessed are you, you Saints who are one with Jesus, for God has blessed Him and there-

fore you! On high enthroned are you, O Saints, for Christ enthroned stands! Him has God exalted, and He has exalted all His saints in Him! He joys not for Himself alone—the meanest Christian has a part in all the glories of the Savior! The enthronization of Christ is God’s solemn declaration and Amen that He will bless all His people and make them kings and priests to reign forever and ever.

Once more, Jesus Christ will be God’s Amen at the conclusion of this dispensation in the fullness of time. I am not going into curious questions about how this dispensation will end. I have my own notions about it—other people have theirs. I believe if some people were as private about theirs as I am about mine, they would not sell so many two penny books, nor make so many foolish guesses at the future! I know just this about that, that Jesus Christ will come in due time, and that when He comes, whether immediately, or after a millennial reign, two things will surely happen—the righteous will be rewarded, and the wicked will be condemned. These two things we can be quite sure of.

Now, when God shall put into His dear Son’s mouth those words, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world,” that will be a most solemn Amen to God’s purpose made concerning those saints! Indeed, it will be the Amen to the Covenant in the whole of its range, and to the entire work of Divine Grace from the first to the last! Then, as they come streaming up the sky in glorious pomp, to reign with Jesus Christ forever, Death and Hell, and the assembled world shall mark with shame and dismay God’s Amen to His own eternal purposes, and to the work of His glorified Son.

When, turning to the left, the Judge shall say, “Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire in Hell”—before the word is spoken the ungodly will recognize Christ as being “the Amen” to all that God had threatened! In their cries to the rocks to hide them, in their shrieks to the mountains to fall upon them they will at once make clear to assembled multitudes that they perceive Jesus to be “the Amen,” making God’s threats true! And when His voice shall have cursed them forever, it will be the weighty Amen throughout eternity! It will be the emphatic reasserting at once of their guilt and of their punishment—that their sentence came from Jesus—that same Jesus who died for sinners and whom sinners crucified and rejected.

Had it come from any other lips the sentence had not been so dreadful. But coming from the Man, as well as from the God, it shall be humanity assenting to God’s verdict as well as God declaring and enforcing the sanctions of His Law. Oh Sinner, may Christ never be God’s Amen to you in that sense! But, on the contrary, may you hide in the wounds of Jesus, and find all the blessings in Him, yes, and in Him, Amen, to you! I have thus spoken sufficiently upon this point if God blesses it to you—and so let us turn to our second head.

II. Our Redeemer took this as a personal title to Himself. He called Himself “the Amen,” and so He is. Our second point, then, is THAT HE IS OUR AMEN IN HIMSELF. He proved Himself to be Amen—the God of truth, sincerity, and faithfulness in His fulfillment of Covenant engagements. The Lord Jesus Christ undertook to bring many saints to Glory. His Father gave Him a people to be His forever and He undertook, in suretyship engagements, that every one of these should be delivered perfect and complete when they should be required at His hands.

He undertook, in order to this, that He would suffer, bleed, and die for His Church—that all her debts should be discharged from His own veins—that a perfect righteousness should be worked out for her in which she should stand all beautiful in the sight of God. Brethren, I leave it to your own judgment, you who know the Lord Jesus, whether He has not faithfully kept His engagements. He has been “the Amen” to the full, in this respect. “Lo, I come! In the volume of the Book it is written of Me: I delight to do Your will, O God.”

From old eternity He declared Himself to be ready to go through the work, and when the time came He was straitened till the work was done. When He was a servant in the house of His Father, He might have gone out free if He had pleased. He might have left the service had He willed, but He said, “I love My Master, and I love My Master’s children.” And so, like a man who would not accept freedom under the old Jewish Law, His ear was fastened to the doorpost of God’s house and He became the servant of His people forever. “My ear have You opened.”

Beloved, He has fulfilled His service! Seven years of toil for Rachel were achieved by Jacob, and seven years afterwards—and our Master has achieved the same. He has paid the price of His Beloved to the uttermost farthing, and up till now it can be said of Him, “Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” “Of all whom you have given Me I have lost none.” Let us praise and bless His name as we see Him in Covenant engagements faithful and true, “the Amen.”

He was also “the Amen” in all His teachings. We have already remarked that He constantly commenced with, “Verily, verily.” The Pharisees in their teachings began with insinuating doubts, beclouding the mind with mystifications, and raising needless difficulties. It was considered to be the right thing for a philosopher never to teach dogmatically—but Christ never spoke in any other way. You find Him beginning, “Verily, verily, I say unto you.” Christ, as Teacher, does not appeal to tradition, or even to reasoning, but gives *Himself* as His authority. He quotes, indeed, the authority of, “It is written,” and speaks of the things which He had seen and heard of His Father. But this He states upon the authority of His own oneness with the Father.

He comes clad with Divine authority and He does not deign to dispute or to argue, but He claims for His words that they are Amen. We have accepted His teachings, I hope, in that same spirit. I do not open the evan-

gelists to find Christ's words to cavil over them. I do not turn to the Epistles to criticize the teachings of my Lord, nor to raise difficult questions with which to wrangle with the great Teacher. The position of a Christian is at his Master's feet, not disputing but receiving—not questioning, but believing. And in this sense Christ claims, as a Prophet and Teacher, to be "the Amen."

He is also "the Amen" in all His promises. Sinner, I would comfort you with this reflection. Jesus Christ said, "Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." If you come to Him, you will not find that He has revoked that promise, but He will say, "Amen," in your soul. That promise shall be true to you. He said in the days of His flesh, "The bruised reed I will not break, and the smoking flax I will not quench." Oh you poor, broken, bruised Heart, if you come to Him He will say Amen to you, and that shall be true in your soul as in hundreds of cases in bygone years.

These are His own words, which He spoke to His servant John: "The Spirit and the Bride say come; and let him that hears say come; and whoever will, let him take the water of life freely." He says Amen to all those "comes," and when you come and are anxious to drink, He will say Amen to your coming and to your drinking, for He declares to you, "Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out." From the Throne of God where He is highly exalted, He utters the very same sentence now, and says Amen to that which He declared before!

Christian, is not this very comforting to you, also, that there is not a word which has gone out of the Savior's lips which He has ever retracted? "I have not spoken in secret, in the dark places of the earth: I said not to the seed of Jacob, Seek you My face in vain." No stopping of Christ's bills—they shall be duly honored when the time comes. If you get a hold of but half a promise, you shall find it true! Beware of him who is called "Clip-promise," who will run away with much of the comfort of God's Word! But if you should even get a clipped promise, God will honor it—He will still keep His Word. "Let God be true, and every man a liar." You have to deal with Jesus Christ, "the same yesterday, today, and forever." Therefore be not afraid—

***"His very word of Grace is strong
As that which built the skies
The voice that rolls the stars along
Speaks all the promises."***

I must not, however, tarry here. Jesus Christ is yes and Amen in all His offices. He was a Priest to pardon and cleanse once. He is Amen as Priest, still. He was a King to rule and reign for His people, and to defend them with His mighty arm. He is an Amen King, still the same. He was a Prophet of old to foretell good things to come. His lips are most sweet, and still drop with honey—He is an Amen Prophet. He is Amen as to the merit of His blood—

"Dear dying Lamb,

***Your precious blood
Shall never lose its power.”***

He is Amen as to His righteousness. That sacred robe shall remain most fair and glorious when nature shall decay. He is Amen in every single title which He bears—your Husband, never seeking a divorce—your Head, the neck never being dislocated. He is your Friend, sticking closer than a brother—your Shepherd, with you in death’s dark valley—your Help and your Deliverer! He is your Castle and your High Tower—the Horn of your strength, your Confidence, your Joy, your All in All, and Amen in all.

I must close all this by reminding you that He is Amen with regard to His Person. He is still faithful and true, immutably the same. Not less than God! No furrows on that eternal brow—no palsy in that mighty arm—no faintness in that Almighty heart! There is no lack of fullness in His all-sufficiency—no diminution in the keenness of His eyes—no defalcation in the purpose of His heart. Omnipotent, Immutable, Eternal, Omnipresent still! God over all, blessed forever! O Jesus, we adore You, You great Amen!

He is the same, too, as to His manhood. Bone of our bone still. In all our afflictions still afflicted. Our Brother in ties of blood as much today as when He wore a peasant’s garb, and said, “Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests. But the Son of Man has not where to lay His head.” He has the same heart of sympathy, the same heart of compassion—remembering us and bidding us remember Him. Not for a moment changed because of the change of His condition. Not for an instant unmindful of us because of the harps of angels and the songs of the redeemed. As quick to hear a sigh or catch a tear today as when in the days of His flesh He comforted His people and carried the lambs in His bosom!

The Amen Savior! Oh, blessed is His name! Let us worship Him as the great Mediator between God and our souls, feeling joy to think that in all this He suffers no shadow of a change—

***“Blessings forever on the Lamb
Who bore the curse for wretched men.
Let angels sound His sacred name,
And every creature say, AMEN.”***

III. But I must roll all this up and leave you to digest and to enjoy the sweetness of the Truths of God which are contained in that short title, “the Amen.” I have to close now by saying that THE LORD JESUS IS EXPERIMENTALLY GOD’S AMEN TO EVERY BELIEVING SOUL. We may say in the first place that He is God’s Amen in us. Beloved, it is not impossible to prove the existence of God by argument. It is not altogether difficult to demonstrate the reasonableness of the Gospel by syllogism and by logic. None but the man who is deficient of brains, I think, need be long without being assured of the authenticity of Scripture.

But let me say to you that all that argument, reasoning and logic can do for you is less than nothing and vanity. You will doubt in the teeth of

argument, and be skeptical in the face of demonstration as long as your heart does not love the Truth of God. Your head may be convinced, but your heart will always supply enough atheism to keep your head at work. And your head will always be willing to receive an abundant supply from that nethermost cavern of your depravity.

But let me say to you if you want to know God you must know Christ. If you want to be sure of the truth of the Bible you must believe Jesus. And I warrant you that when you have once looked up and seen Incarnate God bearing your sins. When you have thrown yourself flat upon the Rock of Ages and have felt the inward joy and peace which flow from believing in God, you will have heard an Amen to that old Book, and an Amen to the existence of God, and an Amen to the Gospel which Satan himself can never remove from your remembrance! You will be confident where once you were diffident! You will believe with a Lutheran vigor when once you have laid hold of Jesus Christ. I believe that this is the keynote of all true believing—to lay hold on Jesus Christ—

***“Till God in human flesh I see
My thoughts no comfort find.”***

And when I get Christ, my thoughts not only have comfort but they get a solid conviction that the things must be true. Perhaps there are few among you here that are troubled with skeptical doubts. They will afflict some of us, and I can say with regard to them whenever they come across my soul in any shape or form, I find the short and quick answer is this—I know one thing—namely, that I am not what I used to be. I know that I have entered into a new world. I feel spiritual heaving in my soul, spiritual longing, emotions, desires to which I was once an utter stranger!

I know there has been as great a metamorphosis passed upon me as though a swine should suddenly become a seraph. I know that the very thought of Jesus keeps me back from sin and impels me in the path of duty. I know that His name exercises such a charm over me that no magician’s wand ever worked such wonders. My rocky heart melts, my frozen soul dissolves at the touch of His love! And I, a clod of dead earth, suddenly get wings and fly and commune with the eternal God! Why, that *must* be true which has done all this for me! It cannot be a lie, it must be true!

I feel within myself that my own consciousness must be true, and the Lord Jesus has so interwoven and intertwined Himself with my being—no, overlaid and covered my being—that though I should doubt all beside, I could not doubt the existence and Divine power of my Lord Jesus Christ! Depend on it, dear Friend, if you want to know the Gospel, you must receive Jesus Christ, and when you know Him you know the Gospel. Mahomet, you know, is not Mohammedanism, but Jesus is Christianity. Jesus Himself is the Bible! Jesus is God’s Word. Trust Him and you shall doubt no more.

Next, Jesus Christ is “the Amen,” not only in us, but “the Amen” *for* us. When you pray, dear Friend, you say Amen. Did you think of Christ? Did

you look to His wounds? Did you offer your prayer through Him? Did you ask Him to present it before God? Did you expect to be heard by virtue of His intercession? If not, there is no Amen to your prayer. But if you have prayed, though it were but a sigh or a tear—if you were looking to the Cross—Jesus Christ’s blood said Amen, and your prayer is as certain to be heard in Heaven as it was heard on earth! As sure as it came from your inmost soul and Christ was pleaded in it, the answer must certainly come!

And now I pray, dear Friends, that Jesus Christ should be God’s Amen in all our hearts as to all the good things of the Covenant of Grace this morning. I am sure He will be if you receive Him. We who have believed have entered into rest. If you have Christ you have entered into rest. “Being justified by faith we have peace with God.” You that have Christ have peace with God this morning. “Being justified by faith we have peace with God.” “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.”

If you have Christ, you are saved. Christ is God’s Amen. Get Christ and you have the promises. Get Jesus, and you are like the man who has an estate and is secure of his property because he holds the title deeds. He says, “I have got the estate.” “Where is it?”—he shows you the title deeds. “Oh,” says another man, “that is not the estate! That is far away in the north of England.” “I have it however,” says the owner, and he folds up his deeds, ties them round, and puts them away in his chest. “I have possession of the estate.”

Well, dear Friends, we have Heaven! We have God Himself because we have Christ—and Christ is the title deeds of all things. May you—

***“Read your title clear,
To mansions in the skies,”***

and the Lord make Jesus to be to your hearts, today, joyfully and blessedly His own Amen.

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AN EARNEST WARNING AGAINST LUKEWARMNESS NO. 1185

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JULY 26, 1874,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

“Unto the angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write, These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness the beginning of the creation of God, I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot: I would you were cold or hot. So then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth. Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich, and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness does not appear; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hears My voice, and opens the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with Me. To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me on My Throne, even as I, also, overcame, and am set down with My Father on His Throne.”
Revelation 3:14-21.

No Scripture ever wears out. The Epistle to the Church of Laodicea is not an old letter which may be put into the waste basket and be forgotten. Upon its page still glow the words, “He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the Churches.” This Scripture was not meant to instruct the Laodiceans only, it has a wider aim. The actual Church of Laodicea has passed away, but other Laodiceas still exist—indeed, they are sadly multiplied in our day and it has ever been the tendency of human nature—however inflamed with the love of God, gradually to chill into lukewarmness. The letter to the Laodiceans is, above all others, the Epistle for the present times. I should judge that the Church at Laodicea was once in a very fervent and healthy condition. Paul wrote a letter to it which did not claim Inspiration and, therefore, its loss does not render the Scriptures incomplete, for Paul may have written scores of other letters besides.

Paul also mentions the Church at Laodicea in his letter to the Church at Colosse. He was, therefore, well acquainted with it, and as he does not utter a word of censure with regard to it, we can infer that the Church was, at that time, in a sound state. In process of time it degenerated—and cooling down from its former ardor it became careless, lax and indifferent. Perhaps its best men were dead. Perhaps its wealth seduced it into worldliness. Possibly its freedom from persecution engendered carnal ease, or neglect of prayer made it gradually backslide. But in any case it declined till it was neither cold nor hot.

Lest we should ever get into such a state—and lest we should be in that state now—I pray that my discourse may come with power to the hearts of all present, but especially to the consciences of the members of my own Church. May God grant that it may tend to the awakening of us all.

I. My first point will be THE STATE INTO WHICH CHURCHES ARE VERY APT TO FALL. *A Church may fall into a condition far other than that for which it has a reputation.* It may be famous for zeal and yet be lethargic. The address of our Lord begins, “I know your works,” as much as to say, “Nobody else knows you. Men think better of you than you deserve. You do not know yourselves—you think your works to be excellent—but I know them to be very different.” Jesus views with searching eyes all the works of His Church. The public can only read reports, but Jesus sees for Himself. He knows what is done and how it is done, and *why* it is done. He judges a Church not merely by her external activities, but by her internal pieties—He searches the *heart* and tries the reins of the children of men.

He is not deceived by glitter. He tests all things and values only that gold which will endure the fire. Our opinion of ourselves and Christ’s opinion of us may be very different—and it is a very sad thing when it is so. It will be melancholy, indeed, if we stand out as a Church notable for earnestness and distinguished for success—and yet are not really fervent in spirit, or eager in soul-winning. A lack of vital energy where there seems to be most strength put forth, a lack of real love to Jesus where apparently there is the greatest devotedness to Him are sad signs of fearful degeneracy. Churches are very apt to put the best goods into the window, very apt to make a fair show in the flesh and, like men of the world, they try to make a fine figure upon a very slender estate.

Great reputations have often but slender foundations and lovers of the Truth of God lament that it should be so. Not only is it true of Churches, but of every one of us as individuals, that often our reputation is in advance of our deserts. Men often live on their former credit and trade upon their past characters, having still a name to live, though they are, indeed, dead. To be slandered is a dire affliction, but it is, upon the whole, a lesser evil than to be thought *better* than we are. In the one case we have a promise to comfort us, in the second we are in danger of self-conceit. I speak as unto wise men—you judge how far this may apply to us.

The condition described in our text is, secondly, one of mournful indifference and carelessness. They were not cold, but they were not hot—they were not infidels, yet they were not earnest Believers. They did not oppose the Gospel, neither did they defend it. They were not working mischief, neither were they doing any great good. They were not disreputable in moral character, but they were not distinguished for holiness. They were not irreligious, but they were not enthusiastic in piety nor eminent for zeal. They were what the world calls, “Moderates,” they were of the Broad-Church school—they were neither bigots nor Puritans—they were prudent and avoided fanaticism, respectable and averse to excitement.

Good things were maintained among them, but they did not make too much of them. They had Prayer Meetings, but there were few present, for

they liked quiet evenings at home. When more attended the meetings they were still very dull, for they did their praying very deliberately and were afraid of being too excited. They were content to have all things done decently and in order—vigor and zeal they considered to be vulgar. Such Churches have schools, Bible classes, preaching rooms and all sorts of agencies—but they might as well be without them—no energy is displayed and no good comes of them. They have deacons and elders who are excellent pillars of the Church, if the chief quality of pillars is to stand still and exhibit no motion or emotion.

They have ministers who may be the angels of the Churches, but if so they have their wings closely clipped, for they do not fly very far in preaching the everlasting Gospel—and they certainly are not flames of fire. They may be shining lights of eloquence, but they certainly are not burning lights of Divine Grace, setting men's hearts on fire. In such communities everything is done in a half-hearted, listless, dead-and-alive way—as if it did not matter much whether it was done or not. It makes one's flesh creep to see how sluggishly they move! I long for a knife to cut their red tape to pieces and for a whip to lay about their shoulders to make them bestir themselves.

Things are respectably done—the rich families are not offended, the skeptical party is conciliated, the good people are not quite alienated—things are made pleasant all round. The right things are done, but as to doing them with all your might, soul and strength, a Laodicean Church has no notion of what that means! They are not so cold as to abandon their work, or to give up their meetings for prayer, or to reject the Gospel. If they did so, then they could be convinced of their error and brought to repentance! But on the other hand they are neither hot for the Truth of God, nor hot for conversions, nor hot for holiness. They are not fiery enough to burn the stubble of sin, nor zealous enough to make Satan angry, nor fervent enough to make a living sacrifice of themselves upon the altar of their God. They are “neither cold nor hot.”

This is a horrible state, because it is one in which a Church wearing a good reputation renders that reputation a lie! When other Churches are saying, “See how they prosper! See what they do for God!” Jesus sees that the Church is doing His work in a slovenly, make-believe manner—and He justly considers that it is deceiving its friends. If the world recognizes such a people as being very distinctly an old-fashioned Puritan Church and yet there is unholy living among them, and careless walking, and a deficiency of real piety, prayer, liberality and zeal—then the world, itself, is being deceived—and that, too, in the worst way, because it is led to judge falsely concerning Christianity, for it lays all these faults upon the back of religion and cries out, “It is all a farce! The thing is a mere pretence! Christians are all hypocrites!”

I fear there are Churches of this sort. God grant we may not be numbered with them! In this state of the Church there is much self-glorification, for Laodicea said, “I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.” The members say, “Everything goes well, what more do we need? All is right with us.” This makes such a condition very hopeless, because reproofs and rebukes fall without power where the

party rebuked can reply, "We do not deserve your censures, such warnings are not meant for us." If you stand up in the pulpit and talk to sleepy Churches, as I very frequently do, and speak very plainly, they often have the honesty to say, "There is a good deal of truth in what the man has said."

But if I speak to another Church, which really is half asleep, but which thinks itself to be quite a model of diligence, then the rebuke glides off like oil down a slab of marble and no result comes of it. Men are less likely to repent when they are in the middle passage between hot and cold than if they were in the worst extremes of sin. If they were like Saul of Tarsus, enemies of God, they might be converted. But if, like Camaliel, they are neither opposed nor favoring, they will probably remain as they are till they die. The Gospel converts a sincerely superstitious Luther, but Erasmus, with his pliant spirit, flippant and full of levity, remains unmoved. There is more hope of warning the cold than the lukewarm! When Churches get into the condition of half-hearted faith—tolerating the Gospel, but having a sweet tooth for error—they do far more mischief to their age than downright heretics!

It is a great deal harder to work for Jesus with a Church which is lukewarm than it would be to begin without a Church. Give me a dozen earnest spirits and put me down anywhere in London and, by God's good help, we will soon cause the wilderness and the solitary place to rejoice! But give me the whole lot of you half-hearted, undecided and unconcerned, what can I do? You will only be a drag upon a man's zeal and earnestness. Five thousand members of a Church all lukewarm will be 5,000 impediments! But a dozen earnest, passionate spirits, determined that Christ shall be glorified and souls won, must be more than conquerors! In their very weakness and fewness will reside capacities for being the more largely blessed of God. Better *nothing* than lukewarmness!

Alas, this state of lukewarmness is so congenial with human nature that it is hard to fetch men from it. Cold makes us shiver and great heat causes us pain—but a tepid heart is comfort itself. Such a temperature suits human nature. The world is always at peace with a lukewarm Church and such a Church is always pleased with itself. Not too worldly—no! We have our lignite! There are certain amusements which, of course, a Christian must give up, but we will go quite up to the line, for why are we to be *miserable*? We are not to be so greedy as to be called miserly, but we will give as little as we can to the cause. We will not be altogether absent from the House of God, but we will go as seldom as we can. We will not forsake altogether the poor people to whom we belong, but we will also go to the world's Church, so as to get admission into better society and find fashionable friends for our children.

How much of this there is abroad! Compromise is the order of the day! Thousands try to hold with the hare and run with the hounds—they are for God and Mammon, Christ and Belial, truth and error—and so are "neither hot nor cold." Do I speak somewhat strongly? Not so strongly as my Master, for He says, "I will spew you out of My mouth." He is nauseated with such conduct! It sickens Him and He will not endure it! In an earnest, honest, fervent heart, nausea is created when we fall in with men

who dare not give up their profession and yet will not *live* up to it. They cannot altogether forsake the work of God, but yet do it in a sluggard's manner, trifling with that which ought to be done in the best style for so good a Lord and so gracious a Savior!

Many a Church has fallen into a condition of indifference and when it does, it generally becomes the haunt of worldly professors, a refuge for people who want an easy religion which enables them to enjoy the pleasures of sin and the honors of piety at the same time. It becomes a place where things are free and easy, where you are not expected to do much, or give much, or pray much, or to be very religious—where the minister is not so precise as the old school Divines—where the people are more liberal, have broad views, free-thinking and free-acting. It becomes a place where there is full tolerance for sin and no demand for vital godliness. Such churches applaud cleverness in a preacher, but as for his doctrine—that is of small consequence—and his love to Christ and zeal for souls are *very* secondary. He is a clever fellow and can speak well and that is all that matters.

This style of thing is all too common, yet we are expected to hold our tongue, for the people are very respectable. The Lord grant that we may be kept clear of such respectability! We have already said that *this condition of indifference is attended with perfect self-complacency*. The people who ought to be mourning are rejoicing. And where they should hang out signals of distress, they are flaunting the banners of triumph. "We are rich, we are adding to our numbers, enlarging our schools and growing on all sides. We have need of nothing. What can a Church require that we have not in abundance?" Yet their *spiritual* needs are terrible. This is a sad state for a Church to be in. Spiritually poor and proud! But a Church crying out to God because it feels itself in a backsliding state. A Church mourning its deficiency, pining and panting to do more for Christ. A Church burning with zeal for God and therefore quite discontent with what it has been able to do—this is the Church which God will bless! But that which writes itself down as a model for others is very probably grossly mistaken and is in a sad plight.

This Church, which was so rich in its own esteem, was utterly bankrupt in the sight of the Lord. It had no real joy in the Lord—it had mistaken its joy in *itself* for that. It had no real beauty of holiness upon it—it had mistaken its formal worship and fine building and harmonious singing for that. It had no deep understanding of the Truth of God and no wealth of vital godliness—it had mistaken carnal wisdom and outward profession for those precious things. It was poor in secret prayer which is the strength of any Church! It was destitute of communion with Christ which is the very lifeblood of religion. It had the *outward* semblance of these blessings and tracked in a vain show. There are Churches which are poor as Lazarus as to true religion and yet are clothed in scarlet and fare sumptuously every day upon the mere form of godliness. Spiritual leanness exists side by side with vainglory. Contentment as to worldly goods makes men rich, but contentment with our spiritual condition is the index of poverty.

Once more, this Church of Laodicea had fallen into *a condition which had chased away its Lord*. The text tells us that Jesus said, “I stand at the door and knock.” That is not the position which our Lord occupies in reference to a truly flourishing Church. If we are walking aright with Him, He is in the midst of the Church, dwelling there and revealing Himself to His people! His Presence makes our worship to be full of spirituality and life! He meets His servants at the Table, and there spreads them a feast upon His body and His blood. It is He who puts power and energy into all our Church activities and causes the Word to sound out from our midst. True saints abide in Jesus and He in them. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, when the Lord is in a Church, it is a happy Church, a holy Church, a mighty Church and a triumphant Church!

But we may grieve Him till He will say, “I will go and return to My place until they acknowledge their offense and seek My face.” Oh, you that know my Lord and have power with Him, entreat Him not to go away from us! He can see much about us as a people which grieves His Holy Spirit—much about any one of us to provoke Him to anger. Hold Him, I pray you, and do not let Him go, or if He is gone, bring Him, again, to His mother’s house, into the chamber of her that bore Him, where, with holy violence, we will detain Him and say, “Abide with us, for You are Life and Joy, and All in All to us as a Church! Ichabod is written across our house if You are gone, for Your Presence is our glory and Your absence will be our shame.”

Churches may become like the Temple when the Glory of the Lord had left the holy place because the image of jealousy was set up and the house was defiled. What a solemn warning is that which is contained in Jeremiah 7:12-15—“But go you now unto My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of My people Israel. And now, because you have done all these works, says the Lord, and I spoke unto you, rising up early and speaking, but you heard not; and I called you, but you answered not; therefore I will do unto this house, which is called by My name, in which you trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of My sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim.”

II. Now let us consider, secondly, THE DANGER OF SUCH A STATE. The great danger is, first, *to be rejected of Christ*. He puts it, “I will spew you out of My mouth”—as disgusting Him and causing Him nausea. Then the Church must first be in His mouth, or else it could not be spewed from it. What does this mean? Churches are in Christ’s mouth in several ways. They are used by Him as His testimony to the world. He *speaks* to the world through their lives and ministries. He does as good as say, “O Sinners, if you would see what My religion can do, see here a godly people banded together in My fear and love, walking in peace and holiness.” He speaks powerfully by them and makes the world see and know that there is true *power* in the Gospel of the Grace of God.

But when the Church becomes neither cold nor hot, He does not speak by her—she is no witness for Him. When God is with a Church, the minister’s words come out of Christ’s mouth. “Out of His mouth went a two-edged sword,” says John in Revelation, and that “two-edged sword” is the

Gospel which we preach. When God is with a people they speak with Divine power to the world, but if we grow lukewarm, Christ says, "Their teachers shall not profit, for I have not sent them, neither am I with them. Their word shall be as water spilt on the ground, or as the whistling of the wind." This is a dreadful thing! Better far, for me, to die than to be spewed out of Christ's mouth!

Then He also ceases to plead for such a Church. Christ's special intercession is not for all men, for He says of His people, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which You have given Me." I do not think Christ ever prays for the Church of Rome—what would He pray for, but her total overthrow? Other Churches are nearing the same fate—they are not clear in His Truth or honest in obedience to His Word. They follow their own devices, they are lukewarm. But there are Churches for which He is pleading, for He has said, "For Zion's sake will I not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest until the righteousness thereof goes forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burns."

Mighty are His pleas for those He really loves! And countless are the blessings which come in consequence. It will be an evil day when He casts a Church out of that interceding mouth and leaves her unrepresented before the Truth of God because she is none of His! Do you not tremble at such a prospect? Will you not ask for Grace to return to your first love? I know that the Lord Jesus will never leave off praying for His own elect, but for Churches as *corporate* bodies He may cease to pray, because they become anti-Christian, or are mere human gatherings, not elect assemblies such as the Church of God ought to be. Now this is the danger of any Church if it declines from its first ardor and becomes lukewarm. "Remember therefore from where you are fallen, and repent, and do your first works; or else I will come unto you quickly, and will remove your candlestick out of its place, except you repent."

What is the other danger? This first comprehends all, but another evil is hinted at—such a Church will be *left to its fallen condition* to become wretched—that is to say, miserable, unhappy, divided, without the Presence of God. And so it will be without delight in the ways of God—lifeless, spiritless, dreary, desolate, full of schisms, devoid of Divine Grace and I know not what beside, that may come under the term "wretched." Then the next word is "miserable," which might better be rendered, "pitiable." Churches which once were a glory shall become a shame. Whereas men said, "The Lord has done great things for them," they shall now say, "see how low they have fallen! What a change has come over the place! What emptiness and wretchedness! What a blessing rested there for so many years, but what a contrast now!" Pity will take the place of congratulation and scorn will follow admiration.

Then it will be "poor" in membership, poor in effort, poor in prayer, poor in gifts and Graces—poor in *everything*. Perhaps some rich people will be left to keep up the semblance of prosperity, but all will be empty, vain, void, Christless, lifeless. Philosophy will fill the pulpit with chaff. The Church will be a mass of worldliness—the congregation an assembly of vanity. Next, they will become blind. They will not see themselves as they are. They will have no eyes upon the neighborhood to do it good, no eyes

to the coming of Christ, no eyes for His Glory. They will say, "We see," and yet be blind as bats. Ultimately they will become "naked"—their shame will be seen by all—they will be a proverb in everybody's mouth. "Call that a Church!" says one. "Is that a Church of Jesus Christ?" cries a second.

Those dogs that dared not open their mouths against Israel when the Lord was there will begin to howl when He is "gone" and everywhere will the sound be heard, "How are the mighty fallen, how are the weapons of war broken." In such a case as that the Church will *fail of overcoming*, for it is, "to him that overcomes," that a seat upon Christ's Throne is promised—but that Church will come short of victory. It shall be written concerning it, even as of the children of Ephraim, that being armed and carrying bows they turned their backs in the day of battle. "You did run well," says Paul to the Galatians, "what did hinder you that you should not obey the Truth?"

Such a Church had a grand opportunity, but it was not equal to the occasion. Its members were born for a great work, but inasmuch as they were unfaithful, God put them aside and used other means. He raised up in their midst a teaming testimony for the Gospel and the light thereof was cast across the ocean and gladdened the nations, but the people were not worthy of it, or true to it—and therefore He took the candlestick out of its place and left them in darkness. May God prevent such an evil from coming upon us! But such is the danger to all Churches if they degenerate into listless indifference.

III. Thirdly, I have to speak of THE REMEDIES WHICH THE LORD EMPLOYS. I do earnestly pray that what I say may come home to all here, especially to every one of the members of this Church, for it has come very much home to me and caused great searching of heart in my own soul. And yet I do not think I am the least zealous among you. I beseech you to judge yourselves, that you be not judged. Do not ask me if I mean anything personal. I am personal in the most emphatic sense! I speak of *you* and to *you* in the most plain way.

Some of you show plain symptoms of being lukewarm and God forbid that I should flatter you, or be unfaithful to you! I am aiming at personal-ity and I earnestly want each beloved Brother and Sister here to take home each affectionate rebuke. And you who come from other Churches, whether in America or elsewhere, you need awakening quite as much as we do. Your Churches are not better than ours—some of them are not as good. I speak to you, also, for you need to be stirred up to nobler things.

Note, then, the first remedy. Jesus gives a *clear analysis* as to the Church's true state. He says to it—"You are lukewarm, you are wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." I rejoice to see people willing to know the truth, but most men do not wish to know it and this is an ill sign. When a man tells you that he has not looked at his ledger, or day-book, or held a stock-taking for this 12 months, you know whereabouts he is, and you say to your manager, "Have you an account with him? Then keep it as close as you can." When a man dares not know the worst about his case, it is certainly a bad one—but he that is right before God is thankful to be told what he is and where he is.

Now, some of you know the faults of other people. And in watching this Church you have observed weak points in many places—have you wept over them? Have you prayed over them? If not, you have not watched as you should do for the good of your Brothers and Sisters and, perhaps, have allowed evils to grow which ought to have been rooted up! You have been silent when you should have kindly and earnestly spoken to the offenders, or made your own example a warning to them. Do not judge your Brother, but judge *yourself*—if you have any severity, use it on your own conduct and heart. We must pray the Lord to use this remedy and make us know just where we are. We shall never get right as long as we are confident that we are so already. Self-complacency is the death of repentance.

Our Lord's next remedy is *gracious counsel*. He says, "I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire." Does not that strike you as being very like the passage in Isaiah, "Come you, buy, and eat; yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price"? It is so and it teaches us that one remedy for lukewarmness is to begin, again, just as we began at first. We were at a high temperature at our first conversion. What joy, what peace, what delight, what comfort, what enthusiasm we had when first we knew the Lord! We bought gold of Him, then, for nothing—let us go and buy again at the same price! If religion has not been genuine with us till now, or if we have been adding to it great lumps of shining stuff which we thought was gold and was not, let us now go to the heavenly mint and buy gold tried in the fire, that we may be *really* rich!

Come, let us begin again, each one of us, inasmuch as we may have thought we were clothed and yet we were naked. Let us hasten to Him again and at His own price, which is *no price*, let us procure the robe which He has worked of His own righteousness—and that goodly raiment of His Spirit—which will clothe us with the beauty of the Lord. If, moreover, we have come to be rather dim in the eye and no longer look up to God and see His face, and have no bright vision of the Glory to be revealed. And if we cannot look on sinners with weeping eyes, as we once did, let us go to Jesus for the eye-salve—just as we went when we were stone blind at first—and the Lord will open our eyes again and we shall behold Him in clear vision as in days gone by. The word from Jesus is, "Come near to Me, I pray you, My Brethren. If you have wandered from Me, return. If you have been cold to Me I am not cold to you, My heart is the same to you as ever, come back to Me, My Brethren. Confess your evil deeds, receive My forgiveness, and from this day on let your hearts burn towards Me, for I love you, still, and will supply all your needs." That is good counsel, let us take it!

Now comes a third remedy, sharp and cutting, but sent in love, namely, *rebukes and chastening*. Christ will have His favored Church walk with great care. And if she will not follow Him fully by being shown in which she has erred, and will not repent when kindly counseled, He then betakes Himself to some sharper means. "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." The word, here, used for, "love," is a very choice one. It is one which signifies an intense personal affection. Now, there are some Churches which Christ loves very specially, favoring them above others,

doing more for them than for others and giving them more prosperity. They are the darlings of His heart, His Benjamins.

It is a very solemn thing to be dearly loved by God. It is a privilege to be coveted. Mark you, the man who is so honored occupies a position of great delicacy. The Lord your God is a jealous God and He is most jealous where He shows most love. The Lord lets some men escape scot-free for a while after doing many evil thing. But if they had been His own elect, He would have visited them with stripes long before. He is very jealous of those whom He has chosen to lean upon His bosom and to be His closest friends. Your servant may do many things which could not be thought of by your child or your wife. And so it is with many who profess to be servants of God—they live a very lax life and they do not seem to be chastened for it. But if they were the Lord's own peculiarly beloved ones, He would not endure such conduct from them.

Now mark this, if the Lord exalts a Church and gives it a special blessing, He expects more of it, more care of His honor and more zeal for His Glory than He does of any other Church. And when He does not find it, what will happen? Why, because of His very love He will rebuke it with hard sermons, sharp words, and sore smiting of conscience. If these do not arouse it, He will take down the rod and deal out chastening. Do you know how the Lord chastens Churches? Paul says, "For this cause some are sickly among you, and many sleep." Bodily sickness is often sent in discipline upon Churches—and losses, crosses and troubles are sent among the members—and sometimes leanness in the pulpit, breakings out of heresy and divisions in the pew, and lack of success in all Church work. All these are smitings with the rod.

It is very sad, but sometimes that rod does not fall on that part of the Church which does the wrong. Sometimes God may take the *best* in the Church and chasten them for the wrong of others. You say, "How can that be right?" Why, because they are the kind of people who will be most benefited by it! If a vine needs the knife, it is not the branch that bears *very little fruit* which is trimmed, but the branch which bears *much fruit is purged* because it is worth purging! In their case, the chastening is a blessing and a token of love.

Sorrow is often brought upon Christians by the sins of their fellow members. And I know of many an aching heart in this world, of Brothers and Sisters who love the Lord and want to see souls converted, but they can only sigh and cry because nothing is done. Perhaps they have a minister who does not believe the Gospel and they have fellow members who do not care whether the minister believes it or not. They are all asleep together except those few zealous souls who besiege the Throne of Grace day and night—and they are the ones who bear the burden of the lukewarm Church. Oh, if the chastening comes here—whoever bears it—may the whole body be the better for it! And may we never rest till the Church begins to glow with the sacred fire of God and boil with enthusiastic desire for His Glory.

The last remedy, however, is the best of all, in my mind. I love it best and desire to make it my food when it is not my medicine. The best remedy for backsliding Churches, is *more communion with Christ*. "Behold,"

He says, "I stand at the door and knock." I have known this text preached upon to sinners numbers of times as though Christ knocked at *their* door and they had to open it, and so on. The preacher has never managed to keep to Free Grace for this reason—that the text was not meant to be so used—and if men will ride a text the wrong way, it will not go! This text belongs to the Church of God, not to the unconverted! It is addressed to the Laodicean Church!

There is Christ outside the Church, driven there by her unkindness. But He has not gone far! He loves His Church too much to leave her altogether. He longs to come back and, therefore, He waits at the doorpost. He knows that the Church will never be restored till He comes back and He desires to bless her. And so He stands waiting, knocking and knocking again and again. He does not merely knock once, but He stands knocking by earnest sermons, by Providences, by impressions upon the conscience, by the quickening of His Holy Spirit. And while He knocks, He speaks—He uses all means to awaken His Church. Most condescendingly and graciously does He do this, for having threatened to spew her out of His mouth, He might have said, "I will get Me gone! And I will never come back again to you!"

That would have been natural and just, but how gracious He is when, having expressed His disgust, He says, "Disgusted as I am with your condition, I do not wish to leave you. I have taken My Presence from you, but I love you, and therefore I knock at your door and wish to be received into your heart. I will not force Myself upon you, I want you voluntarily to open the door to Me." Christ's Presence in a Church is always a very tender thing. He never is there against the will of the Church—it cannot be—for He lives in His people's wills and hearts and, "works in them to will and to do of His own good pleasure."

He does not break bolts and bars and come in as He often does into a sinner's heart, carrying the soul by storm, because the man is dead in sin and Christ must do it all or the sinner will perish! No, He is here speaking to living *men* and *women* who ought, also, to be *loving* men and women. And so He says, "I wish to be among you, open the door to Me." We ought to open the door at once and say, "Come in, good Lord, we grieve to think we should ever have put You outside that door at all." And then see what promises He gives! He says He will come and sup with us! Now, in the East, the supper was the best meal of the day. It was the same as our dinner, so that we may say that Christ will come and dine with us. He will give us a rich feast, for He, Himself, is the daintiest and most plenteous of all feasts for perishing souls!

He will come and sup with us, that is, we shall be the host and entertain Him. But then He adds, "and you with Me," that is, *He* will be the Host and entertain us! So we will change places—He will be Host and Guest by turns. We will give Him of our best, but poor fare is that, too poor for Him! And yet He will partake of it. Then He shall be Host and *we* will be guests, and oh, how we will feast on what He gives! Christ comes, and brings the supper with Him, and all we do is find the room. The Master says to us, "Where is the guest chamber?" and then He makes ready and spreads His royal table. Now, if these are the terms on which we are

to have a feast together, we will most willingly fling open the doors of our hearts and say, "Come in, good Lord." He says to you, "Children, have you any meat?" And if you are obliged to say, "No, Lord," He will come in unto you, none the less, readily, for there are the fish. The net is ready to break, it is so full, and here are more upon the coals! I guarantee you, if we sup with Him, we shall be lukewarm no longer!

The men who live where Jesus is soon feel their hearts burning! It is said of a piece of scented clay by the old Persian moralist, that the clay was taken up and questioned. "How came you to smell so sweetly, being nothing but common clay?" And it replied, "I laid for many a year in the sweet society of a rose, until at last I drank in its perfume." And we may say to every warm-hearted Christian, "How came you to be so warm?" And his answer will be, "My heart bubbles up with a good medicine, for I speak of the things which I have made touching the King! I have been with Jesus and I have learned of Him." Now, Brothers and Sisters, what can I say to move you to take this last medicine? I can only say, take it, not only because of the good it will do you, but because of the sweetness of it. I have heard say of some persons, that they were pledged not to take wine except as a medicine—and then they were very pleased when they were ill! And so if *this* is the medicine, "I will come and sup with him, and he with Me," we may willingly confess our need of so delicious a remedy! Need I press it on you? May I not, rather, urge each Brother, as soon as he gets home, today, to see whether he cannot enter into fellowship with Jesus? And may the Spirit of God help you!

This is my closing word—there *is* something for us to do in this matter. We must examine ourselves and we must confess the fault if we have declined in Divine Grace. And then we must not talk about setting the *Church* right—we must pray for Grace—each one for *himself*, for the text does not say, "If the Church will open the door," but, "If *any man* hears My voice and opens the door." It must be done by *individuals*—the Church will only get right by each man and woman getting right. Oh, that we might get back into an earnest zeal for our Lord's love and service! But we shall only do so by listening to His rebukes and then falling into His arms, clasping Him once again and saying, "My Lord and my God."

That healed Thomas, did it not? Putting his fingers into the print of the nails, putting his hand into the side, that cured him! Poor, unbelieving, staggering Thomas only had to do that and he became one of the strongest of Believers, and said, "My Lord and my God." You will love your Lord till your soul is as coals of juniper if you will daily commune with Him. Come close to Him—and once getting close to Him—never go away from Him again. The Lord bless you, dear Brothers and Sisters, the Lord bless you in this thing. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Revelation 3.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—184, 787, 992.**

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LUKEWARMNESS

NO. 2802

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, OCTOBER 26, 1902.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK,
ON A LORD'S-DAY EVENING, DURING THE WINTER OF 1860-61.

*"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot: I would you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth."
Revelation 3:15, 16.*

IF this had been an utterance of mine, it would have been accounted vulgar. As a sentence of Scripture, I suppose it may be permitted to escape the censure of fastidious modern critics. The vernacular tongue and the homely figure may be decried as vulgarities, but if so, it will be by those whose tastes have been ill-schooled. A vicious refinement has come into vogue. If men call things by their right names and use good old Saxon words, they are perpetually brought under the lash for having indulged in vulgarities. A return to such "vulgarities" in the pulpit would be a return to power! I would far rather have, again, the homely language of Hugh Latimer, with all its singularity—and, I must confess, with some of its grossness—than have the namby-pamby style of modern times in which sacred things are spoken of as if they were only meant to be whispered in drawing rooms and not to be uttered where men meet in everyday life. The fact is, the Bible is a book which deals with things as they are—a book which, just like all of God's works, is glorious because it is natural and simple. God has not polished the rocks in the valleys. He has not set the mountains all in order, nor has He yet been pleased to make all parts of the earth just as fair and beautiful as if they had been intended to form a lovely landscape! But, at least, in some places He has hewn them out and left them rough and rugged—to stand in all their naked glory. So is it with this Book of God. There are things in it at which the too-polite shrug their shoulders—not so many, perhaps, in the original as in our translation—but still, sufficient to shock a prudish taste. The Bible is, none the less, chaste because it scorns to call foul things by fair names. I love the Word of God because, while it is a God-like Book, it is also a man-like Book. In all the Glory of His Infinite Wisdom, the Lord has written to us this Divine message in the rugged grandeur and sublime simplicity of language which even a child can comprehend!

The Lord Jesus here uses a plain, homely metaphor. As tepid water makes a man's stomach heave, so lukewarm profession is nauseous to the Almighty. He could better endure either the coldness of apathy or the

warmth of enthusiasm—but the man who is lukewarm in religion moves Him to the deepest loathing. He vomits him forth from His mouth! His very name shall be dismissed from the lips of the Lord with the most sickening abhorrence that fancy can paint. It is an utterance so strong that no sentence of the most vehement and impassioned orator could rival it. There is such a depth of disgust in this warning against lukewarmness that I know of no figure within the range of imagination—and no words in the whole vocabulary of language which could have conveyed the meaning of “Jesus Christ, who is the faithful Witness,” so fully, or with such terrible force!

I am going to try to show you, from this text, first, some *reasons why lukewarmness in religion is so distasteful to Christ*. And then to point out to you *some dissuasive against lukewarmness*, urging you to be fervent in your Master’s cause.

I. First, then, I am to give you **SOME REASONS WHY LUKEWARM RELIGION IS SO DISTASTEFUL TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**.

And first, let me say that it is so *because it is a direct insult to the Lord Jesus Christ*. If I boldly say that I do not believe what He teaches, I have given Him the lie. But if I say to Him, “I believe what You teach, but I do not think it of sufficient importance for me to disturb myself much about it,” I do, in fact, more willfully resist His Word! I as much as say to Him, “If it is true, yet it is a thing which I so despise and consider so contemptible, that I will not give my heart to it.” Did Jesus Christ think salvation of such importance that He must come from Heaven to earth to work it out? Did He think the Gospel, which He preached, so worthy to be made known that He must spend His life in proclaiming it? Did He think the redemption, which He worked out, to be so valuable that He must shed His own precious blood in order to complete it? Then, surely, He was in earnest, so, if I profess to believe the Truths that He taught and yet am indifferent, do I not insult Christ by seeming to insinuate that there was no need for Him to be in such dead earnest—that, in fact, He laid these things too deeply to heart?

His intense zeal was not on His own account, but on behalf of others and, according to all reason, those who are the interested parties for whom Christ’s solemn engagements were undertaken should be even more earnest than He was, if that could be possible! Yet, instead of that being the case, here is Christ in earnest and we—too many of us—are lukewarm, “neither cold nor hot.” This lukewarmness does not merely seem to give God the lie, it does not merely appear to censure Christ, but it does, as it were, tell Him that the things which He thought were so valuable, are of no worth in our esteem—and so it insults Him to His face! O my Brothers and Sisters, have you ever really thought what an insult it is to God when we come before Him with lukewarm prayers? There stands the heavenly Mercy Seat. The road to it is sprinkled with the precious blood of Jesus, yet we come to it with hearts that are cold, or we approach it leaving our hearts behind us. We kneel in the attitude of prayer, yet we do not pray! We prattle out certain words, we express thoughts which are not our real desires, we feign needs that we do not feel. Do we not thus degrade the Mercy Seat? We make it, as it were, a

common lounging place rather than an awful wrestling place, once sprinkled with blood and often to be sprinkled with the sweat of our fervent supplication. When we come to the House of God to which Jesus Christ has invited us as to the banqueting house full of rich provisions, do we not come up, full often, just as we go to our shops—no, not with so much earnestness as we take with us to the Exchange or to the counting house? What do we thus seem to say but that God's House is a common place, that the provision thereof is but ordinary food and that the solemn engagements of God's sanctuary are but everyday things—not worthy of the zeal and energy of a sensible man, but only meet to be attended to with lukewarmness of spirit.

I think if I were to pause longer, here, I could prove to you that I went not too far when I said that lukewarmness is an insult to God. It insults Him in all that is dear to Him by casting a disparagement upon everything which He would have us to believe to be precious.

Does the Lord Jesus deserve such treatment at our hands? May He not well say to us, if we are lukewarm, "I would you were cold or hot"? O Jesus, Your heart was full of love to those in whom there was nothing lovely! You did leave the glories of Your Father's House, though there was no necessity for You to do so, save the Divine necessity which was found in Your own heart, for You did love Your Church so much that You did become bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh. You did fight her enemies. You did rescue her out of the hands of him who was stronger than she was. You did pour out Your life's blood as the ransom price for her redemption. Your pangs were grievous, Your sufferings were bitter, Your anguish was extreme. I look up to Your thorn-crowned brow. I gaze into Your marred face and see those eyes red with weeping and those emaciated cheeks, and I say, "O Jesus, You are worthy of the best place in the human heart! You ought to be loved as never one was loved before. If there are flames of love to You in my heart, let them burn like coals of juniper and let them be fanned to a most vehement heat." Oh, if it is possible for us to feel warm emotions, we ought to feel it here!

Is it not a sad thing that after all Christ's love to us, we should repay it with lukewarm love to Him? Which would you rather have—lukewarm love or positive hatred? Perhaps you have but little choice with regard to most people, but were it one very dear to you—the partner of your life, for instance—lukewarm love would be no love at all! What but misery could there be in a family where there was only lukewarm love? Is a father content with half-hearted affection from his children? In those relationships we give all our heart, but with regard to Christ, who has a far greater claim on us than husband, or father, or mother, or brother—how is it that we dare to offer Him a distant bow, a cool recognition, a chill, inconstant, wavering heart? Let it be so no longer, Beloved! O my Brothers and Sisters, I bid you, by His agony and bloody sweat, by His Cross and passion, by all the pangs that went through His sacred body and by the deeper anguish of His inmost soul, I beseech you, either love Him or hate Him! Either drive Him from the door of your heart and let Him know that you are not His friend—or else give Him a whole heart full of affection, almost ready to burst with the fervor of your love toward Him!

But though these two things—insult and ingratitude to Christ—would be quite sufficient to justify the strong expressions in our text, let me remind you, further, that *the lukewarm professor compromises God in the eyes of the world by all that he does and says*. If a man is an infidel, openly profane, known to have no connection with Christ and His cause, let him do what he may—he brings no scandal on the Savior’s name. He has no fear of God before his eyes, he is in open enmity against the Most High and, therefore, though he is rebellious and wicked, full of sedition and blasphemy, yet he does not compromise the dignity of God. But when the lukewarm professor of Christianity goes forth before ungodly men, they say, “This man pretends to be a child of God. He professes to have been washed in the blood of Christ. He stands before us and challenges our observation as one who declares that he is a new creature in Christ Jesus. He tells us that he is the workmanship of the Holy Spirit, that he has been begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” Now, whatever *that* man does, the world considers his acts to be those of a new creature in Christ Jesus—to be, in fact, acts inspired by God’s Spirit within him! The world does not make distinctions, as we do, between the old Adam and the new. Their reason does not endorse our beliefs, true though they are, concerning the old and the new natures. Men of the world look at us as a whole and if they see anything wrong in our principles or practice, they set it down at once to the account of our religion and charge it with inconsistency.

Now, lukewarm Professor, what do worldlings see in you? They see a man who says he is going to Heaven, but who is only travelling at a snail’s pace. He professes to believe that there is a Hell, yet he has tearless eyes and never seeks to snatch souls from going down into the Pit. They see before them one who has to deal with eternal realities, yet he is but half awake! They see one who professes to have passed through a transformation so mysterious and wonderful that there must be, if it is true, a vast change in the outward life as the result of it—yet they see him as much like themselves as can be. He may be morally consistent in his general behavior, but they see no energy in his religious character. When they hear a solemn, stirring sermon concerning the wrath of God, they say, “It is all very well for the minister to appeal to our emotions, but what does it matter? The people who constantly hear him are not in earnest. The saints who profess to believe what he says, trifle over it, and are, no doubt, in their hearts, as incredulous as we are.” Let the minister be as earnest as he may, the lukewarmness of professors, to a large extent, neutralizes any effect which his ministry produces because the world will judge the church not so much by the pulpit as by the pew! Worldlings say, by their conduct, if not in so many words, “There is no need for us to make any stir about religion—these saints take it remarkably easy, yet they think all will be well—we do quite as much as they do. They seem to think that, after all, it would be fanaticism to look upon the things that they hear from the preacher as facts—they do not act as if they were realities and so,” they say, “doubtless they are *not* realities and, as one form of religion is as good as another—and there is nothing

of value in any one of them—we see no reason why we should have any religion at all.”

Thus, the careless worldling is lulled to sleep by the lukewarm professor who, in this respect, acts the part of the siren to the sinner, playing sweet music in his ears and even helping to lure him to the rocks where he will be destroyed! This is a solemn matter, Beloved. In this way great damage is done to the cause of the Truth of God and God’s name and God’s honor are compromised by inconsistent professors. I pray you either to give up your profession, or to be true to it. If you are really God’s people, then serve Him with all your might. But if Baal is your god, then serve him. If the flesh is worth pleasing, then serve the flesh. But if God is Lord paramount, then cleave to Him. Oh, I beseech and entreat you, as you love your own souls, do not play fast and loose with godliness! Either let it alone, or else let it saturate you through and through! Either possess it, or cease to profess it. The great curse of the Church—that which brings more dishonor upon the Lord than all the ribald jests of scoffing atheists—is the lukewarmness of its members! Well may He say to His lukewarm Church, as He does in our text, “I will vomit you out of My mouth.”

Yet once more, notice that wherever *there is lukewarmness in religious matters, it is out of place*. There is no spot near the Throne of God where lukewarmness could stand in a seemly position. Take the pulpit, for instance. Ah, my Brothers, of all spots in the world, if lukewarmness comes here, then is the preacher indeed undone! He should be, of all men, the most in earnest who undertakes the charge of souls, for he has that solemn charge ringing in his ears—“I have set you a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear the word at My mouth, and warn them from Me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, you shall surely die; if you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at your hands.” They who have to deal with hardhearted sinners—they who have to preach unpalatable Truths of God—surely *they* should not make men’s hearts harder and the Truth more unpalatable by uttering it in a half-hearted manner! It will go hard with the man who has exercised his ministry with indifference. “If,” said one of old, “there is a man who finds the ministry an easy place, he will find it a hard matter, at the last, to give in his account before God.”

If, my Brothers, there should be any professed ministers of Christ who never know what it is to travail in birth for souls. If there are men who take up the ministry merely as a profession and exercise it as they might do in any secular calling. If they preach merely as a matter of routine or because they consider it is a pleasant occupation, it would have been better for them if they had never been born! Far better would it have been for them to have broken stones by the wayside than to have been preaching the Gospel and leaving their hearts out of their sermon! Yes, I know not whether it would not have been better to have been a devil in Hell than to have been a minister in the pulpit without his heart in his work. Baxter’s “*Reformed Pastor*” stirs my very soul whenever I read its glowing periods—those fiery thunderbolts which he hurls at the heads of

idle shepherds and lazy ministers! I have read nearly the whole book through to those who are studying for the ministry in connection with this Church and I have often seen the tears start from their eyes while listening to the burning language of that fervent preacher and writer! Every time I have read a chapter in that book, I have felt that the next Sabbath I could preach—I *must* preach—with greater earnestness after reading the solemn words of that mightiest of ministers, Richard Baxter! Ah, Beloved, we need to have more of that earnestness in the pulpit! What if my young Brothers should study less and be more earnest? Rather let them study as much as they can, but, oh, if the Holy Spirit will but shed His sacred fire upon the dry fuel of their studies, how much more will be accomplished for the Kingdom of Christ than is done now! So, you see, dear Friends, that lukewarmness is out of place in the pulpit.

So it is, my Brothers and Sisters, in the Sunday school, with the tract distributor and even with the private Christian, the humble attendant upon the means of Grace. Everywhere, lukewarmness in religion is to be loathed and abandoned, for it is a gross and glaring inconsistency! I would not have you go with a lukewarm heart, even to distribute tracts! I would not have you dare to visit the sick unless your heart is filled with love to Christ! Either do such work well, or do not do it at all. Either put your heart into the work, or let someone else do it! We have had too many men of straw filling up our ranks. We have had too many automata going forth to fight our battles. We have counted our legions and said, “A brave host they will be”—but if our army is sifted, if our ranks are thinned—we will probably find that fewer true soldiers of the Cross will accomplish more if they are not impeded in their onward march by the mixed multitude of those who *pretend* to join the army of the living God.

I hope that lukewarm professors will find themselves thoroughly out of place among us. I do not think they could long be happy here. There are so many Brothers and Sisters here with a red-hot spirit that they would soon get burned and they would say “This is not the spot for us.” If you, lukewarm Professors, come among us, you will be asked to do 50 things and you will be teased till you do them—for the good people here will not be content unless you do all that you can—and they will probably want you to do two or three times more than you can! I am sure that in all places where God has sent warm-hearted men to preach the Gospel, you will find yourselves extremely uncomfortable if you want to be lukewarm. I certainly could tell you of some chapels where you could take your seat and where you would be greatly needed for the support of the ministry. The minister would never wake you. I daresay if you paid an extra half-crown a quarter, he would let you sleep on as long as you liked! If you did not join the church, nobody would ever think of asking you whether you were a member or not. In our fashionable churches, of course, people do not speak to one another—that would be quite beneath their assumed dignity. No man would dare, in such a place as that, turn to his neighbor and say, “Are you a child of God?” Well, if you mean to be lukewarm, go to one of those places—do not stay here lest we should worry

you by our importunities! I question whether anybody would come here, for a few Sundays, without some Brother or Sister walking up to him and asking him whether he was a follower of Christ or not—and the question would be repeated, by one or another, until he came to some decision concerning his soul.

II. Now I will turn to the second part of my subject, in which I am to give you SOME DISSUASIVES AGAINST LUKEWARMNESS. I have exposed its evils, now let me try to dissuade you from it.

Let me remind you that *as Christians you have to do with solemn realities*. You have to do with death, with eternity, with Heaven, with Hell, with Christ, with Satan, with souls that must live forever—can you deal with these things in a cold spirit? If you can deal thus with them successfully, it will be one of the greatest marvels in the world, for these things demand the whole man! If but to praise God requires that we call up all the powers of our soul, how much more is needed to serve God and to serve Him, not in the hewing of wood and the drawing of water, but in the winning of souls, in preaching His Gospel, in propagating His cause and extending His Kingdom? Here, my Brothers, are stern and solemn things for us to deal with—and they must not be touched by any but those who come warmheartedly to deal with them.

Remember, too, that these were very solemn things with you once. Perhaps you have been converted 10 or 20 years, yet can it be that these Truths of God now fall lightly upon your ears and excite but little emotion? There was a time when it needed little to make you earnest. You were, then—

“Laden with guilt and full of fears.”

Your groans were deep. You could not sleep at night. You were laboring under such a heavy burden that it seemed to crush your soul all but into the lowest Hell. Then, you prayed in earnest and you sought God in earnest! Oh, how you, in those days, longed to be able, even, to stand in the aisle if you could but hear the Word of God! Though the distance you had to come was great and the pressure of the crowd to enter the House of Prayer was inconvenient. And though you were almost ready to faint, sometimes, before the sermon was finished, you bore up through an insatiable desire to listen to the Gospel message which might be the means of your salvation! Do you not remember how, at that time, you thought every unsaved person was a fool—and especially thought that you, yourself, were a fool for having so long left these great realities untouched and almost unthought of—while the trifles of a day were engrossing all your thoughts? Oh, then, I conjure you, by those days long gone by, think as earnestly, now, of those things as you did then! Let your past experience be the standard of your present zeal! You ought to have advanced beyond that, but if you have not, be patient enough to go back and begin again where you began before—be humble enough to ask God to revive the sincerity of your penitence, the reality of your Grace, the eagerness of your desires and the flaming passion of your heart.

And remember, further, that *there have been times, with you, when these things did seem worthy of a warm heart*. Perhaps you remember when a child out of your Sunday school class died and then you thought,

“Oh, that I had taught that child more earnestly, and prayed over it with all my heart!” Possibly, when your own child died, you cried, “O Absalom, my son, my son!” And the thought wounded you to the quick that you had not taught that child as you might have done—and that you had not wrestled with God in prayer for that child’s soul as you ought to have done. Have not I also had to think like this when I have buried some of your kinsfolk or acquaintances? As I have looked down into the grave of some unconverted hearer, the tears have streamed from my eyes and, afterwards, I have awakened at night with some solemn and terrible dream embodying this black thought—“Have I been faithful to that soul? Have I dealt with that spirit, now departed, as I would deal with it if I had another opportunity of preaching to it?”

Sometimes I feel that I can even say, with the Apostle Paul, “I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.” But there are other seasons of awful questioning when I tremble, lest, out of so numerous a flock, the loss of even one should be attributed to the shepherd’s neglect! Do not some of you remember, when the cholera was so rife, how solemn you thought the things of God to be? And when the fever came into your house and one after another died, you thought there was nothing worth living for but to be prepared to die and that your whole business, from that time, should be to seek to warn others, lest they should perish and go to the dread place of torment!

Let me remind you, also, that *the day is coming when you will think these things worthy of your whole heart*. When you and I shall be stretched upon our dying beds, I think we shall have to regret, above everything else, our coldness of heart. Among the many sins which we must then confess, and which, I trust, we shall then know were pardoned and “laid upon the Scapegoat’s head of old,” perhaps this will lie the heaviest upon our heart and conscience—“I did not live as I ought to have done. I was not as earnest in my Lord’s cause as I should have been.” Then will our cold sermons, like sheeted ghosts, march before our eyes in dread array. Then will our neglected days start up, each one seeming to wave its hair as though it were one of the seven furies and to look right into our hearts, and make our very blood curdle in our veins. Then will our Sunday school classes appear again before us—and those who taught us to teach others will come and reprove us for having despised their training and not having profited by that holy instruction which we received when we were set apart for God’s cause and were first trained to serve in His great army. We may reckon these things of small importance, now, but when we lie on the borders of eternity, we shall think them worth living for and worth dying a thousand deaths for!

I believe that, then, some of those Truths of God which we have kept back, those ordinances which we have neglected and those precepts which we have despised, will seem to grow into an awful mass, too heavy for our soul to endure—just as, sometimes, in a dream, a mountain appears to rise from a single grain of sand and to swell, and swell, and swell till its stupendous weight seems to oppress our brains and to crush the very life out of us! If you have lived lukewarmly, the things of God will

then, even though you are a child of His, darken your dying hour and weigh down your spirit with a fearful load of sad reflections!

Yes, and there will come a time when the things of God will seem yet more real than even on our dying bed! That will be *when we stand at the bar of God*. Am I prepared to stand there with a ministry half discharged? What shall I do if I have to give account before God for sermons preached without my heart being put into them? How shall I appear before my Maker if I have ever kept back anything which I thought might have been useful to you, if I have shunned to rebuke any of you when I ought to have done so, if I have not warned you faithfully and loved you tenderly, even as my own soul, and sought to woo you to the Savior? How can I give in my account, as a steward of the Lord, if I have only served Him half-heartedly? O God, grant, I beseech You, that, notwithstanding a thousand infirmities, Your servant may always be free from that great sin of being lukewarm in Your cause!

And what do you think, Sirs, you will do, as professed followers of Christ, if you have been lukewarm professors, if you have had a name to live and yet have been dead, or if you have been only half alive, with all your energies paralyzed? Ah, Sirs! Ah, Sirs! I would not, for all the world, live as some of you are living—just observing some of the externals of godliness without the vital power thereof. Giving Christ a little of your substance just for a mere show, offering Him a little of your time just to pacify your conscience, taking His name upon you to hide your own defects—but still a stranger to His Grace—unconsecrated, undevoted, not yielding yourself wholly to Him, but still living to the flesh while pretending to be quickened by the Spirit! Living with your heart in your business, but no heart in your religion—closely pursuing the world, but following Christ afar off—firmly grasping the world's plow, but only now and then lightly touching Christ's plow and looking back even as you do! O Sirs, I tell you, when the earth begins to reel, when the heavens begin to shake, when the stars fall from their places and begin to dash abroad like bewildered men, you will be bewildered, too! Your heart, too, shall shake and your grand hopes totter to destruction if you have only served Jesus with a lukewarm heart. God give us Grace to make our religion all! That we may put our whole heart into it and live it out and then be prepared to die for it, if need be, and God so please, that we may live to enjoy the results of it in Glory!

I am fearful, full often, in addressing the same congregation, Sabbath after Sabbath, and week after week, now by the space of seven years, [this sermon was preached in the winter of 1860-61] lest my voice should grow stale to you. And I can truthfully say that I would rather cease to preach at all than preach to people to whom my voice had become so familiar that it was only like the ringing of an old bell to which they gave no heed! No, there must be feeling in the congregation as well as earnestness in the preacher, otherwise let me resign my commission! I pray God, if I am spared to minister to you, year after year, and you are spared to sit in the pew to hear the Word, that there may be earnestness in you and earnestness in me that we may never come down to the dead level of some of the churches of which I spoke a little while ago—as you may think, in a spirit

of censure, but as God knows, in a spirit of loving faithfulness—old churches that have come to be like pools without outlets, covered over with the sickly duckweed of respectability. Stagnation in a church is the devil's delight.

I do not think He cares how many Baptist chapels you build, nor how many churches you open, if you have only lukewarm preachers and people in them. He cares not for your armies if your soldiers will but sleep—nor for your guns if they are not loaded. “Let them build as much as they like,” He says, “for those buildings are not the batteries that shake the gates of Hell.” What we need is new zeal, fresh energy, more fire! Our old Baptist cause has become very slack. The great mass of Baptists appear to be ashamed of their opinions and many of our ministers say so little about Baptism that people forget that there is such an ordinance of Christ! If we have held our tongues concerning Baptism, we have that sin lying at our door for which we shall have to give account—and I trust that we shall not continue in it any longer. If Believers' Baptism is an ordinance of Christ—and we know that it is—we ought to speak out plainly about it. I recommend our Brothers and Sisters to distribute tracts upon the subject as widely as they can and, especially, to make known the teaching of the New Testament upon this matter. If Paedo-Baptist ministers will only preach upon it, I need not do so, for that will send some of their people to search the Scriptures—and that is all that we want. If our views are not in accordance with God's Word, let us abandon them! But if they are in harmony with our Lord's teaching, let us not hold our tongues concerning them. We have had too much of this guilty silence—let us boldly proclaim the whole Truth of God and, by terrible things in righteousness, answer You, O God! Bring on the clash of arms once again and let Your Church win the victory! Give the victory to the right and the true and let all error be trampled underfoot! So be it, O Lord, and unto Your name be all the Glory! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
DANIEL 9:1-13.**

Verses 1, 2. *In the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; in the first year of His reign, I, Daniel, understood by books the number of the years whereof the Word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the Prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.* And, therefore, discovering that the end of the captivity had nearly come, he set himself to plead mightily with God that now He would turn the hand of His love upon the destroyed and desolate city of Jerusalem. Notice that Daniel recollected the exact date when the captivity was to end—and when you and I have had a term put to any trial or chastisement from God, we ought to remember it, and record it among our special memoranda. I am afraid it is not always so. We do not forget when a great sorrow overtook us—we can, probably, recollect when some dear one died—we remember the very day of the week and month when that happened. But are we equally tenacious of the memory of God's loving

kindness? I am afraid not! Yet it should be so. We should be able to write about it as definitely as Daniel did when he said, “In the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes”—and then mention the time when we had some peculiarly choice communion with God, or when we were led out in more than usually earnest prayer, or when we had a specially gracious answer from our God.

3. *And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes.* “I set my face unto the Lord God.” This expression is full of meaning. When men resolutely set their faces to prayer, bending their whole mind that way, seeking God, with their faces towards Him, not in pretense, but in deep and solemn earnestness, then it is that they succeed with their supplication! Daniel speaks of “prayer and supplications,” by which we may understand that he prayed much and prayed often, setting apart a regular and considerable portion of his time for the holy exercise. He was a very busy man, for he was the first of the presidents over the 120 princes, yet, for all that, or because of that, he would have his time for communion with God! And he was wise in so acting, for any portion of our time that is stolen from prayer is also stolen from ourselves. The old saying is true, “Prayer and provender hinder no man’s journey.”

4. *And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the Covenant and mercy to them that love Him, and to them that keep His commandments.* You must have noticed how, in prayer, holy men of old were known to vary the names of God. Here we find Daniel addressing Him as “the great and dreadful God,” but that title was not chosen at random, for the Prophet felt that as Jerusalem had remained so long a desolation, the terrible aspect of God’s Character was more conspicuous even than the tender one. Yet he coupled with it that gracious Truth of God, “keeping the Covenant and mercy to them that love Him, and to them that keep His commandments.”

5, 6. *We have sinned and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and from Your judgments. Neither have we hearkened unto Your servants the Prophets, which spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.* Daniel confesses the sins of the nation and he spares no proper epithets in describing them—“We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled.” He saw at least a shade of different meaning in each word that he employed. These are not vain repetitions! Daniel multiplied his expressions because he had an intense sense of the sinfulness of sin and the guilt of his people. Observe, too, how he notes the aggravation of their sin in their refusal to listen to the messages which God had sent to them by His servants. If there is anything in the world that can make sin to be more than ordinarily sinful, it is when sin is persisted in—*notwithstanding the manifest warnings of God.*

7. *O Lord, righteousness belongs unto You, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day, to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all*

the countries where You have driven them because of their trespass that they have trespassed against You. This verse might be just as truly spoken now as in the first year of Darius, the Mede, for we, also, can say, “O Lord, righteousness belongs unto You”—we cannot find it anywhere else! And the other part of the verse is equally true, for unto us belongs confusion of faces, as it did to the men of Daniel’s day.

8, 9. *O Lord, to us belongs confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against You. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him.* What a precious assurance this is! Just in proportion to your sense of sin, will you value it. If you feel that confusion of face belongs to you, you will also rejoice to know that mercies and forgiveness belong to the Lord and that He is waiting to bestow them upon all who seek His face in penitence and faith!

10, 11. *Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His Laws which He set before us by His servants the Prophets. Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your Law, even by departing, that they might not obey Your voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, because we have sinned against Him.* It was a part of that old Covenant that if they sinned against the Lord, they should be scattered among all the peoples of the earth, and their sufferings exactly tallied with what God had threatened. This fact is used by the Prophet in some measure as a source of consolation, for He argues that if God is true to the black side of the Covenant, He will also be faithful to the bright side of it! And it is so—He who faithfully fulfils His threats will just as faithfully keep His promises.

12, 13. *And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole Heaven has not been done as has been done upon Jerusalem. As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your Truth.* Oh, sad hardness of heart and impenitence that, though Jerusalem had been so sorely smitten, yet the people turned not unto God in prayer!

—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.**

A GREAT MISTAKE AND THE WAY TO RECTIFY IT NO. 1677

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 3, 1882,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness does not appear; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.”
Revelation 3:17, 18.*

THESE words were spoken, not to the outside world, but to the Church of Laodicea. They relate to persons who were in a Church state, who had been baptized on confession of their faith in Christ and who were thought to be in a fine spiritual condition. They had a singularly high opinion of themselves and probably considered that of all the seven Churches in Asia, they were the first in power and influence. The words before us are as sharp as they are true—and they demand the earnest attention of all professors of our holy faith—for to persons like ourselves they were addressed and, moreover, we have the special note of attention—“He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the Churches.” Here the axe is laid to the root, not of the oaks of the forest or the pines of the mountainside, but to the root of the trees of the vineyard and the choice trees of the garden of the Lord. By this, the Lord showed His love to the true ones in Laodicea, according as He says, “As many as I love I rebuke and chasten.”

While reading the text, I feel forced to cry, “O my threshing, and the corn of my floor!” Truly the flail must first be used upon the heap that is gathered in the garner. It is all in vain to preach to the outside world unless matters are true and right within. The Kingdom cannot come, nor the Lord’s banner be lifted high if the soldiers of His own army prove false and turn back in the day of battle. The time is come when judgment must begin at the house of God! The word to the slaughter men in Ezekiel was, “Begin at My sanctuary.” The stout heart of the king of Assyria will not be punished till the Lord has performed His whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem!

Behold, the Lord Himself comes to deal with His Church, for His fire is Zion, and His furnace is in Jerusalem. “His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor.” As for them that are outside, God will judge them in His own time, but now, by His blessed Spirit, He speaks to those of us who are within the Church and make profession of His name. The

solemn words which make up our text were also spoken by the Lord Jesus under a most special title—"These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness" (Rev. 3:14), as much as to say that though the Laodicean professors were false, mistaken and deluded, He who now addressed them by His servant John was true and faithful. He is the Amen, the Verily, Verily of God! He judges not according to the outward appearance, but looks at the heart according to truth.

He is "the faithful and true Witness," who does not flatter, nor keep back any of the terrible Truths of God, but speaks out that which He perceives with His eyes of fire and warns men of their condition with all sincerity. Instead of crying peace, peace, where there is no peace, and letting them be like Moab at ease from their youth and settled upon their lees because not emptied from vessel to vessel, He stirs them up that the sediment of their falsehood may be seen and their evil case be made manifest. Oh for Grace to hear this Word at this time as from the Lord Jesus and as from Him under the weighty Character of a Witness, faithful and true, speaking as the Amen of God!

It seems to me that my text accounts for the lukewarmness of the Laodiceans. They were lukewarm because they imagined themselves rich when they were poor. Two conditions will help us to escape lukewarmness. The one is to be really rich in Grace, for they that have much Grace will not be lukewarm. Grace is as a fire in the soul and he that has much of it, so as to become an advanced Christian, cannot but have a heart boiling with earnestness. The other way is to have but little Grace, but to be painfully aware of it—to be deeply conscious of soul-poverty—to sigh and cry because you are not what you should be.

There is no lukewarmness in a strong desire caused by a bitter sense of need. The poor man, poor in spirit, conscious of his imperfections and failures, is never a lukewarm man, for with sighs and cries coming out of a heart that is all on fire with a desire to escape out of such a sad condition, he besieges the Throne of God that he may obtain more Grace. These Laodicean people, however, were unhappily in such a state that you could not get at them. They were not so poor that they knew they were poor and, therefore, when the poverty-stricken were addressed, they said, "These things are not for us: we are increased in goods." They were blind, but they thought they saw; they were naked and yet they prided themselves in their princely apparel and, therefore, it was hard to reach them.

Had they been outwardly worse—had they openly sinned, had they defiled their garments with overt transgression—then the Spirit might have pointed out the blot and convicted them, then and there. But what was to be done when the mischief was hidden and internal? Had they been utterly cold and frost-bitten, then He might have thawed them into living warmth. But such was their puffed-up notion of themselves that one could not convince them of sin, or awaken them to any sense of fear—and it seemed likely that, after all, the Lord must necessarily spue them out of His mouth as things He could not endure. How far this may be true of any one of us may God, in His infinite mercy, help us to judge, each one, for himself. Whether it is true or not, it will not matter as to the usefulness of

the discourse if God the Holy Spirit will bless it to our souls in His own way.

Two things in the text call for our notice. The first is *their* saying—"You say, I am rich." and the second is Christ's counsel—"I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness does not appear; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see."

I. First, let us think of the Church in Laodicea and listen to THEIR SAYING. It may prevent us from reaching such a height of pride as to speak as they did. The spirit of self-congratulation expressed itself in a manner strikingly unanimous. If all the members did not say so in words, yet, as a whole, they were so self-contented that the great Amen spoke of them as one person, "Because *you* say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Doubtless a few wept and sighed before God, but they were so few in number that they did not mar the apparent unanimity of the Church in its conscious self-respect, nor divide the united utterance of its open boasting. "You say, I am rich, and increased with goods."

It would seem that their minister was of the same opinion. Good, easy man, he felt that his Church was in a splendid state, for the Spirit of God, here, speaks to the "angel of the church," who is, no doubt, the minister of the Church and He says to him, "You say, I am rich, and increased with goods." The self-complacent man had probably gathered together a wealthy congregation—wealthy as compared with the general run of the people of God—who were usually the poorest of the poor. Among these were persons of considerable talent and, as a body, they were intellectual and educated. They were so rich in all sorts of endowments that they had "need of nothing." Perhaps they hardly needed a minister at all, but were able to become, every man, his own teacher and so the timid man was quiet and smooth-tongued for fear they should dispense with him.

They might, perhaps, prefer an open meeting, and then what would become of him? The proverb says, "Like priest, like people," and under the preacher's lukewarm addresses, the Church became lukewarm, too. They were so rich in gifts that they did not need to economize and send out their Brothers to preach, one by one. They could afford to let a dozen attempt to do what one could have done a great deal better. They had grown to be such a leading Church that other Churches looked up to them. They were noted and celebrated all over the country. A member of the Church of Laodicea was recognized, at once, as a remarkable person, so that wherever he went, the people would ask him to get up and speak—for coming down from Laodicea, that famous Church which had "need of nothing"—surely he could not open his mouth without precious things dropping from them, for was he not one of those who were "rich and increased with goods, and had need of nothing"?

It was a first-class Church and their prudent and kind minister thought so, too, and he often took occasion to say as much. When he spoke to the good people of Philadelphia, at their anniversary meeting, he told them that he hoped they would do their best, although they had but a

little strength and could not expect to equal his people who were so much richer and so much better educated. Of course, all Churches could not be so strong as Laodicea—it was not likely that everywhere, in those little places, they could gather congregations such as he was proud to look on every Sabbath in the Tabernacle at Laodicea! It was the general unanimous feeling, from the minister down to the latest convert, that they were a most wonderful Church. They were heartily at one in having a high estimate of themselves and this helped to keep them together and stirred them to attempt great things.

This saying of theirs was exceedingly boastful, for it divides itself into three parts. They were “rich”—that was their present state. They were “increased with goods”—that is, they could look back upon years of great prosperity and progress in their past history. And at that present time, if they were not absolutely *perfect*, they were getting close to the edge of it, for they had “need of nothing.” They did not know of anything which the Church lacked. They had the best deacons, the best elders, the best members—they were always ready to do anything and everything that was proposed to them. They were rich and increased with goods, and had need of nothing. The present was all right, the past was eminently satisfactory and they had reached a point of all but absolute perfection—for they needed nothing!

And when people have need of nothing they can go no further—they have ascended to the highest point—their sun has reached its zenith; their path has been like the path of the just which shines more and more unto the perfect day! Truly I do not know that they could have opened their mouths any wider! They gave forth about as fine a piece of brag as one is likely to meet with in any ancient record. Here is a Church which is a city set on a hill that cannot be hidden! Is it not a candle that gives light unto all that are in the house? And the candle needs no snuffing—it is burning at its very best. Think of a Church which has need of nothing!

Now, notice once more, that they were sincere in this glorying. When they said it, they were not consciously boasting, for the text says, “And you know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” They did not know the truth! They were not hypocrites—when they thus spoke with such self-conscious complacency they really thought it was so—and their minister thought so, too. The angel of the Church thought that it was an angelic Church! There was no insincerity in what they said. In fact, I dare say they said to themselves, “We really speak below what we might say. We are a wonderful. What we do could hardly be put in print or people! Thoroughly described in words, our existence is an extraordinary fact.” They did not know the real truth of the matter, but they sincerely believed the flattering tale which their ignorance told them.

How readily do we believe a lie when it fosters in us a high opinion of ourselves!

But now see what was their actual state—they were altogether mistaken. Their mistake was founded upon ignorance—“You know not.” These intelligent persons, these wealthy persons, these instructed persons did not know themselves and that is the grossest kind of ignorance. A

man may know all about Africa and the sources of the Nile and the Congo, and yet he may not know what is going on in certain regions of the home department. He is ignorant, indeed, who does not know his own condition in reference to the most weighty matters. In our Church there are many members who know shamefully little about it—they go in and out among us and they have not enough concern about the Church to make its spiritual state a matter of enquiry. I grieve to say that there are members who, I fear, do not know their own spiritual state and who take it for granted that everything is sound! They say, “No doubt it is all correct.”

If their conscience is touched and they are troubled, they call it unbelief—though it is quite another thing and may be praised as godly fear. If they are driven into a corner by conviction, they say, “I must not get into this state. I must hope for the best.” They make the best of everything and shut their eyes to all storm signals. These Laodicean people were mistaken through ignorance—they had not searched—they had judged the surface of the matter and never looked below the topsoil. But, “the faithful and true Witness” makes them see the naked truth. He says, “You know not that you are wretched.” That is to say, they were in a sad and undesirable state. There was nothing about them that could please God and nothing about them that would have pleased themselves if they had seen things in a true light. “You are wretched.” Oh, what a change from the distorting glass of self-flattery to the clear mirror of truth! How these men that had need of nothing are shown up when Christ begins to describe them! They seem to need everything!

The next word, “miserable,” conveys the same idea to us in the English, but the original had better, perhaps, been translated, “pitiableness.” There was nothing about them to admire, but everything to pity, for everything that seemed to be good was really false. Everything that was apparently useful was a mere matter of display. As Jesus Christ looked at Laodicea, He said of the Church, “Pitiableness! Pitiableness!” He does not use fine expressions, does He, towards this respectable Church, this Church with so much wealth and so much strength? He does not flatter it, for He says of it, first, “Wretched!” and then, “Pitiableness!” Then He goes on to say, “Poor!” Poor in the choice things in which they thought they were rich; so much Grace they thought they had, but He says they have exceedingly little and calls them “poor.” Oh, but they had such riches of faith! “No,” He says, “poor!” Oh, but they had such abundance of energy. “No,” He says, “that is only a pretense. They are poor.”

He searches the members through and looks into their hearts, where their precious things are stored up, and He says of them all, “Poor.” There is a sense in which the Lord cries, “Blessed are you poor,” but these were poor in quite another sense. Think of it! Here are a people that were “rich and increased with goods and had need of nothing,” and yet the verdict of the Savior is, “They are poor!” And then He goes on to say they are “blind.” Blind? Why, they had among them men of the greatest possible discernment, who could see as far into a millstone as any people! They were able to split hairs over points of doctrine and they had discernment of spirits,

so they thought, and could tell who was and who was not sincere! But Jesus Christ says they have *no* discernment, they are “blind.”

They are not merely shortsighted and weak about the eyes, but altogether blind. And, mark you, this is no exaggeration—it is not a hard speech meant to sting them into repentance, but the, “Amen, the faithful and true Witness,” says this calmly and deliberately—and says it about that admirable Church of Laodicea concerning which we heard so much when we commenced our discourse—they were poor and blind! And now He adds that they were “naked.” No, surely, not *that*! Will the Savior say as much us that? Yes, He says so. They are not dressed in the righteousness of Christ—they are dressed in their own cobwebs of conceit—and, therefore, they are naked. They are not resting upon Christ, but relying upon their own strength and wealth and, therefore, He says they are “naked.”

Yes, these same people, who “have need of nothing,” yet have need of a rag with which to cover the shame of their nakedness! They are “naked” before God. Had a storm suddenly come upon them, they would have found it out. We are such poor creatures that we need to be covered from the sun and from the wind, from the wet and from the drought, from the cold and from the heat. Such is our weakness that we have need of garments against all outward surroundings—and so it was with these Laodiceans—not only for the common decency of their appearance did they need to be robed in the righteousness of Christ, but they needed the most ordinary kind of covering. Though they did not know it, they were open to have been scattered and destroyed as a Church had anything happened out of the ordinary.

Oh, this mistake! May the Lord of Truth prevent us from making it about ourselves, individually, and prevent every Church from making such a mistake about itself and being unanimous in it! These professors were poor and proud; they were conceited and, therefore, they were not likely to be converted. They thought they were making progress, but they were going backward and because they did not know their true condition, it was hard work to help them. You remember the Tay Bridge disaster? There is no doubt, whatever, that the bridge was not fitted for its position, its ordinary strain was all it could bear—but nobody thought so. Undoubtedly the engineers reckoned it would stand any test to which it might be put and, therefore, there was no attention given to it to make it any stronger and to provide against sudden disaster. And, consequently, when a specially fierce hurricane was out one night, it swept it all away!

That is just the picture of many a Church and many a man because he is thought to be so pious, and the Church is thought to be so correct and vigorous, therefore no attempt is made for improvement, no special prayer, no cries to Heaven, no repentance because of backsliding—and so when there comes an unusual pressure, a night of terrible temptation—the whole fabric falls in ruins! How much better is the condition of the man who feels that he is weak and, therefore, goes to the strong for strength! I know a railway bridge at this moment which is showing signs of danger—there are cracks in the brickwork and other mischief—in all

probability it would soon have come down if let alone. But it has been noticed by the railway people and they are as busy as possible trying to repair it and prevent an accident.

Is not this much better than a delusive belief that all is safe? If there is a crack in the substantial part of your religious structure, what a mercy to see it! If the supporting pillars begin to give way, what a blessing to perceive the fact! “Oh,” says one, “you make us feel uneasy.” Yes, it is often a great blessing to be uneasy and that blessing, I pray the Holy Spirit will confer upon you! It is infinitely better to be uneasy and to get right, than to be perfectly serene and all the while to be wrong! How many a house is built upon sand and only waits till the floods shall come and the winds shall beat upon it—and then the whole fair fabric will vanish like a vision of the night! Will it not be well to let the tenant know his peril? I think so.

Now I leave this saying—may we never use it, ourselves. We have looked underneath the surface and we have seen the mud which lies at the bottom of what seemed a glassy pool.

II. Now we come to think of OUR LORD’S BLESSED COUNSEL. “I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness does not appear; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.” I call your attention, first, to the amazing Grace which is here displayed. Ask a schoolmaster what kind of pupil is most objectionable and I think he will reply that he cannot bear a youth who knows so much, already, that he will learn nothing correctly. It is very difficult to deal with the conceited. We can instruct persons who are conscious of ignorance and willing to learn, but those who “have need of nothing,” what can you teach them? They are up to the mark in all points; they are models—they can teach *you* and, therefore, what can you say to them?

But here our blessed Lord seems to single out this puffed-up Church, though pride is always obnoxious to Him, and He draws near to it and begins to speak to it in love. He does not use a peremptory tone, but in words of great affection He tenders His advice. He does not say, “I command you,” but, “I *counsel* you.” It is tantamount to that other blessed text, “Come now, and let us reason together.” He puts it so softly, as if He said, “I offer a little kindly advice to you—will you listen to Me? I might speak in harsher tones. I might condemn, I might command, but instead of that I stoop to you and counsel you. See whether My counsel is not good. Am I not the Wonderful, the Counselor? Is not the wisdom of God in Me? Therefore I am come to speak to you,” says Christ, “and counsel you.”

Note how He begins—“I counsel you to buy.” Is not that singular advice, indeed? Just now He said that they were “wretched” and “poor.” How can they *buy*? Surely it suggests to us, at once, those blessed free Grace terms which are only to be met with in the market of Divine Love—“Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” The chapmen of Vanity Fair have great difficulty to bring people up to their price, but the Lord Jesus Christ’s difficulty is to bring people *down* to His—and so He begins by counseling the poor to come and buy on such terms as this—“Without money and without price.”

But why is it called *buying*? If you have nothing to give, why does He not say, “Come and *take* it”? No, it is buying because God would have us make business of it. If any of you have backslidden and yet dream that you have not declined; if there creeps over you the cold thought that perhaps it is so; then awaken yourselves and make a business of recovery! Come to Christ and buy! Not merely act the beggar’s part, but come and act the *purchaser’s* part, with thoughtfulness, with desire, with judgment! Come, now, and give an estimate—do as you would if you were buying a valued article. Estimate the value of Christ and see how richly He is worth having! In a purchase there is consent on both sides—the one consents to sell and the other to receive by purchase—therefore the word, “buy,” is used, for God does not force the gifts of His Grace upon any man, but He first teaches him his need of those gifts, and then He bids him come and buy, though it is without price, by exercising *thought*, making an *estimate*, having a strong *desire*, being *willing* to give anything if he had anything to give—and then taking the blessing with joyful willingness. Christ gives them counsel to buy.

But next, what does He say? “I counsel you to buy of Me.” Ah, they had been dealing with one another! They had been chaffering and bartering amongst themselves! One Brother had brought this talent and another, that, and they had grown rich, as they thought, by a mutual commerce. “Now,” says Christ, “compare yourselves with yourselves no longer! Give up seeking of man and buy of Me.” It is the very foundation of Grace—to be willing to buy of Christ. Have you a religion which you received of me? It is not worth a pin! Have you in possession a religion which you received of your mother, your father, your Sunday school teacher? Your neighbors, your friends? It is worth nothing! All true Grace must be bought of Christ on free Grace terms—“I counsel you to buy of Me.”

Do you not know that Jesus is a great monopolist? Nobody else has anything to sell of this kind. The articles He speaks of are entire monopolies in His hands! No one else can sell you the gold tried by fire, or white raiment that you may be clothed, or eye salve that you may see! The whole stock of Grace is vested in the Person and offices of Jesus Christ and, therefore, He says, “I counsel you to buy of Me.” Do you wear a spiritual vesture which you bought elsewhere? Do you use an eye salve which you purchased of another physician? Do you hoard up gold which you procured of some pretended goldsmith? Throw the imaginary gifts away, for there is no genuine article in the market except that which comes of the Lord Jesus Christ and of Him, alone! “I counsel you to buy of Me.”

Oh, that every Christian here would lay hold upon this advice and say, “I will go and buy of Christ again.” Have I been living on past experience? Have I been living on a profession which I have maintained these last 20 years? I will do so no longer—I will buy of Jesus anew—I will get my manna fresh from Heaven! I will seek all my provisions, day by day, from the Person of my blessed Lord and Master, for He counsels me to buy of Him! Now see the goods which He describes. “I counsel you to buy of Me”—what? Everything! It is true that only three needs of these people are here mentioned, but they are inclusive of all needs.

First, the Lord says, “Buy gold.” The man who can buy gold has bought everything, for money answers all things. He who has gold, has the medium with which he can procure whatever he needs. In Christ there is a fullness of all good things and in the gold of His Grace there is an adaptation to every need. You cannot have a necessity, nor even *think* of a necessity which is a real one, but the Grace of God, which is like fine gold, will be sure to meet it! Your free will, your unaided efforts, your wisdom, your knowledge, your strength—all this you can get something for in such-and-such a market—but in God’s market there is nothing current but this precious gold and, if you get the gold of Grace, then you can get whatever your soul needs. “I counsel you,” says He “to buy of Me gold.”

Then, next, He brings forth raiment rich and rare—perfect coverings such as do really clothe a man so that the shame of his nakedness will never appear. I like that expression. It is very plain, but what suggestions there are in it! Our sin is our shame and it is well that the Lord has found a complete covering for it. Sin brought nakedness upon us and shame is the result. But He who has Christ has lost both sin and shame, for the blood of Jesus removes guilt from the soul and terror from the conscience! Man was naked and is still naked apart from Christ, but in Christ he is covered and has become comely before the Lord. Even those eyes of God which see everything cannot see that which does not exist—and God has said of His people’s iniquities—“They shall not be.”

God has cast the sins of His people behind His back and, therefore, He cannot see them! “If they are searched for, they shall not be found; yes, they shall not be, says the Lord.” And if they shall not “be” or exist, then are they gone from His sight! What a covering this must be! What a purchase this is for a man to buy white raiment of Christ! Imputed and inherent righteousness make up the double garment of righteousness, worked out *for* us by the Lord Jesus and *in* us by the Holy Spirit. This is a fair garment in which to stand among men and it will fit us to appear at the Judgment Seat of God. Jesus says, “I counsel you, buy this of Me.” No one else has this sacred apparel to dispose of. The fig leaves of earth are a mockery and the cobwebs of conceit are soon blown aside, but the covering which adorns and comforts is with Christ, alone, whose name is, “The Lord Our Righteousness.”

Next, our Lord recommends them to buy an eye salve of Him. That is a very curious recommendation, is it not? For they were blind—and can an eye salve give blind men, eyes? Many salves are useful for eyes when they are weak or inflamed, but what salve is of any good to a blind man? He says they are blind and yet recommends them to buy eye salve of Him. Strange counsel! But there is no setting forth Gospel principles by human similes without endowing the emblems with something above Nature. We must strain that which is human to set forth by it that which is Divine. O you that have no heavenly discernment; that have no eyes upon which the Light of God might fall, Christ Jesus counsels you to come and buy of Him the true eye salve—that ancient salve of high renown, or something more marvelous, still—which will open your eyes so that you shall see that which is invisible and shall behold the face of God!

This is glorious! No other physician has such eye salve! None else can even *pretend* to! The Savior has the whole stock of this sovereign remedy! He is the sole dispenser of it—no one can make the like—go, then, to Him who sells, and buy for yourselves! The counsel of the Lord is not only that we buy of Him everything, but that we buy the *best* of everything of Him. Laodicea had made the mistake of buying second-quality articles which turned out to be good for nothing. Our Lord says, “I counsel you to buy of Me gold.” Gold is the most precious metal, but He would have them buy the best of it—“gold tried in the fire,” gold that has just passed through the assay and has the mint mark upon it—gold that will endure all further tests, having survived that of fire.

O Brothers and Sisters, our wisdom is to buy what we buy from Christ, for from Him comes Grace which will endure to the end! I have lately been looking through some of the sufferings of the Waldenses for Christ and the sad spectacle has produced a most painful effect upon my mind, but, I trust, also a beneficial one. When I read of the horrible cruelties worked upon them by the Papists and of the firmness of feeble women and children, as well as men, I asked myself, Could I endure such torments? I did not dare believe that I could, for they suffered agonies which scarcely even the devils of Hell could have invented! Suppose that you and I should possess a sort of Grace which would not endure such tests—will it be the right sort of Grace? If we are never dragged at the heels of horses, or set up as targets, or dismembered, or burned at a slow fire, yet we ought to have that same kind of Grace which made these gracious ones more than conquerors through Jesus Christ!

It is true we may never have to suffer martyrdom, but a man must be prepared to give up house, lands, wife and children, yes, and his own life, also, sooner than forsake Christ. Look at the saints in the first days, the young, brave Church of Christ, when the world sought to stamp out our holy faith. They defied the world and Pliny writes to Trajan to know what to do, for the Christians come crowding to the judgment seat to avow their faith! Instead of shunning the conflict, they seemed to court it, knowing that to avow themselves Christians was speedy death! They were yet eager to do it—knowing that unutterable torments awaited them—they offered themselves willingly to bear anything for their dear Savior. Do you think we could act in this fashion? Yes, if we have bought the true “gold tried in the fire,” but not otherwise. Is our gold of this sort?

Do not begin talking about how you could endure martyrdom—how do you endure the ordinary trials of life? In those lesser pains that come upon your body—are you patient? Those little disquietudes in the domestic circle—do you keep your temper over them? Those words that sometimes drop carelessly, not meant to be unkind, but which grate on your feelings—can you forgive them, for Christ’s sake, and think no more of them? If not, what kind of gold is this which cannot bear the touch of the acid? Such metal would hardly do to lie on the hob, much less to be put in the flame, for if it begins to melt in such mild heat, it would utterly vanish in the furnace! Oh to have gold which has been tested in the center of the flame, such as God Himself will acknowledge in the Last Great Day

when He shall come to separate between the precious and the vile! Christ counsels us to buy the best and we can only get it by buying it of Him, “without money and without price.”

Remember the raiment, too, for that is of the best. Our Lord calls it “white raiment.” That is a pure color, a holy color, a royal color. We put on the Lord Jesus as our joy, our glory, our righteousness. To walk with Him in white is real honor and sure acceptance—it marks us out as victors through Him that has loved us. This robe is the true wedding dress, a holiday robe and yet a serviceable garment arraying a man from head to foot. Are you wearing it? Is your sin hidden? Does it not, at times, appear? Does it not come before your own conscience? “Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God, but if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart and knows all things.” Have you this covering so that you will not be afraid to die in it, nor afraid to stand before the blazing Judgment Seat in it? Are you sure, certain, *positive* that your sin is put away in Christ Jesus? This is what you need and you must not be content with less! If you must play at haphazard, do it with your estates, do it with your lives, but never leave your soul-affairs to be a matter of chance! Make sure work for eternity!

A man likes to be quite positive about the title deeds if he buys a farm. But what is that? If I wish for Heaven, I need to be sure that I have it—sure that I have Christ who is the Glory of it—sure that I am pardoned and renewed which is my fitness for it. One single note of question upon that matter will banish all peace and joy out of your heart. God grant us Grace to buy the white raiment through which nothing of sin can be seen, for all guilt is gone. And as to the eye salve, it is the best possible one, for Jesus says, “Anoint your eyes with eye salve that you may see.” Eye salve that can make a blind man see stands in the front rank of all the medicine that ever can be sold! Oh, for Grace to get it, so that we may see and know spiritual things!

Can you say, “One thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see”? Are you the pure in heart who see God? Is God about you wherever you are? Can you see your own sin and hate it? Can you see the power of Christ’s blood and delight to be washed in it? Can you see the *spiritual* kingdom, or do you only see the things of your trade and business, the things which blind worldlings can perceive? O God, give us *real* sight that we may see Heaven and delight in it, see Hell and flee the sin that will bring us there, that we may see Christ and rejoice in Him evermore! He counsels us to do this. So I must come to a close by noticing that all this is the counsel of Christ and the counsel of Christ to a people that were proud and self-conceited. He gave those counsel who thought they needed none!

Does not this reveal infinite Grace, that He should come to such and sit down by them and say, “Come now, put your case into My hands. It is a very bad one and I advise you to come to Me for help”? Oh, how tenderly would I try to speak, this morning, in imitation of the soft tones of Jesus! O you who have thought of yourself other than the truth, I do not counsel you to despair! At the sight of the truth I do not counsel you to say, “I will give it all up; there is no hope.” “No,” Christ says, “be advised; take coun-

sel; I counsel you to come to Me, now, and get in very truth all that which you only had in fancy. All things are ready for you! You have not to search for the gold and dig it up from the mine—here it is—come and buy it.” “Lord, I have not a penny to buy it with.” That does not matter! Buy it without money and without price! These are the easy terms of the gracious Savior!

Believe, and be rich! When Satan tells me, or conscience tells me, that I am not a Christian, that I am not saved, then I find it wise to say, “I will begin now. If I have made a mistake. If I have been presumptuous. If I have not truly believed, then I will believe at once and lay hold upon Jesus at this good hour!” I recommend you who are not puffed up to take Christ’s counsel, for when He counsels these proud ones to come, I am sure His advice is good for you, too. It is always wise to get gold when you can buy it for nothing! I guarantee you if the Bank of England put up a notification that they would sell any quantity of pure bullion for nothing tomorrow morning, our Stock Exchange men, instead of turning into Capel Court, would take the other side of the street and dispose, at once, of the Bank’s surplus! There is a ready market for pure gold at this extraordinary minimum! Come, then, and accept the gold of free Grace! It is sure to be useful, therefore come along, you that love Christ, and you that are afraid you do not love Him. Come along, all of you—come and buy this “gold tried in the fire.” You will never made a better investment in all your lives. May the good Master sweetly lead you to do so.

But what a rebuke this is to all boasting! The Lord does not say to us, “You have been very foolish in talking about your riches,” but He convicts us by saying, “I counsel you to buy gold.” He does not say, “You are stupid to glory in your dress,” but He convicts us by saying, “Buy raiment.” He does not condemn us for pretending to be able to see when we are blind, but He cries, “Anoint your eyes with eye salve.” Is not this a sweet way of making us feel our error? Perhaps you would turn away from stern rebuke, but you cannot turn from love! Come now, members of this Church and members of no Church—come, buy these three precious things, “without money and without price!” You cannot take better counsel than that of the Son of God! Therefore, do as He bids you and buy at once!

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THE LOVED ONES CHASTENED

NO. 164

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, NOVEMBER 22, 1857,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.”
Revelation 3:19.***

THE dealings of God towards the sons of men have always puzzled the wise men of the earth who have tried to understand them. Apart from the Revelation of God the dealings of Jehovah towards His creatures in this world seem to be utterly inexplicable. Who can understand how it is that the wicked flourish and are in great power? The ungodly man flourishes like a green bay tree. Behold, he stretches out his roots by the river. He knows not the year of drought—his leaf withers not. And his fruit does not fall in an untimely season. Lo, these are the ungodly that flourish in the world. They are filled with riches. They heap up gold like dust, they leave the rest of their substance to their babes. They add field to field and acre to acre and they become the princes of the earth.

On the other hand, see how the righteous are cast down. How often is virtue dressed in the rags of poverty! How frequently is the most pious spirit made to suffer from hunger and thirst and nakedness! We have sometimes heard the Christian say, when he has contemplated these things, “Surely I have served God in vain, it is for nothing that I have chastened myself every morning and vexed my soul with fasting. For lo, God has cast me down and He lifts up the sinner. How can this be?” The sages of the heathen could not answer this question and they therefore adopted the expedient of cutting the Gordian knot. “We cannot tell how it is,” they might have said—therefore they flew at the fact itself and denied it.

“The man that prospers is favored of the gods. The man who is unsuccessful is obnoxious to the Most High.” So said the heathen and they knew no better. Those more enlightened from the east, who talked with Job in the days of his affliction got but little further. They believed that all who served God would have a hedge about them. God would multiply their wealth and increase their happiness. They saw in Job’s affliction a certain sign that he was a hypocrite and therefore God had quenched his candle and put out his light in darkness.

And alas, Even Christians have fallen into the same error. They have been apt to think that if God lifts a man up there must be some excellence in him. And if He chastens and afflicts, they are generally led to think that it must be an exhibition of God’s wrath. Now hear the text and the riddle

is all solved—listen to the words of Jesus, speaking to His servant John and the mystery is all unraveled. “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten—be zealous therefore and repent.”

The fact is that this world is not the place of punishment. There may now and then be eminent judgments. But as a rule God does not in the present state fully punish any man for sin. He allows the wicked to go on in their wickedness. He throws the reins upon their necks. He lets them go on unbridled in their lusts. Some checks of conscience there may be. But these are rather as warnings than as punishments. And, on the other hand, He casts the Christian down. He gives the most afflictions to the most pious. Perhaps He makes more waves of trouble roll over the breast of the most sanctified Christian than over the heart of any other man living. So, then, we must remember that as this world is not the place of punishment, we are to expect punishment and reward in the world to come. And we must believe that the only reason, then, why God afflicts His people must be this—

***“In love I correct you, your gold to refine
To make you at length in My likeness.”***

I shall try this morning to notice, first, *what it is in His children that God corrects*. Secondly, *why God corrects them*. And thirdly, *what is our comfort, when we are laboring under the rebukes and correcting of our God*. Our comfort must be the fact that He loves us even then. “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.”

I. First, then, Beloved, WHAT IS IT IN THE CHRISTIAN THAT GOD REBUKES? One of the Articles of the Church of England says right truly, that, naturally, “man is very far gone from original righteousness and is of his own nature inclined to evil so that the flesh lusts always contrary to the spirit. And therefore in every person born into this world, it deserves God’s wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature does remain, yes, in them that are regenerated. Whereby the lust of the flesh, called by the Greek, *fponema sarkos* which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire of the flesh, is not subject to the Law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the Apostle does confess that concupiscence and lust has of itself the nature of sin.”

And because evil remains in the regenerate there is therefore a necessity that that evil should be upbraided. Yes and a necessity that when that upbraiding is not sufficient, God should go to severer measures and after having failed in His rebukes, adopt the expedient of chastening. “I rebuke and chasten.” Hence God has provided means for the chastisement and the rebuking of His people. Sometimes God rebukes His children under the ministry. The minister of the Gospel is not always to be a minister of consolation. The same Spirit that is the Comforter is He who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness and of Judgment. And the

same minister who is to be as the angel of God unto our souls, uttering sweet words that are full of honey, is to be at times the rod of God, the staff in the hand of the Almighty with which to smite us on account of our transgressions.

And ah, Beloved, how often under the ministry ought we to have been checked when we were not? Perhaps the minister's words were very forcible and they were uttered with true earnestness and they applied to our case but alas, we shut our ear to them and applied them to our Brother instead of to ourselves! I have often marveled when I have been preaching. I have thought that I have described the cases of some of my most prominent members. I have marked in them many sins and as Christ's faithful pastor, I have not shunned to picture their case in the pulpit that they might receive a well-deserved rebuke.

But I have marveled when I have spoken to them afterwards, that they have thanked me for what I have said because they thought it so applicable to such another Brother in the Church—while I had intended it wholly for them and had, as I thought, so made the description accurate and so brought it out in all its little points that it must have been received by them. But alas, you know, my Friends that we sit under the sound of the Word and we seldom think how much it belongs to us, especially if we hold an office in the Church. It is hard for a minister when he is hearing a Brother minister preach, to think it may be he has a word of rebuke to him.

If exalted to the office of elder or deacon, there grows sometimes with that office a callousness to the Word when spoken to himself and the man in office is apt to think of the hundreds of inquirers unto whom that may be found applicable and of the multitudes of the babes in grace to whom such a word comes in season. Yes, Friends, if we did but listen more to the rebukes of God in the ministry, if we hearkened more to His Word as He speaks to us every Sabbath, we might be spared many corrections, for we are not corrected until we have despised rebukes and after we have rejected those—then out comes the rod.

Sometimes, again, God rebukes his children *in their consciences*, without any visible means whatever. You that are the people of God will acknowledge that there are certain times, when, apparently without any instrumentality your sine are brought to remembrance. Your soul is cast down within you and your spirit is sore vexed. God the Holy Spirit is Himself making inquisition for sin. He is searching Jerusalem with candles. He is so punishing you because you are settled on your lees. If you look around you there is nothing that could cause your spirits to sink. The family is not sick. Your business prospers, your body is in good health.

Why, then, this sinking of spirit? You are not conscious at the time, perhaps, that you have committed any gross act of sin—still this dark depression continues and at last you discover that you had been living in a

sin which you did not know—some sin of ignorance, hidden and unperceived and therefore God did withdraw from you the joy of His salvation till you had searched your heart and discovered wherein the evil lay. We have much reason to bless God that He does adopt this way sometimes of rebuking us before He chastens.

At other seasons the rebuke is *quite indirect*. How often have I met rebuke where it never was intended to be given? But God overruled the circumstance for good. Have you ever been rebuked by a child? The innocent little prattler uttered something quite unwittingly which cut you to your heart and manifested your sin. You walked the street maybe and you heard some man swear. And the thought perhaps struck your mind, “How little am I doing for the reclaiming of those who are abandoned?” And so the very sight of sin accused you of negligence and the very hearing of evil was made use of by God to convict you of another evil. Oh, if we kept our eyes open there is not an ox in the meadow nor a sparrow in the tree which might not sometimes suggest a rebuke.

There is not a star in midnight—there is not a ray in the noonday but what might suggest to us some evil that is hidden in our hearts and lead us to investigate our inner man—if we were but awake to the soft whispers of Jehovah’s rebukes. You know our Savior made use of little things to rebuke His disciples. He said, “Consider the lilies of the field how they grow. Behold the fowls of the air how they are fed!” So He made lilies and ravens speak to His disciples, to upbraid their discontent. Earth is full of monitors—all that we need are ears to hear. However, when these rebukes all fail, God proceeds from rebuke to correction.

He will not always chide. But if His rebukes are unheeded, then He grasps the rod and He uses it. I need not tell you how it is that God uses the rod. My Brethren, you have all been made to tingle with it. He has sometimes smitten you in your persons, sometimes in your families, frequently in your estates, oftentimes in your prospects. He has smitten you in your nearest and dearest friend. Or, worse still, it may be He has give you “a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet you.” But you all understand if you know anything of the life of a Christian what the rod and the staff of the Covenant are and what it is to be corrected by God. Let me just particularize for a few minutes and show what it is that God corrects in us.

Very frequently God corrects *inordinate affection*. It is right of us to love our relatives—it is wrong of us to love them more than God. You perhaps are yourselves today guilty of this sin, At any rate, Beloved, we may most of us look at home when we come to dwell on this point. Have we not some favored one—perhaps the partner of our heart, or the offspring of our bosom more dear to us than life itself? Have I not here some man whose life is bound up in the life of the lad, his child?—some mother

whose whole soul is knit unto the soul of her babe?—some wife, some husband, to whom the loss of the partner would be the loss of life?

Oh there are many of us who are guilty of inordinate affection towards relations. Mark you, God will rebuke us for that. Sometimes He will rebuke us by the minister. If that is not enough He will rebuke us by sending sickness or disease to those very persons upon whom we have set our hearts and if that rebukes us not and if we are not zealous to repent, He will chasten us—the sickness shall yet be unto death. The disease shall break forth with more fearful violence and the thing which we have made our idol shall be smitten and shall become the food of worms. There never was an idol that God either did not or will not pull out of its place. “I am the Lord your God. I am a jealous God.” And if we put any, however good and excellent their characters may be and however deserving of our affection, upon God’s Throne, God will cry, “Down with it.” And we shall have to weep many tears. But if we had not done so we might have preserved the treasure and have enjoyed it far better, without having lost it.

But other men are baser than this. One can easily overlook the fault of making too much of children and wife and friends, although very grievous in the sight of God. But alas, there are some that are too sordid to love flesh and blood—they love dirt, mere dirty earth—yellow gold. It is that on which they set their hearts. Their purse they tell us is dross. But when we come to take anything from it, we find they do not think it is so. “Oh,” said a man once, “if you want a subscription from me, Sir, you must get at my heart and then you will get at my purse.” “Yes,” said I, “I have no doubt I shall, for I believe that is where your purse lies and I shall not be very far off from it.”

And how many there are who call themselves Christians who make a god out of their wealth! Their park, their mansion, their estate, their warehouses, their large ledgers, their many clerks, their expanding business—or if not these, their opportunity to retire, their money in the Three per Cents. All these things are their idols and their gods and we take them into our Churches and the world finds no fault with them. They are prudent men. You know many of them. They are very respectable people. They hold many respectable positions and they are so prudent. But the love of money, which is the root of all evil is in their hearts too plainly to be denied.

Everyone may see it, though perhaps they see it not themselves. “Covetousness, which is idolatry,” reigns very much in the Church of the living God. Well, mark you, God will chasten for that. Whosoever loves mammon among God’s people shall first be rebuked for it, as he is rebuked by me this day. And if that rebuke is not taken, there shall be a chastisement given. It may be that the gold shall melt like the snowflake before the sun or if it is preserved it shall be said, “Your gold and silver are cankered. The moth shall eat up your garments and destroy your glory.” Or else the Lord

will bring leanness into their souls and cause them to go down to their graves with few honors on their heads and with little comfort in their hearts because they loved their gold more than their God—and valued earthly riches more than the riches that are eternal. The Lord save us from that, or else He will surely correct us.

But this is not the only sin—we are all subject to another crime which God abhors exceedingly. It is the sin of *pride*. If the Lord gives us a little comfort, we grow so big that we hardly know what to do with ourselves. Like Jeshurun of old, of whom it is said, “Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked.” Let us for a little time enjoy the full assurance of faith—self-conceit whispers—“You will retain the savor of that all your days.” And there is not quite a whisper but something even fainter than that—“You have no need to depend upon the influence of the Holy Spirit now. See what a great man you have grown into! You have become one of the Lord’s most valued people. You are a Samson. You may pull down the very gates of Hell and fear not. You have no need to cry, ‘Lord, have mercy upon me.’”

Or at other times it takes a different turn. He gives us temporal mercies and then we presumptuously say, “My mountain stands firm. I shall never be moved.” We meet with the poor saints and we begin to lord over them as if we were something and they were nothing. We find some in trouble, we have no sympathy with them. We are gruff and blunt with them as we talk with them about their troubles. Yes, we are even savage and cruel with them. We meet with some who are in deep distress and faint-hearted. We begin to forget when we were faint-hearted, too, and because they cannot run as fast as we can, we run far ahead and turn back and look at them, call them sluggards and say they are idle and lazy.

And perhaps even in the pulpit, if we are preachers, we have got hard words to say against those who are not quite so advanced as we are. Well, mark—there never was a saint yet that grew proud of his fine feathers but what the Lord plucked them out by-and-by. There never yet was an angel that had pride in his heart but he lost his wings and fell into Gehenna as Satan and those fallen angels did. And there shall never be a saint who indulges self-conceit and pride and self-confidence but the Lord will spoil his glories and trample his honors in the mire and make him cry out yet again, “Lord have mercy upon me, less than the least of all saints and the very chief of sinners.”

Another sin that God rebukes is sloth. Now I need not stop to picture that. How many of you are the finest specimens of sloth that can be discovered? I mean not in a business sense, for you are “not slothful in business,” but with regard to the things of God and the cause of Truth. Why, nine out of ten of all the professors of religion, I do hazard the assertion, are as full of sloth as they can be! Take our Churches all around and there is not a corporation in the world, however corrupt, that is less atten-

tive to its professed interest than the Church of Christ. There certainly are many societies and establishments in the world that deserve much blame for not attending to those interests which they ought to promote.

But I do think the Church of God is the biggest culprit of all. She says that she is the preacher of the Gospel to the poor—does she preach it to them? Yes, here and there—now and then there is a spasmodic effort—but how many are there that have got tongues to speak and ability to utter God’s Word that are content to be still! She professes to be the educator of the ignorant and so she is in a measure—there are many of you who have no business to be here this morning—you ought to have been teaching in the Sabbath-School, or instructing the young and teaching others. You have no need of teachers just now. You have learned the Truth and should have been teaching it to other people.

The Church professes that she is yet to cast the light of the Gospel throughout the world. She does a little in missionary enterprise. But ah, how little! How little! How little compared with what her Master did for her and the claims of Jesus upon her! We are a lazy set. Take the Church all round—we are as idle as we can be. And we have need to have some whipping times of persecution to whip a little more earnestness and zeal into us. We thank God this is not so much the case now as it was even twelve months ago. We hope the Church may progress in her zeal. For if not she as a whole and each of us as members will be first rebuked and if we take not the rebuke we shall afterwards be chastened for this our great sin.

I have no time to enter into all the other reasons for which God will rebuke and chasten. Suffice it to say that every sin has one twig in God’s rod appropriated to itself. Suffice it to say that in God’s hand there are punishments for each particular transgression. And it is very singular to notice how in Bible history almost every saint has been chastened for the sin he has committed by the sin itself falling upon his own head. Transgression has been first a pleasure and afterwards it has been a scourge. “The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways,” and that is the most severe punishment in all the world. Thus I have tried to open the first head—it is that *God rebukes and chastens*.

II. Now, secondly, WHY DOES GOD REBUKE AND CHASTEN? “Why,” says one, “God rebukes His children because they are His children. And He chastens them because they are His children.” Well, I will not go the length of saying that is false but I will go the length of saying it is not true. If any one should say to a father, after he had chastened his child, “Why is it you have chastened the child?” he would not say it is because I am his father. It is true in one sense but he would say, “I have chastened the child because he has done wrong.” The primary reason why he had chastened his child would not be that he was his father but the absolute cause

would be, "I have chastened him because he has done wrong, because I wish to correct him for it, that he might not do so again."

Now, God, when He chastens His children, never does it absolutely, because He is their Father. But He does it for a wise reason. He has some other reason besides His fatherhood. At the same time, one reason why God afflicts His children and not others, is because He is their Father. If you were to go home today and see a dozen boys in the streets throwing stones and breaking windows it is very likely you would chase the whole lot of them. But if there is one boy that would get a sweet knock on the head it would be your own, for you would say, "What are you doing, John? What business have you here?"

You might not be justified, perhaps, in meddling with the others—you would let their own fathers attend to them. But because you were his father you would try to make him remember it. Certain special chastisements are inflicted on God's children because they are His children but it is not because they are His children that He chastens them at any one time but because they have been doing something wrong. Now, if you are under chastisement, let this Truth be certain to you. Are the consolations of God small with you? Is there any secret sin within you? Are you chastened in your business? Then what sin have you committed? Are you cast down in your spirit? Then what transgression has brought this on you? Remember, it is not fair to say, "I am chastened because I am His child." The right way to say it is, "I am His child and therefore when He chastens me He has a reason for it." Now, what is it? I will help you to judge.

Sometimes God chastens and afflicts us, *to prevent sin*. He sees that the embryo of lust is in our hearts. He sees that that little egg of mischief is beginning to hatch and to produce sin and He comes and crushes it at once—nips the sin in the bud. Ah, we cannot tell how much guilt Christians have been saved from by their afflictions. We are running on madly to our destruction and then some dark apparition of trouble comes and stretches itself across the way and in great fright we fly back astonished. We ask, why this trouble? Oh, if we knew the deluge into which we were rushing we should only say, "Lord, I thank You that by that direful trouble You did save me from a sin that would have been far more troublous and infinitely more dangerous."

At other times God chastens us for sins already committed. We perhaps have forgotten them. But God has not. I think that sometimes years elapse between a sin and the chastisement for it. The sins of our youth may be punished in our gray old age—the transgressions you did twenty years ago, those of you who have grown old—may this very day be found in your bones. God chastens His children but He sometimes lays the rod by. The time would not be seasonable perhaps. They are not yet strong enough to bear it—so He lays His rod by and He says, as surely as He is

My child, though I lay the rod by, I will make him smart for it, that I may at last deliver him from his sin and make him like unto Myself.

But mark—you people of God—in all these chastisements for sin there is no *punishment*. When God chastises you He does not *punish* as a judge does. But He chastens as a father. When He lays the rod on with many blows and smart ones, there is not one thought of *anger* in His heart—there is not one look of *displeasure* in His eye. He means it all for your good. His heaviest blows are as much tokens of His affection as His sweetest caresses. He has no motive but your profit and His own glory. Be of good cheer, then, if these are the reasons. But take care that you fulfill the command—“Be zealous, therefore and repent.”

I read in an old Puritan author the other day a very pretty figure. He says, “A full wind is not so favorable to a ship when it is fully fair as a side wind. It is strange,” says he, “that when the wind blows in an exact direction to blow a ship into port, she will not go near so well as if she had a cross wind sideways upon her.” And he explains it thus—“The mariners say that when the wind blows exactly fair it only fills a part of the sails and it cannot reach the sails that are ahead, because the sail, bellying out with the wind, prevents the wind from reaching that which is further ahead.

“But when the wind sweeps sideways, then every sail is full and she is driven on swiftly in her course with the full force of the wind. Ah!” says the old Puritan, “there is nothing like a side wind to drive God’s people to Heaven. A fair wind only fills a part of their sails. That is, fills their joy, fills their delight. But,” says he, “the side wind fills them all. It fills their caution, fills their prayerfulness, fills every part of the spiritual man and so the ship speeds onwards towards its haven.” It is with this design that God sends affliction, to chasten us on account of our transgressions.

III. And now I am to conclude by noting WHAT IS OUR COMFORT WHEN GOD REBUKES AND CHASTENS US?

Our great comfort is that He *loves* us still. Oh, what a precious thing faith is when we are enabled to believe our God and then how easy it is to endure and to surmount all trouble! Hear the old man in the garret, with a crust of bread and a cup of cold water. Sickiness has confined him these years within that narrow room. He is too poor to maintain an attendant. Some woman comes in to look to him in the morning and in the evening. And there he sits, in the depths of poverty. And you will suppose he sits and groans. No, Brethren. He may sometimes groan when the body is weak but usually he sits and sings.

A visitor climbs the creaking staircase of that old house where human beings scarcely ought to be allowed to live. When he goes into that poor cramped room that is more fit to accommodate swine than men—he sits down upon that bottomless chair and when he has squatted himself as well as he can upon the four cross pieces of it—he begins to talk to him

and he finds him full of Heaven. "Oh, Sir," he says, "my God is very kind to me." What?—propped up he is with pillows and full of pain in every member of his body—kind? But he says, "Blessed be His name, He has not left me."

"Oh, Sir, I have enjoyed more peace and happiness in this room, out of which I have not gone for years,"—(the case is real that I am now describing)—"I have enjoyed more happiness here than I ever did in all my life. My pains are great, Sir, but they will not be for long. I am going Home soon." Yes, were he more troubled still—had he such rich consolation poured into his heart he might endure all with a smile—and sing in the furnace. Now, child of God, you are to do the same. Remember, all you have to suffer is sent in love. It is hard work for a child when his father has been chastening it, to look at the rod as a picture of love.

You cannot make your children do that—but when they grow up to be men and women how thankful are they to you then? "O Father," says the son, "I know now why it was I was so often chastened. I had a proud hot spirit. It would have been the ruin of me if you had not whipped it out of me. Now, I thank you, my Father, for it."

So, while we are here below we are nothing but little children. We cannot prize the rod—when we come of age and we go into our estates in Paradise we shall look back upon the rod of the Covenant as being better than Aaron's rod, for it blossoms with mercy. We shall say to it, "You are the most wondrous thing in all the list of my treasures. Lord, I thank You that You did not leave me unafflicted, or else I had not been where I am and what I am—a child of God in Paradise." "I have this week," says one, "sustained so serious a loss in my business that I am afraid I shall be utterly broken up." There is love in that.

"I came here this morning," says one, "and I left a dead child in the house—dear to my heart." There is love in that. That coffin and that shroud will both be full of love. And when your child is taken away, it shall not be in anger. "Ah," cries another, "but I have been exceedingly sick and even now I feel I ought not to have ventured out—I must return to my bed." Ah, He makes your bed in your affliction. There is love in every pain, in every twitch of the nerve. In every pang that shoots through the members, there is love. "Ah," says one, "it is not myself but I have got a dear one that is sick." There is love there, too.

Do what God may, He cannot do an unloving act towards His people. O Lord! You are Omnipotent. You can do all things but You can not lie and You can not be unkind to the elect. No, Omnipotence may build a thousand worlds and fill them with bounties. Omnipotence may powder mountains into dust and burn the sea and consume the sky. But Omnipotence cannot do an unloving thing towards a Believer. Oh, rest quite sure, Christian, a hard thing, an unloving thing from God towards one of His own people is quite impossible. He is kind to you when He casts you into

prison as when he takes you into a palace. He is as good when He sends famine into your house as when He fills your barns with plenty. The only question is, Are you His child? If so, He has rebuked you in affection and there is love in His chastisement.

I am almost done but not until I have made my last appeal. I have now to turn from God's people to the rest of you. Ah, my Hearers, there are some of you that have no God. You have no Christ on whom to cast your troubles. I see some of you today dressed in the clothes of mourning. I suppose you have lost someone dear unto you. Oh, you that are robed in black—is God your God? Or are you mourning now, without God to wipe every tear from your eye? I know that many of you are struggling now in your business with very sharp and hard times. Can you tell your troubles to Jesus, or have you to bear them all yourself—friendless and helpless?

Many men have been driven mad because they had no one to whom to communicate their sorrow. And how many others have been driven worse than mad because when they told their sorrows their confidence was betrayed. O poor mourning spirit, if you had, as you might have done, gone and told Him all your woes, He would not have laughed at you. And He would never have told it out again. Oh, I remember when once my young heart ached in boyhood, when I first loved the Savior. I was far away from father and mother and all I loved and I thought my soul would burst.

I was an usher in a school in a place where I could meet with no sympathy or help. Well, I went to my chamber and told my little griefs into the ears of Jesus. They were great griefs to me then, though they are nothing now. When I just whispered them on my knees into the ear of Him who had loved me with an everlasting love, oh, it was so sweet, none can tell. If I had told them to somebody else they would have told them again. But He, my blessed Confidante, He knows my secrets and He never tells again. Oh, what can you do, you that have got no Jesus to tell your troubles to? And the worst of it is, you have got more troubles to come. Times may be hard now but they will be harder one day—they will be harder when they come to an end.

They say it is hard to live but it is very hard to die. When one comes to die and has Jesus with him, even then dying is hard work. But to die without a Savior! Oh, my Friends, are you inclined to risk it? Will you face the grim monarch and no Savior with you? Remember, you must do it, you must die soon. The chamber shall soon be hushed in silence. No sound shall be heard except the babbling watch that ever tells the flight of time. The physician shall, "Hush!" and hold up his finger and whisper in a suppressed voice, "He cannot last many minutes longer." And the wife and the children, or the father and the mother, will stand around your bed and look at you, as I have looked at some, with a sad, sad heart.

They will look at you a little while, till at last the death change will pass over your face. "He is gone!" it shall be said. And the hand uplifted shall

be dropped down again and the eye shall be glazed in darkness and then the mother will turn away and say, "O my child, I could have borne all this if there had been hope in the end!" And when the minister comes in to comfort the family, he will ask the question of the father, "Do you think your son had an interest in the blood of Christ?" The reply will be, "O Sir, we must not judge but I never saw anything like it. I never had any reason to hope—that is my greatest sorrow."

There, there! I could bury every friend without a tear, compared with the burial of an ungodly friend. Oh, it seems such an awful thing to have one allied to you by ties of blood, dead and in Hell. We generally speak very softly about the dead. We say, "Well, we hope." Sometimes we tell great lies for we know we do not hope at all. We wish it may be so but we cannot hope it. We never saw any grounds that should lead us to hope. But would it not be an awful thing if we were honest enough to look the dread reality in its face—if the husband were simply to look at it and say, "There was my wife. She was an ungodly, careless woman. I know she never said anything concerning repentance and faith. And if she died so and I have every reason to fear she did, then she is cast away from God"?

It would be unkind to say it. But it is only honest for us to know it—to look dread Truth in the face. Oh, my fellow Brothers and Sisters! Oh, you that are partners with me of an immortal life! We shall one day meet again before the Throne of God. But before that time comes, we shall each of us be separated and go our different ways down the shelving banks of the river of death. My fellow man, are you prepared to die alone? I ask you this question again—Are you prepared to arise in the Day of Judgment without a Savior? Are you willing to run all risks and face your Maker when He comes to judge, you without an Advocate to plead your cause?

Are you prepared to hear Him say, "Depart you cursed!" Are you ready now to endure the everlasting ire of Him who smites and smiting once, does smite forever? Oh, if you will make your bed in Hell, if you are prepared to be damned, if you are willing to be so, then live in sin and indulge in pleasures—you will get your wish.

But if you would not. If you would enter Heaven and you would be saved, "Turn you, turn you, why will you die, O house of Israel?" May God the Holy Spirit enable you to repent of sin and to believe on Jesus. And then you shall have a portion among them that are sanctified—but unrepentant and unbelieving, if you die so, you must be driven from His presence, never to have life and joy and liberty, as long as eternity shall last.

The Lord prevent this, for Jesus' sake.

Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

A DOOR OPENED IN HEAVEN

NO. 887

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, AUGUST 22, 1869,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“After this I looked and, behold, a door was opened in Heaven.”
Revelation 4:1.***

How highly favored was the Apostle John! While his Master was on earth he was the favored disciple, permitted to lean his head upon His bosom as a token of the most familiar and loving communion. After our Lord had ascended, He had the same heart towards John and, finding him alone amidst the wild rocks of Patmos, He visited him on the Lord’s-Day and revealed Himself to him in a most glorious manner. Brothers and Sisters, if Heaven should offer any one thing which we might choose—if ever the Lord should appear to us as He did to Solomon and say, “Ask what you will, and it shall be given you,” be it ours to request that we may enjoy the closest possible fellowship with the Well-Beloved!

If we might choose our portion among the sons of men, we could not select a happier, a holier, a more honorable lot than to abide in hallowed fellowship with Jesus, even as did the beloved disciple. Remember, John has not this privilege reserved unto himself. The innermost circle of fellowship is not for the seer of Patmos alone—there is room upon the bosom of Christ for other heads than his! The innermost heart of Jesus is large enough to hold more than one beloved!

Despair not of gaining the choicest place! It is not easy to ascend into the hill of the Lord and to stand in His holy place, but if you are pure in heart. If you are fervent in spirit. If you are purged from earthly dross, and if you surrender yourself as a chaste virgin unto Christ, you may—even *you* may yet attain unto this rare and choice privilege of abiding in Christ and enjoying without ceasing His love shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit.

Leaving John, however, to whom the door in Heaven was so remarkably opened that his vision of the spiritual world excelled all others, we will content ourselves with gathering up the crumbs from his table while we muse upon one of the descriptions which fell from his pen. John says, “A door was opened in Heaven,” and I believe the first meaning of the statement is that he was permitted to gaze into the secret and mysterious spirit-land and to behold things which have not at any other time been seen by mortal eyes.

That, I think, to be the first meaning. Yet, if we append another sense to it, we shall not be departing from the Truth, even if we depart from the immediate connection of the text. We shall regard this door opened in Heaven in three ways. First, there is *a door of communion* between God

and man. Secondly and more closely the meaning of the text, *a door of observation* has been opened with regard to the glories of the saints. And thirdly, by-and-by, to each of us there will be *a door of entrance* opened, by which we shall enter in through the golden gate into the city.

I. First, then, a DOOR OF COMMUNION has been opened in Heaven. The angels fell. Far back in the ancient ages, Lucifer, the son of the morning, rebelled against his liege Lord and led a multitude of subordinate spirits to revolt. These, having proved traitors, were expelled from Heaven, hurled like lightning from the battlements of Glory down into the depths of woe. For them no door was opened in Heaven. Mysterious as is the fact, it is nevertheless clear that no mercy was shown to fallen angels.

He who will have mercy upon whom He will have mercy, and will have compassion on whom He will have compassion, suffered those once bright and illustrious spirits who had revolted to continue in their revolt without a proclamation of pardon to suggest repentance. He allowed them to continue in their revolt, delivered unto chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment. Man also, soon after his creation, broke his Maker's law, placing himself, thereby, in the same position as the fallen angels. Man had no greater claim upon God's mercy than the devils! No, if anything, if any claim could be, he had less, seeing the restoration of so insignificant a being was far less important than the rekindling of the stars of Heaven—while his destruction would be far less loss than the overthrow of the angelic spirits.

Yet the Lord in His sovereignty, for reasons that He knows, but which He has not revealed to us, was pleased to look upon the sons of men with singular favor, determining that in them His Grace should be revealed. The devils, as vessels of wrath, are reserved unto judgment—but the sons of men, as vessels of mercy, are prepared for Glory! Against angels who kept not their first estate, Heaven is shut up. But for *men*, a door is opened in Heaven! Here is matchless Grace, combined with absolute Sovereignty, furnishing us with a display of election upon the largest scale—against the truth of which none can raise debate—for whatever objectors may affirm against the choice of some men and not of others, they cannot deny but that God has chosen men rather than angels.

Neither can they explain any more than we can the reason why the Savior took not up angels, but took up the seed of Abraham. Beyond all question, it is to the praise of Divine Grace that we are able to declare that for the human race a door is opened in Heaven. A door of communion was virtually opened in the Covenant of Grace when the sacred Persons of the Divine Trinity entered into solemn league and compact that the chosen should be redeemed—that an offering should be presented by which sin should be atoned for and God's broken Law should be vindicated. In that Covenant council chamber where the sacred Three combined to plan the salvation of the chosen, a door was virtually opened in Heaven and it was through that door that the saints who lived and died *before* the coming of Christ passed into their rest.

It was this door which was at the head of the ladder which Jacob saw—through which the angels ascended and descended—keeping up communion between God and man. Blessed be God, the effect of the Savior's blood reached backward as well as forward! Before it was shed, the anticipation of the blood-shedding availed with God for the salvation of His people. But, dear Brothers and Sisters, the door was actually and evidently opened when our Lord Jesus came down to the sons of men to sojourn in their flesh. What? Does the Infinite veil Himself in an infant's form? Does the pure and holy God dwell here on earth among unholy men? Does God speak through those lips of tenderness and does God's light beam through those eyes of love? It is even so!

The Son of Mary was the Son of God and He that suffered, He that bore our sicknesses, He upon whom our sins were laid was no other than God over all! The Word which was God and was in the beginning with God, was made flesh and tabernacled among us! Surely there was a door opened in Heaven, then, for if the Godhead comes into actual union with manhood, man and God are no more divided by bars and gates! It cannot be impossible that manhood should go up to God, seeing God has come down to man! If God condescends thus, it must be with a motive and a reason and there is hope for poor humanity! There are stars in the darkness of our fallen state!

Immanuel, God with us, the virgin's Child, the Son of the Highest, is He among us? Then a door is opened in Heaven, indeed! The angels knew this, for through the open door they came trooping forth with songs of joy and gladness, hailing the birth of the Prince of Peace. And doubtless the spirits of the just, as they peered through the opened lattice, were glad to behold the union of earth with Heaven. But the door, dear Brethren, was not opened, even then, effectually and completely, for Christ, when He came into the world, had to stand, though in Himself pure and holy, in the position of a *sinner*. "The Lord has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all."

Now, where sin is, there is a shutting out from God, and Christ was officially, as our Substitute, shut out so long as sin laid upon Him. When the transgression of His people was laid on Him and He was numbered with the transgressors, the veil hung down before even Him. But oh, remember well how bravely He removed that which hindered! He came up to the Cross with the lead of sin upon Him, a lead that would have staggered all the angels and bowed a universe of human beings to the lowest Hell. Up to that Cross He came and there He bore the consequences of His people's guilt. The transgressions of His people were laid on Him and for those iniquities was He struck—but He bore all the strikes—He drank the cup of wrath to the dregs, and shouting, "It is finished," He took the great veil that hung up between earth and Heaven and, with one gigantic pull, He tore it from top to bottom, never to be put together again—to make an open way between God and man!

The veil is torn in two. Heaven is laid open to all Believers. But though our Lord Himself, to prove how He had torn that veil, passed through it up

to the Most Holy Place, as to His Soul, yet you will remember, Beloved, that He left His body behind Him. That holy Thing slumbered in the grave, where it could not see corruption. It was not taken up into the excellent Glory, but remained here for 40 days. Then, when the appointed weeks were finished, Jesus once again entered Heaven—this time taking possession of it for our bodies as well as for our souls. How wondrously David foretold the glorious opening of the gates, when he sang the ascent of the illustrious hero! He rose amid attending angels, ascending not in phantom form, but in a real body and, as He neared the heavenly portals, holy angels sang, “Lift up your heads, O you gates and be you lift up, you everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in!”

When on their hinges of diamond, those pearly gates revolved and Jesus entered, then, once and for all and forever the door was opened in Heaven, by which the chosen people shall all of them ascend into the joy of their Lord. At this very hour, as if to show us that He opens and no man shuts, we see the door most certainly open because He has promised to come again and, therefore, the door cannot be shut, for He is coming quickly. His promise rings in our ears, “Behold, I come as a thief! Blessed is he that watches and keeps his garments.” Yes, blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. Yet again He says, “Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me.” Expect Him, then, and as you expect Him, learn that a door is still open in Heaven!

Beloved, there is no little comfort in the belief that Heaven’s gates are opened, because then our prayers, broken-winged as they are, shall enter there. Though they seem as if they could not mount because of a clogging weight of sorrow, yet shall they enter through that door! Our sighs and tears shall pass. There is no boom across the harbor’s mouth—our poor half-shipwrecked prayers shall safely sail into the haven. The ports of Glory are not blockaded—we have access by Jesus Christ unto the Father—and there is free trade with Heaven for poor broken-hearted sinners. Here is consolation because our songs, also, shall reach the Truth of God through the opened door. How delightful it is to sing God’s praise alone, but much more in company when all our hearts and voices keep tune together in sacred melodies of adoration!

But what must our songs be compared with the chorus of the 10,000 times ten thousands! We might fear that ours would be unable to scale the walls of the New Jerusalem, but, lo, a door is opened for their entrance. Moreover, there is access for sinners to God—Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost. You are not shut out of your Father’s house, poor Prodigal. The door is opened! You have not to stand and knock by the month together with processes of repentance and reformation. A door is opened! Christ is that Door. If you come to Christ you have come to God! If you trust in Jesus you are saved! The door to the ark was wide enough to admit the largest beasts as well as the tiniest animals, and the door into God’s mercy is wide enough to let in the greatest sinner as well as the more refined moralist.

He that comes to Christ comes to Heaven! He is sure of Heaven who is sure of Christ. Let me cheer everyone here who fears that the gate is barred against him. The door is still open! While there is life there is hope. You cannot climb to Heaven and see if your name is left off the roll—therefore don't think it is! You cannot turn to the list of souls who will perish forever—don't think, therefore, that your name is among them. But, since the silver trumpet rings out the invitation—"Come, laboring and heavy laden! Come to Christ and He will give you rest!" accept the invitation! And you shall find that the God who in mercy gave the invitation, gave you power to comply with it—and gave you the will to accept it—and He will, by no means, cast you out!

II. Now we must turn to the second view of the text, which is the proper one from its connection. "A door was opened in Heaven," it was A DOOR OF OBSERVATION. It is very little that we can know of the future state, but we may be quite sure that we know as much as is good for us. We ought to be as content with that which is not revealed as with that which is. If God wills us not to know, we ought to be satisfied not to know. Depend on it, He has told us all about Heaven that is necessary to bring us there—and if he Had revealed more, it would have served rather for the gratification of our curiosity than for the increase of our Grace.

Yet, Brethren, much concerning Heaven, much, I mean, comparatively, may be guessed by spiritual men. There are times when, to all who love the Lord, doors are opened in Heaven through which they can, by spiritual illumination, see somewhat of the city of the Great King. And first, a door is opened in Heaven whenever we are elevated by the help of God's Spirit to high and ravishing thoughts of the Glory of God. Sometimes by investigating the works of Nature, we obtain a glimpse of the Infinite. More often by beholding the Grace and mercy revealed in Jesus Christ, our hearts are warmed towards that blessed One who made us, who sustains us, who redeemed us, to whom we owe all things.

My Brothers and Sisters, what joy have we felt in the thought of His Presence! It has been bliss to feel that our Father is with us when we are alone, covering us with His feathers in danger, hiding us in peace beneath His shield and buckler in times of alarm. How delightful has it been to serve Him, to have a consciousness of doing Him some service, poor and imperfect as it is! I think I know of no delight on earth that is higher than that of knowing that you are really, with all your heart, adoringly serving God! And what a delight it is, dear Brethren, when you can feel in your own soul that you are reconciled to God—that there is no opposition between your desires and God's will, or if there should be, yet not in your heart of hearts—for your soul desires to be perfectly at one with Him who made it.

How glad we feel when God is glorified, how happy when His saints are honoring His name! What a hallowed thrill shoots through us when another sinner is embraced within the arms of Divine mercy! Oh, to see God's kingdom come and His will done on earth as it is in Heaven! Brothers and Sisters, if we might but see this, our prayers would be ended—

there is nothing more that we could want if we could once see the whole earth filled with the knowledge of the Lord! This is our greatest joy beneath the sky—to know the Lord to be present—to feel that we are one with Him, to catch some glimpses of His Glory and to see that Glory appreciated among the sons of men, while we also are helping to spread it abroad.

Now, if it is so happy a thing to obtain some gleaming of the Glory, what will it be when we shall be near to Him and shall behold Him face to face? What will be our joy when everything that now separates us from God shall be taken away—when inbred sin that mars our fellowship shall be utterly rooted up—when, instead of a little casual and imperfect service, we shall serve Him day and night in His Temple? What will be our joy when we shall no longer behold sin rampant, but shall see holiness universal all around? When there shall be no idle words to vex our ears, no cursing without and no thought of sin within to molest us? When the hymn of His Glory shall forever make glad our ears and our tongue shall joyously help to swell the strain world without end?

Why, Brethren, we have true views of Heaven when our soul is blessed with nearness of access to her Father and her God. The unspiritual know not this. If I talked to them of harps and streets of gold and palms of victory, they might admire the imagery, but of the inner meaning they would know nothing. Yet, there are your harps and there your palms and there your songs and there your white robes—the beholding of the Glory of the Lord and being transformed into it! To be made like unto your God in purity and true holiness—this is Heaven, indeed!

A door is opened in Heaven, secondly, whenever the meditative spirit is able to perceive *Christ Jesus* with some degree of clearness. It is true we see Him here as in a glass, darkly. But that sight, dark and dim as it is, is transporting to our souls. Do you not know what it is to sit under His shadow with great delight and to find His fruit sweet unto your taste? The first day you knew Christ and He spoke your pardon to you, why, it was a marriage day to your soul! Since then He has opened to you coffers containing priceless treasures! He has taken you into the inner rooms of His treasury where the richest and best blessings are stored up—and thus your sense of Christ's excellence has been a growing one.

You thought Him good at first, but now you know Him to be better than the best. Now He is “the chief among 10,000, and the altogether lovely.” I am sure, Beloved, nothing can so carry you out of yourself above your cares and your present troubles as to feel that your Beloved is yours and that you are His. Why, your spirit, like David, dances before the Ark of the Lord when the full beauties of a precious Christ are perceived by your heart! Imagine, then, what must it be to see the Redeemer face to face! To hear but the King's silver trumpets sounding in the distance makes the heart to dance, but what must it be to see the King in His beauty in the streets of His own metropolis, where He rides forth in constant triumph?

Have you not known the day when a word from Him would have made your spirits like the chariots of Amminadab? What will be our ecstasy

when you hear not afterwards, but listen *continually* to Him whose lips are like lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh? A stray kiss of those lips has ravished you beyond description, but what will it be when those cheeks that are as beds of spices, as sweet flowers, shall forever be near you—when the full marriage of your soul with the royal spouse shall become, indeed, to your ineffable delight? Perhaps this is a door through which you have often gazed. If so, take not away your eyes, Man, take not away your eyes! But through this window of agate, through this gate of carbuncle, gaze ever at the Person of your blessed Lord, for in Him you may see Heaven fully revealed.

We sometimes get a door opened in Heaven when we enjoy *the work of the Holy Spirit* in our souls. The Holy Spirit has breathed over our hearts and turned tumult and storm into profound peace, like the peace of God's own Self. He has given us more than quiet resting, He has filled us with high and exulting thoughts of God until whether we were in the body or out of the body we could not tell. And then there has come with these great thoughts a flush of joy, as though a well of honey had sprung up at our feet—as though soft breezes from the celestial beds of spices were fanning our cheeks. We knew that we were one with Christ by indissoluble, vital union—we grasped the promise, we knew it to be true—we were sure that all Covenant blessings were our own!

The spirit of sonship was within us! We cried, "Abba, Father!" Faith rejoiced exceedingly. Bright-eyed Hope laughed for joy. Love tuned her harp. The Holy Spirit made a Paradise within our hearts and He Himself walked in the garden of our soul in the cool of the day. Right well do some of us know what the Holy Spirit can do for us. We have felt His joy not only in prosperous moments, but in our very darkest times when our troubles have been multiplied and griefs have threatened to overwhelm us. Now, if such it is to enjoy the Presence of the Spirit, Brethren, what must it be to dwell in the land where we shall never vex Him with our sins? Where we shall never quench His sacred influences with our negligence? Where we shall never miss the delightful, sensible conscious enjoyment of His love shed abroad in our souls?

Ah, if we could always be as we sometimes are! I find it comparatively easy to climb the hilltop, but the difficulty is to *abide* there. We slide down to the valley again so soon! But in Glory we shall forever sit on the top of Amana with our forehead bathed in the light that streams from an unsetting sun, filled with all the fullness of God and that forever and ever! O you that know anything of the blessed Spirit, there is a door opened in Heaven for you in His gracious operation—look through it and rejoice at what you see!

Further, Brothers and Sisters, a door is often opened in Heaven in *the joys of Christian worship*. As I was reading over and over again yesterday the 42nd Psalm, I could not but note how David dotes on the sunny memories of sacred seasons when he went with the multitude with the voice of joy and praise—with the multitude that kept holyday. He remembered the times when he went up to the House of the Lord in the company of his

people. It is not always a delightful thing to go to a place of worship, for some places are very much used for sleeping in and in some others it might be better to be asleep than awake. Many services are so dull that men attend them as a stern duty—they find no pleasure in them. But where there is unity, harmony, heartiness, zeal—where the song rolls up with mighty peals like thunder, where the Gospel is preached affectionately and faithfully and the Holy Spirit bedews the whole like the dews that fell on Hermon—oh, it is sweet to be there!

Do you not feel, sometimes, your Sundays to be the most blessed portions of your life below the skies? And the assemblies of God's people—what are they to you? Are they not the House of God and the very gate of Heaven! Yes, and if it is sweet, today, to mingle with Christians in their praise and prayer, when we are so soon to separate and go our way—how passing sweet that place must be where the saints meet in *eternal* sessions of worship—where the King is always with them, where there is never a dreary service, where the song never, never, never ceases, where no discord mars it and no harp is hung upon the willows—

***“There no tongue can silent be,
All shall join the harmony.”***

Why, if there were no other door in Heaven than these blessed Sunday gatherings and the sweet enjoyments of the assemblies of the saints, surely this would be enough to make us long to be there!

Another door is opened in Heaven in *the fellowship which we enjoy with the saints on earth*. “They that feared the Lord spoke often one to another,” and thus they obtained one of the most delightful joys to be had this side of the golden gate. Though we love all the saints, have we not some who are our peculiars, to whom we take the doors of our heart right off their hinges and say to them, “Come in, for in sympathy and experience I am one with you. Come in and converse with me”? Brethren, if common Christian communion is very sweet and I know that as Church members we have found it so, how much sweeter it will be to meet with the more eminent of the saints!

What meetings Heaven will see! I imagine Saul meeting Stephen. He aided the persecutors who stoned the martyred Stephen and yet out of the ashes of a Stephen there springs a Paul! What a grip of the hand they will give each other on the other side of Jordan! When holy bright spirits meet, why, I would far sooner watch their salutations than the occultation of the moons of Jupiter! It will be grand to see these celestial bodies casting their shadows, as it were, for awhile about each other, as they come into the closest contact in the skies. And do you not delight to think that you shall meet the Apostles? That you shall meet David and Abraham? That you shall have communion with Luther and Calvin, Wesley and Whitefield, and men of whom the world was not worthy?

Some have doubted whether there will be recognition in Heaven. There is no room for doubt, for it is called, “my Father's house.” And shall not the family be known to each other? We are to “sit down with Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob,” and we shall, therefore, know these Patriarchal

saints. We shall not sit down with men in iron masks and see none but great unknowns, but we shall, “know even as we are known.” Doubtless even before the body rises there will be marks and peculiarities of constitution about disembodied spirits by which we shall be able to detect them and shall hold happy, intelligent communion with them.

Ah, well, you gray-headed saints, your best friends have gone before you and the thought of seeing them may well make you long to be on the wing. Your dearest ones are on the other side of Jordan—they went to their heritage a long while ago—they abide in the land of the living, while you still linger in the land of the dying. Press forward! Let immortal fingers beckon you towards the dwelling places of the saints in the land of the hereafter. How the prospect of future communion ought to make the saints love one another, because ours is no earthly love which must end at the grave! Our union and communion in Christ will outlast both sun and moon! Our love in Christ Jesus will not ripen in another world, than be dissolved like that of merely carnal relationship—we need not be afraid of having too much of it! How kindly affectionate we ought to be to one another! We are to live together in Heaven—never let us quarrel on earth.

I read a story the other day of an elder of a Scottish Church, who at the elders’ meeting had angrily disputed with his minister until he almost broke his heart. The night after he had a dream which so impressed him that his wife said to him in the morning, “You look very sad, Jan. What is the matter wi’ you?” “And well I am,” said he, for I have dreamed that I had hard words with our minister, and he went home and died and soon after I died, too. And I dreamed that I went up to Heaven and when I got to the gate, out came the minister and put out his hands to welcome me, saying, “Come along, Jan, there’s nae strife up here, I’m so glad to see you.” So the elder went down to the minister’s house to beg his pardon and found in very truth that he was dead. He was so struck by the blow that within two weeks he followed his pastor to the skies. And I should not wonder but what his minister did meet him and say, “Come along, Jan, there’s nae strife up here.”

Brethren, why should there be strife below? Let us love each other and by the fact that we are coheirs of that blessed inheritance, let us dwell together as partakers of a common life and soon to be partakers of a common Heaven. Brethren, I think I may add a door has often been opened in Heaven to us *at the communion table*. Astronomers select the best spots for observatories. They like elevated places which are free from traffic so that their instruments may not quiver with the rumbling of wheels. They prefer, also, to be away from the smoke of manufacturing towns, that they may discern the orbs of Heaven more clearly. Surely, if any one place is more fit to be an observatory for a Heaven-mind than another, it is the table of communion—

***“I have been there and still will go,
‘Tis like a little Heaven below.”***

Christ may hide Himself from His people in preaching, as He did from His disciple on the road to Emmaus, but He made Himself known unto

them in the breaking of bread. Prize much the solemn breaking of bread. That ordinance has been perverted. It has been caricatured and profaned, and therefore some tender Christians scarcely value it at its right account. To those who will use it rightly, examining themselves and so coming to that table, it is, indeed, a Divine observatory—a place of calm retirement from the world. The elements of bread and wine become the lenses of a far-seeing telescope through which we behold the Savior. And I say again, if there is one spot of earth clear from the smoke of care, it is the table where saints have fellowship with their Lord. A door is often opened in Heaven at this banquet, when His banner over us is love—and if it is so sweet to enjoy the emblem, what must it be to live with Christ Himself and drink the new wine with Him in the kingdom of our Father!

Another door that is opened in Heaven is *the delights of knowledge*. It is a charming thing to know of earthly science, but it is more delightful by far to know *spiritual* Truth. The philosopher rejoices as he tracks some recondite law of Nature to its source and discovers callow principles of matter as they nestle beneath a long hidden mystery. But to hunt out a Gospel Truth, to track the real meaning of a text of Scripture, to get some fresh light upon one of the offices of the Redeemer, to see a precious type stand out with a fresh meaning—to get to know Him and the power of His Resurrection *experimentally*—to have the Truth of God engraved upon the soul as though by the finger of God! Oh, this is happiness! It is certainly one of the greatest delights of the Christian to sit at the feet of Jesus with Mary and learn of Him—to be educated in the college of Corpus Christi and to find the *schola Crucis* to be *schola lucis*, because of the light which streams from the Cross.

But, Brethren, if the little knowledge we gain here is so sweet, what will our knowledge be when the intellect shall be expanded, when the mental eye shall be clarified and when Truths of God shall be perceived not through a veil of mist and cloud, but in full meridian light? If the dawn is bright, what will the midday be? If today our little travels in the domains of Revelation have so enriched us, how rich shall we be when, like Columbus, we spread the sail for the unknown land, traversing seas of knowledge never navigated before? What will it be, Beloved, to make discoveries of the Glory of Christ and then to make known to the principalities and powers, in the heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God in the Person of the Well-Beloved? There is a door opened in Heaven to every thoughtful, studious reader of the Word and to every experienced Christian. If you are learning of Christ, the joy of knowledge gives you some idea of Heaven.

Another door of Heaven may be found in the *sweets of victory*. I mean not the world's victory, where there are garments rolled in blood and wringing of hands and wounds and death. I refer to victory over sin, self and Satan. How grand a thing to get a passion down and hold it by the throat, strangling it despite its struggles! It is fine work to hang up some old sin as an accursed thing before the Lord, just as they hung up the Canaanite kings before the face of the sun. Or if you cannot quite kill the lust, it is honorable work to roll a great stone at the cave's mouth and

shut in the wretches till the evening comes when they shall meet their doom. It is a joyous thing when, by God's Grace, under temptation you are kept from falling as you did on a former occasion and so are made conquerors over a weakness which was your curse in past years!

It is a noble thing to be made strong through the blood of the Lamb so as to overcome sin! The delights of holiness are as deep as they are pure. To be acquiring, by Divine Grace, spiritual strength, is no mean blessing. But what will it be to be in Heaven, when every sin shall be conquered, when Satan himself shall be under our feet? Ah, if I once have him under my foot, how will I exult and rejoice over that old dragon who has tormented the saints of God these many years! Let us once but see sin and Hell led captives, how will we sing hosanna to the Lord mighty in battle and how will we exult and rejoice as we participate in His victory! It is coming! The victory is surely coming! We shall stand upon the mountain's brow with Him and chant the song of victory!

At the battle of Dunbar, when Cromwell and his men fought up hill and step by step achieved the victory, their watchword was the Lord of Hosts, and they marched to the battle singing—

**“O Lord our God, arise and let
My enemies scattered be,
And let all them that do You hate
Before Your presence flee.”**

When they had won the day, the grand old leader, saint and soldier in one, bade his men halt and sing with him. And there they poured forth a Psalm with such lusty music that the old German Ocean might well have clapped its hands in chorus, “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously.” But what a song will that be when we, the followers of Christ, having long fought up hill, wrestling against sin, shall at last see Death and Hell overcome, and with our Leader standing in our midst, shall raise the last great hallelujah to God and the Lamb, which hallelujah shall roll on forever and ever!

God grant us each to be there! Each little victory here helps us to see as through a door to the grand ultimate triumph which may God hasten in His own time.

III. I might thus have continued, but time fails altogether. And therefore I must only add two or three sentences concerning THE DOOR OF ENTRANCE. A door will soon be opened in Heaven for each one of us who have believed in Christ Jesus. Christian, the message will soon come to you, “The Master is come and calls for you.” Ready-to-Halt, the post will come to town for you with the token, “The golden bowl is broken and the silver cord is loosed.” Father Honest must find it true that the daughters of music shall be brought low and Valiant-for-Truth must learn that the pitcher is broken at the fountain.

Gird up, then, your loins for the last time and go down to the river with courage! It flows, as some say, cold and icy as death at the foot of the celestial hill. Remember, however, it will be deeper or shallower to you according to your faith and if your faith can keep from staggering, you shall

pass through that stream dry-shod and in the river's midst you shall sing the loudest song of all your life! You shall then be nearer to Heaven and Heaven shall flood your spirit and drown out death. Soon, I say, that door will open. Surely you do not want to postpone the day. What is there amiss between you and your Husband that you wish to tarry away from Him? What? Do you love to be an exile from your own country? Do you love to be banished from the "city that has foundations," of which you are a citizen?

Surely, if your spirit is as it should be, you will say—

***"Like a bairn to its mither, a wee birdie to its nest,
I would gladly be gauging home to my Savior's breast;
For He gathers in His bosom witless, worthless lambs
like me,
And He carries them Himself to His ain countrie."***

Beloved, never try to forget your departure. Thoughts of mortality are incessant with me. But, alas, sometimes they are painful and I chide myself that it ever should be painful to think of being where Jesus is. No, no, it is not that! It is that naughty doubt and fear that flits across my soul and darkens it—for it must be bliss to be with Jesus and therefore it must be a secondary bliss to *think* of being where He is! It is greatly wise to talk about our last hours. It is well to often perform in meditation a rehearsal of the coronation scene—when the crown shall be on our head and the palm in our hand!

Anticipate, I pray you, the Glory which is surely yours if you are in Christ. But O make sure that you are in Christ! Get two grips of Him! O hold Him by a strong, but humble confidence! Fling away all other hopes, they are vanity! Bind yourself to His dear Cross, the one plank on which you can swim to Glory! Never mariner was drowned on that—

***"None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good."***

God bless you for the Redeemer's sake. Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Revelation 5 & 7:9-17.

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THE HEAVENLY RAINBOW

NO. 3412

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

***“And there was a rainbow around about the Throne,
in sight like unto an emerald.”***
Revelation 4:3.

“A RAINBOW!” “A rainbow around about the Throne!” I have a notion concerning this rainbow, that it was a complete circle. In the 10th Chapter the Apostle tells us that he saw “another mighty angel with a rainbow upon his head,” which could hardly have been the semi-circular arc we are accustomed to see in the sky in times of rain and sunshine. It must have been, I should imagine, a complete ring.

I stood, two years ago, on a little wooden bridge in the village of Handeck on the Swiss side of the Grimsel Pass, and looked down upon the roaring torrent beneath. The waterfall, breaking itself upon enormous rocks, cast up showers of foam and spray. As I looked down, the sun shone upon it and I saw a rainbow such as I had never seen but once before in another place upon a similar occasion. It was a complete circle around the fall, then another one and within it a third—three wheels within wheels, consisting of all the delightful colors of the rainbow, from the timid violet up to the courageous red! There was no mistake about it. They were complete rings that seemed to go right round the torrent, like great belts of sapphires, emeralds and chalcedonies. The ring was trebled as it shone before me. I stood and wondered at the sight. Then these very texts came to my mind, “a rainbow around about the Throne,” and, “I saw a mighty angel, who had a rainbow upon his head.”

It seems to me that John had such a sight before him—a rainbow which entirely surrounded the Throne of God. If it is so, I shall not, I think, be accounted fanciful if I draw a moral. *In this world we only see, for it is all we can see, one-half of the Eternal Covenant of God’s Grace.* That one upward arch of Divine masonry is all that we see here. The other downward half, on which the one which we see rests, namely, the eternal decree, the purpose, the resolve of Infinite Sovereignty—that is out of sight as yet. We cannot discern it. Earth comes between the horizon and bounds it. But when we shall get up yonder and see things as they are, and know even as we are known, then the Covenant will be seen by us to be a complete circle, an harmonious whole—not a broken thing, not a broken arc, or a semi-circle, as it seems to be now—but, like Deity itself, perpetual, everlasting, complete, perfect, eternal! It may be true to the figure—it certainly will be so in fact. What we know not now,

we shall know hereafter and possibly this very emblem is here used to set forth to us that while we see the Glory which God has made manifest, we do not and cannot, at present, see the eternal purpose itself, except as far as we judge of it from its grand results. Oh, it is delightful to think of going up yonder if for nothing else than knowing more of Christ, understanding more of Divine Love, drinking deeper into the mystery of godliness through which God was manifest in the flesh! Surely, if we know but little, that little knowledge has set us thirsting for deeper draughts and we are waiting for the time when we shall drop the veil which parts us from spiritual realities and shall see them face to face, needing no longer to view them as in a glass, reflected darkly!

I want you to notice three things which these words suggest, "There was a rainbow around about the Throne." First—*Divine Sovereignty never oversteps the bounds of the Covenant, but is rainbow-hedged with a wall of fire around about the Throne.* In the second place—*Divine Government springing from Sovereignty—the Throne of God is always regulated by the Covenant—there is respect at all times to the Covenant of Grace in everything that Jehovah does.* Thirdly—*in the Covenant of Grace the predominant quality is Grace—"it was in sight like unto an emerald," which I will further explain indicates that loving kindness and tender mercy towards men always shine radiant in the Covenant.* First, then, "there was a rainbow around about the Throne."

I. DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY NEVER OVERSTEPS THE BOUNDS OF THE COVENANT.

"There was a rainbow around about the Throne"—as though the rainbow hedged the Throne of God—belted it, girt it round about. God's Sovereignty must, of necessity, be absolute and unlimited. He made everything and as nothing existed before God, or independent of God, He had a right to make what He pleased and to make all that He did make after His own will and pleasure. And when He has made, His rights do not terminate, but He still continues to have an altogether unlimited and absolute power over the creatures of His hands. He claims the right for Himself. "Has not the potter power over the clay to make of the same lump one vessel to honor, and another to dishonor?" God has the power to create and the power, afterwards, to use that which is created for the purpose for which He has made it. "Shall I not do what I will with My own?" is a question which the Almighty may well ask of all His creatures who would dare to bring Him to their bar and blasphemously rejudge His judgment, snatch from His hands the balance and the rod and seek to set themselves up as censors of the Holy One! Whenever men say, "How can God do this?" and, "How shall He do that?" it should always content us to answer, "No, O man, but who are you that replies against God?" for whether we will have it or not, still God has said it and He will stand to it. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion"—so then, it is not of him that wills nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy!

But as one Truth of God is always to be taken in its relation to another Truth and not to be isolated from its natural kindred, it is a delightful consideration that God, in His absolute Sovereignty, never does violence to any of His other attributes and, *above all, never does violence to the Covenant*. The Covenant still surrounds the Sovereignty and practically hedges it within its bounds!

God is practically, as far as we are concerned, bound by His own Revelation of His own Character. He has been pleased to tell us that He is just and that He is the Lord God, merciful and gracious. In a few words, He has given us the sum of Himself by saying that, "God is Love." When a man says concerning himself, "I have a right to do as I like, but I am generous as well as just," you feel sure he will exercise the right which he claims in a manner according to and consistent with his own statement of what he is. And if he has rightly estimated his own character, he will give bountifully and pay honorably. Rest assured, then, that God's Sovereignty never will prove Him to have misrepresented Himself, or to have deceived us! When He says that He is just, He neither can nor will act unjustly towards any creature He has made. There was never a pang or a pain inflicted arbitrarily by God. God never pronounced a curse upon any man unless that man had clearly and richly earned it by his sin! No soul was ever cast into Hell by God's Sovereignty. God takes counsel with Himself, but He stoops not to caprice. How comes the hapless creature, then, to this dread torment? *Sin* brings the sinner into a ruined state—*justice* pronounces the sinner's doom. Sovereignty may let that doom stand. What if it moves not to avert the issue? Justice it is that pronounces the curse. Be assured, Man, however much you may kick against the Doctrine of Election, you have no reason to do so! Whatever that Doctrine may involve, it is not possible but that God must and will act towards you in a way so strictly just that when you, yourself, come to discover it in eternity, you will not be able to complain, but be compelled to stand speechless!

Moreover, God has been pleased to assure you that He is Love—that He is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. Now, whatever Sovereignty may decree, you may rest assured that the decree will be in consonance with the fact that God is full of mercy, grace and truth. I know some of you set up the decree of God like a huge monster before you. You paint a horrible picture, as though the visage of Him that speaks to you from Heaven were cruel and pitiless. But that picture is drawn by your perverse imagination—it is not God's portrait of Himself, for He says, "As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but had rather that he would turn unto Me and live." God mocks not when He says, "Turn you, turn you; why will you die, O house of Israel?" That is honest emotion which God feels over a sinner who ruins himself when He cries, "How can I give you up? How shall I set you as Admah? How shall I make you as Zeboim? My heart is moved; My repentings are kindled together!" God wills not the death of a sinner, but had rather that he should turn unto Him and live! So He, Himself, as-

sure us and, Sovereign as He is, yet He still remains both just and gracious forever—and let us not doubt it for a moment! The rainbow, the rainbow of His own glorious attributes of mercy always surrounds the Throne of God!

It is equally certain, taking another view of this subject, that *God's Sovereignty never can by any possibility run counter to the promise which He Himself has made.* God has a right to do as He wills with His own, but when He once, in His Sovereignty, chooses to make a promise, He would be unfaithful if He did not keep it—and it is not possible that He can be unfaithful, for none of His Words ever did fail, or ever shall! He has been true to the very jots and tittles of all that He has, Himself, declared. Never in any case has any man been able to say that God has spoken in secret, and said to the seed of Jacob, “Seek you My face,” in vain. I want every unconverted person here to be careful to note this Truth of God. Whenever you find a promise in God's Word, do not let the thought of Predestination scare you from it. Predestination can never be contrary to the promise! It is not in Election, or Reprobation, or in any Doctrine that asserts Divine Sovereignty to make the promise of God to be of no effect! Take a promise like this—“He that believes and is baptized, shall be saved.” If you believe, and if you are baptized, you have, then, God's Word for it—you shall be saved! Be sure of it—that stands fast! Heaven and earth may pass away, but that Word shall not fail you. God will keep His Word of Truth with you and at the Last Tremendous Day you shall find that since you believe, God will save you!

Take another—“Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Then, if you call upon the name of the Lord—that is if with hearty, earnest prayer, you cry to God and if with your whole soul you take Him to be your All-in-All, calling upon His name as the heathens do upon their gods when they avow themselves to be their followers—if you do this, you shall be saved! Now, I beseech you, remember that no decree can possibly run counter to this. You say, “What if the decree shall destroy me?” Man, His promise *is* the decree! The promise of God is His eternal purpose, written out in black and white for you to read. So far from the counsel of eternity being contrary to the Revelation in time, the revelation in time is nothing more than a transcript of what God resolved to do from before the foundation of the world! Take any promise you will. Let it be this, if the others seem to miss you—“Come now, let us reason together; though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as wool.” Now, your sins *are* as scarlet, and you *are* willing to come and reason with God and you find that when He reasons with you, He tells you that you must rest in the blood of Jesus, leave your sins and depend wholly upon Christ. Well, now, after you have done, you have God's Word for it that those scarlet sins of yours shall be “whiter than snow.” Well then, they must be so! It is not possible that anything unknown to you should come in and make void the promise which is known. I will read that verse I just mentioned again, “He has never spoken in secret, and said to the seed of Jacob, Seek you My face in vain.” God has not said behind your back what

He has not said to your face! He has said, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." He has said, "Oh, you thirsty, come and drink." He has said, "Whoever will, let him come and take of the Water of Life freely." There is nothing in that mysterious roll, which no human eye has ever seen, that can be in conflict with the golden promises which gleam in the Book of God's Word upon every needy sinner that comes and trusts in the Lord! There is a rainbow around about the Throne. Sovereignty never gets out of the circle of the promise.

Oh, child of God! Your heavenly Father, in His Sovereignty, *has a right to do with you, His child, as He pleases, but He will never let that Sovereignty get out of the limit of the Covenant!* As a Sovereign, He might cast you away, but He has promised that He never will—and He never will! As a Sovereign, He might leave you to perish, but He has said, "I will not leave you nor forsake you." As a Sovereign, He might suffer you to be tempted beyond your strength, but He has promised that no temptation shall happen to you, but such as is common to man, and He will, with the temptation, make a way of escape! Let no dark thought ever cross your mind that, perhaps, towards *you* He will deal arbitrarily. It is not so. He will carry out His purpose to you—and of that purpose He has already informed you by telling you that you are His, His adopted child and you shall be His forever and ever! In the second place—

II. THE RULING GOVERNMENT OF GOD IN THE WORLD ALWAYS HAS RESPECT TO THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

It is so in great things. He set the bounds of the nations according to the number of the children of Israel. When you read God's Word, Egypt comes upon the stage—Assyria, Babylon, Greece and Rome. Yet what are they but a sort of background? They come and they go, for all their secular grandeur, as mere accessories. The central figure is always the Election of Grace—the people of God—for the rest, they are merely the plowmen and the vinedressers for the Lord's own people. Sometimes these nations are nursing fathers. At other times they are sharp rods. Whichever they may be, they are mere instruments. The Bible speaks of them as so much scaffolding for the building of the living temple in which the mercy of God shall be displayed! Whenever you read, or hear people talk about prophecy, you may depend upon it that Inspiration has not been given to tell of Louis Napoleon, or any other earthly Sovereign. It is not the history of Prussia, Russia, or France that the heavenly Apocalypse unveils. The whole Book is written for His people—it gives us the history of the Church—but it does not give us the history of anything else! The way to read the Book, if you do read it, is with this central thought in your minds—that God has not revealed to us anything concerning Assyria, Babylon, Greece, or Rome for their own sakes—but He has referred to them because they happen to have a connection with the history of His Church. That is all, for He has chosen Jacob to Himself and Israel to be His peculiar treasure. My Brothers and Sisters, I believe that when kings and potentates meet in the cabinet chamber and consult together according to their ambition, a Counselor whom they never see

pulls the strings and they are only His puppets. And even when armies meet in battle array, when the world seems shaken to and fro with revolutions and the most stable thrones quiver as though they were but vessels out at sea, there is a secret Force working in all. The end and drift of these momentous actions is the bringing out of the chosen race—the salvation of the blood-bought company and the glory of God in the redeeming of the world unto Himself! When you read the newspaper, read it to see how your heavenly Father is managing the world for the good of His own children! All else—be it the disposal of a throne, the settlement of a political question, or the winning of a boat race—all else, I say, are minor things compared with the interests of the Election of Grace! All things are revolving and cooperating for good. They are working together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to the purpose of His Grace. By them He will make manifest throughout the ages unto the angels and the principalities, His manifold wisdom!

Now, as this is the case in the great, *it is equally so in the little*. In all your smaller affairs, God always governs with respect to the Covenant. Your worst afflictions are still meant for your good, for this is one clause in the Covenant, “Surely in blessing, I will bless.” When you come to the worst, even should that happen to be at the close of life, you will find that God has still kept within Covenant engagements. Hear what David said upon his bed of pain, “Although my house is not so with God, yet”—oh, gracious, “yet”—“yet has He made with me an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure.” You have lost your property—it is a sad thing for you to come down in the world, but this always was in the Covenant. Have you never read it? “In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” Lately, when you have been in prayer, you have had but little comfort—and when you have read the Word of God, it has not seemed to gleam with delight to you, but rather the Book has seemed dark. Well, well, that is in the Covenant! Did I not read it to you? “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent.” Perhaps you have been backsliding. It is sad that it should be so. And now you have lost much of your enjoyment and you are exceedingly cast down. But did you ever read it, “The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways”? Do you not know it to be a promise from God—“If his children err from My commandments, then will I visit their transgressions with the rod; nevertheless, My Covenant will I not take away from him, nor suffer My loving kindness to fail”? You are only receiving, now, what God has promised to give to you!

Look upon these things as tokens that God is faithful. We are told in the Covenant God made with Noah, that “seed-time and harvest, summer and winter shall never cease.” Now, the snow has fallen today, and it is bitterly cold. But, my Brothers and Sisters, it was in the Covenant that the winter should not cease. No doubt when the harvest comes, and the summer laughs with joy, we shall say, “How good God is and how true He has been to His Covenant, that there should be a harvest and a summer!” Ah, but when the seed is cast into the cold soil and the frost

covers it, you ought to be equally grateful to the faithfulness of God, for this, too, is one part of the promise! If He did not keep one part, you might be afraid that He would not keep the other! Just so is it *spiritually*. Your troubles are promised to you. "In the world you shall have tribulation." You have got your troubles. "As many as He loves, He chastens." You have got the chastening. Be, therefore, thankful that you have another proof of the Divine Faithfulness towards you. There is a rainbow around about the Throne of God, and let the Throne decree what it may! The scepter is never stretched beyond the boundary of Covenant Love. It is impossible for God to deal towards His people contrary to the spirit which breathes in the two Immutable things in which it is impossible for Him to lie, and by which He has given strong consolation to those who have fled for refuge to the hope which is set before them in the Gospel. Our third point is—

III. IN THE COVENANT OF GRACE, REPRESENTED BY THE CIRCULAR RAINBOW, LOVE AND GRACE ARE ALWAYS CONSPICUOUS.

The emerald, with its green color, is always taken to represent this green earth and the things which concern the dwellers therein. And it has always been viewed as a type of mercy. It is a soft and gentle color, the most agreeable to the eyes of all the colors, the vibrations of light caused by it being found to be more suitable to the optic nerve than the vibrations of any other color. Scarlet and such bright colors, the emblems of justice and vengeance, would soon destroy the eyes. White, the emblem of purity, cannot long be endured. Those of us who have crossed lofty mountains covered with snow have had to suffer as long as we have been there, from snow-blindness. The human eyes would soon cease to perform its functions if the earth were long covered with snow and if we had nothing to relieve the eyes. Green is the color that suits mankind and it represents the mercy, the tenderness and the benevolence of God towards mankind.

Whenever you read the Covenant, read it in the light of the emerald. I have sometimes thought that some of my Brothers and Sisters read it in another light. I think I have heard prayers which, if translated into plain English, would run something like this—"Lord, we thank You that we are elected. We bless You that we are in the Covenant. We bless Your name that You are sending sinners down to Hell, cutting them off and destroying them, but we are saved!" I have sometimes thought I have caught in such prayers an air of complacency in the damnation of sinners, and even a little more than that—I have fancied I have seen in certain hyper-Calvinists a sort of Red Indian scalping knife propensity—an ogre-like feeling with respect to reprobation—a smacking of lips over the ruin and destruction of mankind! As to all of which, I can only say that it seems to me to be "earthly, sensual, devilish." I cannot imagine a man, especially a man who has the spirit of Christ in him, thinking of the ruin of mankind with any other feeling than that which moved the soul of Christ when He wept over Jerusalem, crying, "How often would I have gathered you as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings!" Let no one imagine that the

spirit of Calvinism is a spirit of hostility to universal humanity! It is not so! It is a perversion and a caricature of the expositions of Calvin and Augustine—and of the Apostle Paul and of what our Master preached—to represent us as thinking with complacency of the ruin of any one of the human race!

My Brothers and Sisters, when I have sometimes heard statements made about the fewness of those who will be saved at the last, I have thought that surely the rainbow around about the Throne of the God whom such people worshipped must have been scarlet in color. It could not have been “in sight like unto an emerald.” There must have been a predominance of vengeance in it and not of mercy! Why, I firmly believe that at the last it will be found that there are *more* in Heaven than in Hell, for when the great winding up of the drama shall come, Christ will in all things have the preeminence! Now, alas, there are few that find the narrow road while broad is the gate of Hell and many there are that go in that way. We are in the minority, now, but when I think of the countless hosts of little children, elect of God, who have gone from their mother’s breasts to Glory, not having passed through actual sin, but being bought with precious blood, I can see a vast multitude that belongs to Christ! And when I look forward to that brighter age when the nations shall flock to the feet of Christ, and tens of thousands and hundreds of millions shall sing His praises from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, I rejoice to think that then the Lord Jesus Christ will see of the travail of His soul and will be satisfied—and it is not a little that will satisfy Him! I have sometimes thought with a certain good Divine, that when the King comes to end His reign, there will be found no more in prison in comparison with the great number of His creatures, than in any well ordered government. At any rate, let us hope so. We have no right to speak positively where we have no positive declaration. But it is significant that there is always a prominence given in Scripture to the grace, the mercy, the goodness and the loving kindness of God. Surely Scripture would not tell us this unless it would also seem to be so in the universal Providence of God. I believe that in the rainbow, the emerald will be the most conspicuous, and that Divine Grace will be “in Heaven the topmost stone,” for it “well deserves the praise.” And now, in conclusion, my dear Friends—

IV. LET ME MAKE ONE OR TWO PRACTICAL REMARKS.

Let me exhort you *all to understand the Covenant, of which the rainbow is the symbol*. I am sorry to say that there are many professors who do not know what the Covenant means. I have been told that there are pulpits where the word, “Covenant,” is scarcely ever mentioned, so that the congregation really do not know what the Covenant of Grace means. Now, the old Scotch Divines and our own Puritan forefathers were of opinion that the two Covenants are the very essence of all theology. When a man gets a clear view of the Covenant of Works and sees how it was made with Adam, and broken, and how it involved our ruin—and then gets a clear view of the Covenant of Grace made with the Second Adam,

the conditions of which are all fulfilled by Him, so that the Covenant cannot be broken by us—and that all the provisions of that Covenant are made sure by His having fulfilled His Suretyship and Sponsorship on our behalf. When a man gets a hold of these two things, why, he cannot be an Arminian. It is impossible! But he must keep pretty near to those grand old Doctrines which we call the Doctrines of Grace. If any man says to me, “What is the one thing which I have to learn to be a sound preacher of the Gospel?” I think I would say, “Learn to distinguish between the Covenant of Hagar, which is Sinai in Arabia, and the Covenant of Sarah, which is the Covenant of the New Jerusalem, which is of promise. The distinction between works and Grace, between debt and gift, between the works of the Law and the abounding loving kindness of the Lord our Lord.” May I ask young members of the Church to read the Scriptures upon this point and to ask their older friends to instruct them in the matter of the Covenant? It is such an important point that I would press it very earnestly. I hope you do not wish to go to Heaven like those of whom the Savior speaks, and who enter into life lame, or maimed, or having but one eye. Oh, no, but seek to clear away ignorance! That the soul is without knowledge is not good. Get a clear view of these things, for by so doing you will be comforted, you will be strengthened, you will be sanctified!

But *if you do understand the Covenant, have a constant regard to it.* There is a sweet prayer, “Have respect unto Your Covenant.” We pray that to God. Well, He does have respect to the Covenant. He has the symbol of it all around His Throne! He cannot look anywhere without looking through His Covenant. He sees us, He sees the world, He sees all things through that rainbow which is around His Throne. He sees all human affairs through the medium of the great Mediator, the Covenant Angel, the Lord Jesus. Well now, what you ask God to do, and what He does, do for yourselves! Have respect unto the Covenant. Do you ever think of the Covenant? Some, I am afraid, do not think of it by the month together and yet the Covenant—oh, Brothers and Sisters—it is a casket full of wealth! It is a fountain full of crystal streams! It is the Heaven out of which the manna falls! It is the Rock out of which the living waters flow—the Rock, Christ, who is the essence of the Covenant to us! Live upon the Covenant in life and let it claim your last accents in the moment of death! Rejoice in this Covenant of Grace all day! Live upon the choice morsels which God has laid up in store for you in it. The Covenant! The Covenant! Oh, keep your hearts, keep your thoughts, keep your eyes constantly on it!

And oh, *get comfort from the Covenant!* Do not merely *think* of it, but really lay hold upon it. You are in covenant with God! It is not a question with you, as a believer in Christ, whether God may keep you and bless you and cause His face to shine upon you. He will do so! He cannot do otherwise, if I may use such language concerning Him, because though He is free, yet He has bound Himself by His promise! He has bound Himself by His oath! He has put Himself within the limit of the rainbow and

out of that He cannot, and will not go! It encircles His Throne and Himself. You may go up to His Throne humbly but still go there with boldness. You do not come like a common beggar. You do not knock at the door as a man does at your door, a chance beggar asking for charity. You have got a promise! Come, then, as a man goes into the bank who has got a bank-bill that is dated and now the day is come for it to be paid! Go to God, making mention of the name of Jesus, with the humble boldness with which a child asks of its own loving parent what that parent has often promised to bestow. Let the comfort of the Covenant be continually yours!

And if you have this comfort, *never, never be so base as to indulge hard thoughts of God.* It is very easy for me to say this to you, but it will not always be so easy for you to practice it. Ah, Friends, we think we can take God's will and be submissive to it and acquiesce in it—but when it presses hard upon us—then is the proof. When a man gets into the firing-pot and the crucible is put into the fire, they will show what faith he has! Ah, it is hard when you get a heavy stroke, when you are told that such-and-such an one who is very dear to you will die before long, or when you know that you, yourself, have a fatal disease—it is then hard to say, “The Lord lives, and blessed be my Rock!” Or, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away, and blessed be His name.” It was admirable in David, that when he began one of his mournful Psalms, he knew that he was going to groan a good deal, so he said, “There is one matter we will set right before we get out of trim. Truly God is good to Israel.” That is settled. He puts that down as the first thing when he gets into the box as a witness. He says, “I am confused, today, and tumbled up and down in my wits, but before I say anything, I have to say this one thing—I solemnly declare before men, angels and devils—God is truly good to Israel! As for me, my feet had well-nigh gone, my steps had almost slipped,” and so on—but he begins with that. Now, settle that, settle that in your soul! Put that down like an anchor, right deep in the sea—come winds, come waves, come hurricanes—God is good! God is faithful! God will keep His Covenant! Every dark and painful line meets in the center of His Love. It must be right. Never let your soul be envious of the wicked when you see their prosperity, but still rejoice in your God and let Him do as He wills!

If you do know anything about the sweetness of the Covenant, when you meet with a poor child of the house of Israel, tell him about it. And as you do not know who he may be, tell everybody about it! There may be one of your Brothers or Sisters with whom you are to live in Heaven sitting next to you in the pew. Since I mentioned last Sunday night that there was a young person who had been here for two years and nobody had ever spoken to her, I have had a letter from a young man to say that he is in the same case. Oh, dear! You know how I told you on Sunday night that I was ashamed of some of you, but I did not know in which part of the chapel you were and, therefore, as I did not know who it was, I could not be ashamed of you, but get you to be ashamed on your own account! Now, you see, there are two cases, and I am afraid if we get

more testimony, it would go to ever so many places in the Tabernacle. Do not let it be so! Let each one pluck up heart and say unto his fellow, "Know the Lord." Let each man say to his neighbor, "Have you tasted the sweetness?" Who finds honey and eats it all? You ought to say, like the Syrian lepers, "This is a day of good tidings; if we tarry here, perhaps mischief will befall us; let us go even into the camp of Israel and let us tell them of this thing." Spread abroad the good news! Who knows how many you may bring to my Master's footstool, to their salvation and to your own comfort and joy?

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
REVELATION 18:21-24; 19:1-10.**

Blessed is he that reads and understands the prophecy of this Book. We have no difficulty in knowing to what city this great Babylon refers, for the Church of Rome, in the plenitude of its wisdom, has taken the title to itself in attempting to claim that Peter was the first bishop of Rome! They quote the text, "The church that is in Babylon salutes you"—that church, they say, being the church in Rome! Therefore Rome is Babylon! Besides, the whole of the 18th Chapter gives such a description as can only apply to her and she must, and shall, come to her end!

Verses 21-24. *And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city, Babylon, be thrown down and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in you; and no craftsmen of whatever craft he is, shall be found anymore in you; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in you, And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in you. And the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in you: for your merchants were the great men of the earth; for by your sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of Prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.*

REVELATION 19:1-10.

Verses 1-4. *And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in Heaven, praying, Alleluia, Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are His judgments: for He has judged the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and has avenged the blood of His servants at her hands. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up forever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshiped God that sat on the Throne, saying, Amen: Alleluia. For the overthrow of a monstrous system of error gives delight to all holy spirits—and chiefly to those who stand nearest the eternal Throne of God!*

5-6. *And a voice came out of the Throne saying, Praise our God, all you His servants, and you that fear Him, both small and great. And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God Om-*

nipotent reigns! The harlot church is put away! The true Church is introduced, fully arrayed in perfect holiness, ready for the consummation of her own joy and her master's—her last delight.

7-10. *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he said unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said unto me, These are the true sayings of God. And I fell at his feet to worship him, and he said unto me, See you do it not: I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.* If John made a mistake, because the saints in Heaven are all so like their Master, it is well that the mistake was at once corrected, for angel worship, or the worship of saints, is to be avoided by all saints! And God's Word about it is, "See you do it not." It is said that we should certainly pay reverence to holy men that are now with God, but see you do it not! Indeed, here among men, the same kind of idolatry is sought to be kept up, and the preacher is arrayed in garments to make him distinct from the people, as though he were something better or different from them and not their fellow servant! But, for all this, let us hear the voice which says, "See you do it not. I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren that have the testimony of Jesus." Worship God, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

—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.**

THE ELDERS BEFORE THE THRONE

NO. 441

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 23, 1862,
BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

“And round about the Throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting clothed in white raiment. And they had on their heads crowns of gold.” The four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the Throne and worship Him that lives forever and ever and cast their crowns before the Throne, saying, You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for You have created all things, and for Your pleasure they are and were created.”
Revelation 4:4; 10, 11.

THE universe of God is one—Heaven and earth are not so separate as unbelief has dreamed. As the Lord has but one family, written in one register, redeemed with one blood, quickened by one Spirit, so this whole household abides in one habitation evermore. We who are in the body abide in the lower room which is sometimes dark and cold but bears sufficient marks that it is a room in God’s house. For it is to the eye of our faith often lit up with heavenly luster and we, even we, while we are yet here, are by blessed earnestness made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

It is the same house, I say, but ours is the lower room, while our glorified Brethren are up there, in the upper story, where the sunlight streams in everlastingly, where no chilling winds or poisonous breath can ever reach. It was well said that God’s great house seems to have two wings. The one was a hospital and the other a palace. We are as yet in the wing on the left hand side, which is the hospital. We came into it sick even unto death, leprous to our very core, polluted from head to foot, having no soundness in us anywhere.

And in this hospital we are undergoing the process of cure—a cure which is already certain, which is soon to be perfected. And then we shall pass from the hospital, the lazar-house, into the palace, where “without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing,” we shall be recognized as the aristocracy of God, princes of the blood—royal of the universe. Sons of God and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus. Still is it but one building—one roof covers the whole, both lazar-house and palace—one family, we dwell in it—one Church, above, beneath, though now divided by the narrow partition of death.

Now, to a great extent there is a likeness between the lower room and the upper room. As on earth we prepare for Heaven, so the state of the saints on earth is Heaven foreshadowed. In many respects the condition of the child of God on earth is a type of his condition in Heaven. And I may say without fear of question that what the character of the saints is above, that should be the character of the saints below. We may very safely take

for our example those glorified spirits. We need not be afraid that we shall be led astray by imitating them, by learning their occupations, or by attempting to share their joys. Surely the things in Heaven are patterns of the things on earth and as *they* are before the Throne of God so ought we to be, and so *shall* we be in proportion as we live up to our privileges and receive the likeness and image of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Brethren, it is upon this subject that I want to speak this morning. God is making Heaven very near to us. We are now so large a Church that according to the laws of mortality, we lose five or six every month by death, and frequently two or three are removed in a week. We can hardly hope to meet together upon a single Sunday without hearing that another of the stars is set. Some little time ago we went to the grave with an excellent elder of our Church, who had long known the Master and had served Him well—and now, during the coming week, it will be our lot to perform the same mournful office for another Brother who has been in Christ, I suppose, these forty or fifty years, and who has served this Church for some little time with industry and zeal—but this week has been removed from our midst to join “the general assembly and Church of the first-born whose names are written in Heaven.”

The veil grows thinner and thinner, and our faith in the unseen grows stronger. As the advanced guard of the army wades through the stream, and we hear their triumphant shouts upon the other shore, this world fades away and that better land stands out in stronger and more glorious reality than it did before. Come, let us talk to one another by the way, this morning, of that better land and let us encourage each other’s hearts to make ourselves through God such as *they* are who sit upon their thrones and to make *this* land, through the Spirit, such as that land is where God sheds His light forever.

With regard to the spirits before the Throne of God, we shall have three things to say this morning. First, a little *concerning their state and enjoyments*. Then, further, concerning *their occupations and spirit*. And a few words with regard to their testimony and precepts to us, as, speaking from the upper spheres, they urge us to follow their example.

I. First, then, Brethren with regard to THE STATE AND ENJOYMENTS OF THE SPIRITS BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD. In John’s vision, you perceive that the Church of Christ is represented by the four and twenty elders who sat round the Throne of God. We are to look upon them as being the representatives of the great body of the faithful gathered to their eternal rest.

Mark, then, in the first place, that the saints in Heaven are represented as “*elders*,” which we take to refer not merely to the office of the eldership, as it is exercised among us, although it seems most fitting that the officers should be the representatives of the whole body—but the reference is rather to the fullness of growth of Believers before the Throne of God. Here we have elders and those who are elders in office should be chosen, because they have had spiritual experience, are well taught in the things of the kingdom of Heaven and are, therefore, elders by Divine Grace as well as elders by office.

But in all our Churches we have many who are babes in Christ, who as yet can only receive the elements of the Gospel. We have many others who are young men, strong but not matured. They have the vigor of manhood

but they have not yet the ripeness of advanced age. The elders in the Church are those who, by reason of years, have had their senses exercised. They are not the saplings of the forest but the well-rooted trees. They are not the blades of corn springing up, but the full corn in the ear awaiting the reaper's sickle. Such are the saints before the Throne of God.

They have made wondrous strides in knowledge. They understand now the heights and depths, the lengths and breadths of the love of Christ, which still surpasses even *their* knowledge. The mean, if there are such differences, the mean of the glorified understands more of the things of God than the greatest Divine on earth. The rending of the veil of death is the removal of much of our ignorance. It may be that the saints in Heaven progress in knowledge—that is possible—but it is certain that at the time of their departure they made a wondrous spring.

They are babes no longer. They are children and infant beginners no more. God teaches them in one five minutes, by a sight of the face of Jesus, more than they could have learned in threescore years and ten while present in the body and absent from the Lord. Their heresies are all cleared away with their sins. Their mistakes are all removed. The same hand which wipes away all tears from their eyes wipes away all specks from their eyes, too. Then they become sound in doctrine, skillful in teaching. They become masters in Israel by the sudden infusion of the wisdom of God by the Holy Spirit. They are “elders” before the Throne of God. They are not unripe corn gathered green and damp—they are all fully ripe and they come to the garner as shocks of corn come in their season.

Perhaps they are represented as elders to show the dignity and gravity which shall surround saints of God in Heaven. We sometimes hear complaints made about the younger members of Churches, that they are somewhat light in their conversation. Well, this has always been the fault of young people and, as I said the other day, when one complained, *I* could not make lambs into sheep—and while they were lambs I suppose they would show some playfulness. It seems to be the natural failing of young people to be overflowing with mirth and sometimes overtaken with levity.

But there is a gravity which is very becoming in Christians and there is a solidity which is extremely comely in the young Believer. And I think when we make a profession of our faith in Christ, though we are not to cast away our cheerful faces but to be more happy than ever we were before, yet we must put away all unseemly levity and walk as those who are looking for the coming of the Son of Man, hearing this voice in our ears, “What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness!”

Now that fault can never be brought against the Church of God before the Throne. There they are elders, glorious, blissful, happy—but yet serene and majestic in their joy. Theirs is not the prattling joy of the child, but the deep silent bliss of the full-grown man. As the senators in the Roman senate sat down in solemn grandeur, so that even the barbarians were overawed by their majesty bearing, so let our holier tranquility and joyful serenity cast an influence over the foes of our religion.

Look upwards, Christians. There are the elders before the Throne of God, representatives of what you and I, and all of us who trust in Christ,

shall soon be. Let us be laying aside childish things. Let us be getting ready for the elders' dignity. Let us leave the toy, the trifle, the plaything, to those who know not the immortal manhood of Believers and let us go on unto perfection, growing in Divine Grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In passing, I may observe that the number of *four and twenty* is somewhat puzzling. There have been different attempts made to account for it. They say that this was the number of the Sanhedrim. But that is not clear. Others think that as the number twelve was the symbol of the Jewish Church, in the twelve tribes, so twelve more may have been added to represent the accession of the Gentile Church. Or it may show the multiplication of the Church, that though small, so that it is numbered by twelve, its number, while still definite and complete, is now larger than it was before.

But, still better, I think, as there were twenty-four courses of Levites, who were porters at the gate of the temple and twenty-four courses of priests who offered sacrifice, so the number twenty-four is made use of to show that the service of God in His temple is complete—that there are as many as will be wanted—that every part of the Divine service will be taken up and around that altar which smokes before God eternally, there shall be a full complement of those who shall bow before Him and do Him homage.

2. But, secondly, you will notice that these elders are said to be *around the Throne*. We suppose, as near as we can catch the thought of John, sitting in a semi-circle, as the Jewish Sanhedrim did around the Prince of Israel. It is a somewhat singular thing that in the passage in Canticles, where Solomon sings of the king sitting at his table, the Hebrew has it “a round table.” From this, some expositors, I think without straining the text, have said, “There is an equality among the saints.” In Heaven they are not some sitting at the head and some sitting lower down but there is an equality in the position and condition of glorified spirits.

Certainly that idea is conveyed by the position of the four and twenty elders. We do not find one of them nearer than the other, but they all sat round about the Throne. We believe, then, that the condition of glorified spirits in Heaven, is that of nearness to Christ, clear vision of His glory, constant access to His court and familiar fellowship with His Person. Nor do we think that there is any difference before the Throne of God between one saint and another. We believe that all the people of God, Apostles, martyrs, ministers, or private and obscure Christians, shall all have the same place *near the Throne*, where they shall forever gaze upon their exalted Lord and forever be satisfied in His love.

There shall not be some at a distance, far away in the remote streets of the Celestial City and others in the broad thoroughfares. There shall not be some near the center and others far away on the verge of the wide circumference. But they shall all be near to Christ, all ravished with His love, all eating and drinking at the same table with Him, all equally His favorites and His friends.

Now, Brothers and Sisters, as we bade you imitate the saints in their eldership and perfection, so would we exhort you to imitate them in their nearness to Christ. Oh, let us be on earth as the elders are in Heaven, sitting round about the Throne of God. May Christ be the center of this

Church! May He be the center of your thoughts, the center of your life. If an angel should fly across this assembly this morning, when he came back to Heaven, could he say, “I saw them in the House of God, sitting around the Throne. Their eyes were gazing on the slaughtered Lamb. Their hearts were loving and praising *Him*. They were desiring to do *Him* homage and to pay *Him* reverence”?

And what do you think of tomorrow and the other days of the week? Will it be true of you that you are sitting before the Throne of God? Brothers and Sisters, we are out of our proper place when we are looking after anything but Christ. “We are not our own. We are bought with a price.” Why live as if we were our own? He is our Husband, our soul is espoused to Him. Oh, how can we live at such a distance from Him? He is our life. He makes us live, He makes us blessed—how can we be so much forgetful of Him? How can our hearts be such strangers to their Beloved?

Jesus! Draw us nearer to Yourself! Oh to be nearer to Your Throne, Lord, even while we are here! O take us up to You, or else come down to us. Say unto us, “Abide in Me and I in you.” And permit our souls to say, “His left hand is under my head and His right hand does embrace me.”—

**“Abide with me from morn till eve,
For without You I cannot live.
Abide with me when night is nigh,
For without You I dare not die.”**

3. A third point of likeness strikes us at once. It seems that the elders sitting around the Throne were represented to the illuminated eye of John as “*clothed in white raiment.*” Not in raiment of party colors, where there were some spots and yet some signs of whiteness. They are without fault before the Throne of God. They have “washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,” and the Spirit of God also has so thoroughly renewed them, that they are “without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.”

They have been presented holy and unblameable before the Throne of God. Brothers and Sisters, in this, too, they are an example to us. Oh that the Spirit of God might keep the members of this Church, that our garments might be always white. Perfection we must not hope to see here—but oh, we must aim after it. If one should never unite with a Christian Church till he found one which is perfect, and free from all fault, then such a man must be a schismatic forever—for with no Christian people could he ever join. Yet, this is what we aspire unto—to be faultless before God. We desire to so walk, and to so act among men that our conduct may never bring a slur upon our profession—that our language, our actions, our motives—everything that is about us, may witness to the fact that we have been with Jesus and have learned of Him.

O Brothers and Sisters, it is impossible for one pastor, assisted even by the most earnest of elders, to oversee so large a flock as this. Let me ask, have you kept your garments white this last week? Oh, if you have stained them, I beseech you, repent, repent bitterly before God. And if any of you have backslidden, I pray you, do not be hypocrites. Let your guilt be fully confessed before God. If you cannot honor this Church, do not dishonor it. If you cannot glorify Christ by your walk and conversation, at least do not trample under foot His blood and put His Cross to an open shame.

There is nothing which can so injure a Church and cut the sinews of its strength, as the unholiness of its members. When we are “fair as the moon and clear as the sun,” then we shall be “terrible as an army with banners.” But not till then. Those blots upon the escutcheon, those spots upon the garment, are soon perceived by a lynx-eyed world. And then they turn round and say, “Ah, these are your Christians. This is your religion!” The sons of Belial make excuses for their own conscience and go on in their sin, hardened by our mistakes. Oh, let this be your prayer, I exhort you, you who are mighty in prayer, never forget this day and night, “Lord, keep Your people! Hold them up.” I can say it has been at all times the bitterest draught I have ever had to drink, when any who have professed the name of Christ have turned back unto vanity.

To bury you is but a blessed duty in comparison with noting and correcting backsliding and apostasy. I know my prayer for myself has been a hundred times, “A speedy death, a soon and sudden sleeping beneath the green turf, or even a painful, agonizing, languishing decay, upon a bed of pain, rather than you should live to see your pastor stain his profession and fall from his integrity.” If it be so with the minister, it must be so with each of you. Better for you that you depart at once than that you should live bearing the name of Christ, to make that name a reproach and a by-word among the heathen. Lord, help us, that we, like Your saints above, may be clothed in white garments.

4. Further, to carry on the parallel. You perceive that these elders *exercised a priesthood*. Indeed, their being clothed in white garments, while it is an emblem of their purity, also represents them as being priests unto God. They themselves expressly sing in the 10th verse of the 5th chapter, “You have made us unto our God kings and priests.” They exercise the office of the priesthood, as you perceive, by the double offering of prayer and praise. They hold in their hands the censers full of sweet incense and the harps which give forth melodious sounds.

Brethren, in the wilderness of old they were not all priests. One special tribe and one family out of that tribe, alone, could exercise that office—the rest of the people stood in the outer court. As for the most holy place, into that only came the high priest and he only once a year, so much exclusion was there in that age of shadows. But now all Believers are priests. We have all a right to stand in the priest’s place, to offer sacrifice and incense. No, more—through Christ we enter into that which is within the veil and stand in the most holy place and look at the bright light from the Shekinah, fearing not that we shall die, but having boldness and confidence through the new and living way, the rent body of Christ.

The saints before the Throne of God are represented as all of them in the holy place, round the Throne, all officiating, every one of them presenting sacrifice. Brethren, what are we doing? Let us look up to them as the priests of God and then ask ourselves, are *we* celebrating His worship, too? Brother, did you this morning, before you came up to this house, lift up your hand with the bowl of incense in it, in your earnest prayer for a blessing upon His people? Have you this day in our sacred song, been laying your fingers mystically among the strings of your golden harp?

What did you do last week, my Brethren? What *were* you? Can you say that you were a priest? Or, must you not blush that you were rather a buyer and a seller, or a thinker and a writer, than a priest unto our God?

And yet this is our high calling. This is our blessed vocation. Our earthly calling is but little honor to us, nor should it engross our richest thoughts. Our *heavenly* calling is of the most importance. It is that which is to last forever. It is that which should have the cream of our soul's attention. We are priests.

Oh, Brothers and Sisters, if we have failed in the past, may God give us Grace for the future! And during the coming days of the next work-day week, may He help us, that our buying and our selling, our traveling and our tarrying at home, may all be the exercise of priesthood! You know, you can make "the bells upon the horses" holiness to the Lord, and the very pots of your house can be as the bowls upon the altar. You need not go out of your everyday callings to be priests, but be priests in your callings. Sanctify the Lord God in your workshops, in your fields, in your market-places, in your exchanges. And whatever you do, whether you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, who has made you priests and kings unto Him.

I know there is a sad tendency among us all to leave the priesthood to some peculiar clan. Mark you, members of this Church, I will be no priest for you. It is as much as I can do to exercise the priesthood to which God calls me on my own account, to offer my own thanks and my own petitions. I will have none of your responsibilities. You must be priests for yourselves. You cannot shift this burden off, nor would you wish, I am sure, if you are true-hearted. You, you say, are poor! You are unknown! You have no talent! You need it not, *these* cannot make you priests. How came the sons of Aaron to the priesthood? By birth.

So with you. You have been "born not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, nor of blood, but of God," and the priesthood is the inalienable inheritance of the new birth. Exercise your office, then, be you who you may, O Beloved of the Lord. In the name of Him who has begotten you again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, live as men sanctified for Divine service, who cannot and must not be servants of men and slaves of sin.

5. Once more and I think I shall have said enough upon this first point. There is yet another likeness between the saints in Heaven and those on earth. You perceive that these *had on their heads crowns of gold*. They reigned with Christ. He was a king and He made them kings with Him. As in the old Persian court the princes of the blood wore crowns, so in the court of Heaven the princes of the blood, the Brethren of the Lord, are crowned, too. They are royal senators. They sit upon thrones, even as He who has overcome and sits down with His Father on His Throne.

These thrones they have to show their dominion, their rights and jurisdiction. Know you not that we shall judge angels, and that when Christ shall come He will bring His people with Him and they will sit upon His throne as co-assessors with Him? Then the wicked, the persecutors, the revilers of God's people, shall be brought to judgment and the saints whom they despised shall be their judges! So that when Christ shall say, "Depart, you cursed," there shall be heard the thundering assent of the ten thousands of His saints, as they say "Amen," and confirm from their hearts the sentence of the All-Righteous Judge. Therefore do these elders sit upon their thrones.

Now, Beloved, let us imitate them in this. “Oh,” you say, “but I cannot wear a crown as they do.” Nevertheless, you are a king. For they who are Christ’s are kings. Take care, Brother, that you wear your crown, by reigning over your lusts. Reign over your sins. Reign over your passions. Be as a king in the midst of all that would lead you astray. Christ Jesus has broken the neck of your sin—put your foot upon it. Keep it under—subdue it. Be king in the dominions of your own being. In the world at large act a king’s part. If any would tempt you to betray Christ for gain, say, “How can I? I am a king. How shall I betray Christ?”

Let the nobility of your nature come out in your actions. Forgive in a royal manner, as a king can forgive. Be ready to give to others as God has helped you, as a king gives. Let your liberality of spirit be right royal. Let your actions never be mean, sneaking, cowardly, dastardly. Do the right thing and defy the worst. Dare all your foes in the pursuit of that which is right and let men see while they look upon you that there is a something under your homely appearance which they cannot understand. Men make a great deal of fuss about the blood of the aristocracy. I dare say it is not very different from the blood of crossing-sweepers.

But there is a great deal of difference between the life-blood of the saints and the life-blood of the proudest prince. For they who love Christ have fed upon His flesh and have drunk of His blood and have been made partakers of the Divine nature. These are the royal ones. These are the aristocrats. These are the nobility and all are mean beside.

Christians, perhaps some of you have not reigned as kings during the last week. Perhaps you have been either murmuring, like poor whining beggars, or you have been scraping, like dunghill rakers, with your covetousness. Or perhaps you have been sinning, like idle boys in the street, who roll in the mire. You have not lived up to your kingship. Now I pray you, ask God’s Grace that during the week to come you may say of sin, “I cannot touch it, I am a king. I cannot demean myself with it.” That you may say of this earth’s dross, “I cannot go down and scrape that—my heritage is above.” That you may be able to say of everything that is low and mean, “Shall such a man as I do this? How can I come down from the elevated position to which God has called me, to act as others act, from their motives and with their ends?”

Let, then, the state of the saints above, while it is the theme of our delightful thought—while we anticipate the time when we shall fully partake of it—be also an example to us while in these lands below.

II. Briefly upon our second point—THE OCCUPATION AND SPIRIT OF THOSE GLORIFIED ONES, AS THEY SHOULD BE IMITATED BY US BELOW.

1. Notice their occupation. First of all it is one of *humility*. At the tenth verse in our fourth chapter we perceive it is written, “They fall down before Him.” They are *kings* but yet they fall down. They wear royal crowns, but yet they prostrate themselves. They are second to none in God’s universe. They stand as first in the peerage of creation. Yet before the King they have no honor and no esteem. As if they were slaves and menials, they cast themselves upon their faces before His Throne, having nothing of their own whereof to glory but boasting alone in Him.

Where holiness is in perfection, there humility is in perfection, too. The cherubim veil their faces with their wings, while they cry, “Holy, holy,

holy, Lord God of Sabaoth.” So do these elders, taking the same posture of humility, they bow before the Throne of God.

Brothers and Sisters, are we as humble as we should be? If we think we are, we at once betray our pride. But let us understand how unseemly anything but humility must be to us. We are yet on earth. If they in Heaven boast not, how dare we? We are yet sinful and erring. If the spotless ones bow, what shall we do? If we threw dust and ashes on our heads and acknowledged ourselves to be the vilest of the vile, yet were the words not too coarse for us, nor the action too humiliating. Far from us be the pride which would let us exalt ourselves! Pride is natural to us all, Brethren, we cannot get rid of it, even though we strive against it. What shall we say of those who nurture it—whose very carriage and walk betray the pride of their hearts?

What shall we say of the pride which finds root in the purse, or that which shows itself in outward array and garments? What shall we say of the pride of station and of rank which will not permit the professedly Christian man to speak with his poorer Brother? Oh, these are damnable things! I hope we despise and are rid of these. But there is a subtler pride—a pride which mimics humility—a pride which comes in after prayer, or after preaching, or after anything that is done for Christ. Let us strive against it and be it our constant and daily endeavor to fall before the Throne of God, “While less than nothing we can boast and vanity confess.”

2. But as they fall before the Throne of God in humility, you will note that they express their *gratitude*. It is said they cast their crowns before the Throne. They know where they got them from and they know to whom to ascribe the praise. Their crowns are their own and, therefore, they wear them on their heads. Their crowns were Jesus’ gift and, therefore, they cast them at His feet. They wear their crown, for He has made them kings and they cannot refuse the dignity. But they cast the crown at His feet, for they are only kings by right received from Him and acknowledge Him thus to be King of kings and Lord of lords.

It was a custom, you know, in imperial Rome, for those kings who held dominion under the emperor, on certain occasions, to take off their crowns and lay them down before the emperor, so that when he bade them put them on again, they had fully recognized that their rights of kingship flowed only through him. So do they who are before the Throne of God. With what rapture, with what joy, with what delight, do they cast their crowns there! To think they have a crown and a crown to cast before Him!

Brothers and Sisters, I am afraid when you and I get any Graces, or have been made useful in Christ’s cause, we are glad for the thing’s sake. But we are not right, if so. We should be glad because we have something to cast at *His* feet. Have you faith? I must thank *Him* for faith, I must lay it at His feet and say, “Jesus, use my faith for Your glory, for You are its Author and Finisher.” If you and I shall, by Divine Grace, persevere to the end and shall arrive at Heaven, it will be a joy to think that we are saved, but we will lay it all at the door of Divine love.

Will you wear a crown, Believer? Will you accept jot or tittle of the glory? O no, you will each of you disown anything like the Arminian’s proud boast of free self-will. It will be Grace, Grace, Divine Grace, alone,

in Heaven. There will be no division and no discord in that eternal hymn. We will cast our crowns at once before Him and we will say, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Your name be all the praise." We imitate them, then, in this—in our gratitude mingled with humility.

3. Further, I well perceive that these elders spent their time in *joyous song*. How glorious was that strain—"You are worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof: for You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation." These elders knew that the time was come when all earth and Heaven should be more than usually glad. They, with the four living creatures, whom we take to be the representatives of some special order of presence—angels, about whom we know but little—led the strain.

And as the music rolled through the aisles of Heaven, distant angels, who were in all parts of God's dominion keeping watch and ward, stood still and listened till they had caught the strain. And then they joined with loudest notes, till from north and south and east and west, from the highest star and from the uttermost depths, there came up the blessed refrain from ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing."

Then, as these angelic ones sent up the song, the inferior creatures caught the Divine infection and in Heaven and earth, in the sea and the uttermost depths, the voice was heard and all creatures responded, while the universe echoed with the song, "Blessing, and honor and glory and power, be unto Him that sits upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." This is the occupation of saints before the Throne of God. Be it yours, Brothers and Sisters. Let us, as God's redeemed, sing with all our hearts and let us enlist others in the strain. Let us remember that we are to be leaders in the hymn of God's works.

We are to begin with, "Bless the Lord, O my Soul." But we are not to end there. We are to go on bidding all God's works praise Him, till we come to a climax like that of David, "Bless the Lord, you hosts, you ministers of His that do His pleasure; bless the Lord, all His works, in all places of His dominion; bless the Lord, O my Soul." The world is the organ—we are the players. We are to put our fingers upon the notes and wake the universe to thunders of acclaim. We are not to rest with our own feeble notes, but we must wake even the dumb earth itself, till all the planets, listening to our earth and joining her song, shall sing forth the music of the ages.

God give you, Brothers and Sisters, a desire to imitate the saints! Some of you, perhaps, are good hands at groaning—perhaps some of you have come up here today mourning and murmuring. Lay these things aside! Take up your proper vocation and now smite the strings of your harp! Magnify the Lord. Let the day of jubilee come to your spirits. You saints of God, rejoice! Yes, in your God, exceedingly rejoice!

4. Yet once again—these saints not only offered praise, but *prayer*. This was the meaning of the bowls, which are so foolishly translated vials. A vial is precisely the opposite of the vessel that was intended—the vial is long and narrow—whereas this is broad and shallow. A bowl is meant—full of incense, covered over with a lid and perforated with holes—through which the smoke of the incense rises. This does not mean that the four

and twenty elders offer the prayers of the saints below, but their own prayers.

Some have asked, Is there any prayer in Heaven? Certainly, there is room for prayer in Heaven. If you want proof, we have it in the chapter which follows the one out of which we have been reading this morning—the ninth verse of the sixth chapter—“I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, do You not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?”

There is prayer. Perhaps the prayers of the saints are the major portion of that perpetual litany which goes up to Heaven. But leaving that for a moment, let us imitate them. If they pray, how much more reason have we? If they plead for the universal Church, they who enjoy the rest of God, how should we pray who are still in this land of temptation and of sin, who see the perils of our Brethren, know their weaknesses and their afflictions? Let us draw near unto God. Let us never cease, day and night, to offer intercession for the whole company of the elect.

5. I must not forget, however, that these elders before the Throne of God were ready not only for prayer and praise but for *all kinds of service*. You remember there was one of them, when John wept, who said, “Weep not.” Depend upon it—that elder had been occupied in visiting the sick when he was on earth. And often when he had gone into their cottages and found them sorrowing, he had said unto them, “Weep not.” And the good man had not lost his character when he went to Heaven, although it had been spiritualized and perfected. And seeing John weeping, he said to him, “Weep not.”

Ah, those saints before the Throne of God, if there were mourners there, would comfort them, I know. And if they could be sent down here to visit any of the sorrowing children of God, they would be too glad to do it. Then there was, you remember, another of the elders, who said to John, for his instruction, “Who are these that are arrayed in white robes and from where came they? And I said unto him, Sir, you know. And he said to me, These are they that came out of great tribulation.” I venture to believe that this elder used to teach a catechumen class on earth. That he had been in the habit of teaching young people, and he put the question to John first, as he had been in the habit previously of putting it to young disciples on earth. The saved ones would be ready to teach us now, if they could. And they do today bear testimony for Christ, for to the ages to come God through His Church makes known to principalities and powers the exceeding riches of His Divine Grace.

Now, those before the Throne are willing to *comfort the weeper or to instruct the ignorant*. Let us do the same! And may it be ours to wipe the tears from many an eye, to chase the darkness of ignorance from many a young heart. Have you been doing that lately Brothers and Sisters? If not, mend your ways. Be more earnest in these two good works—visit the fatherless, the widow, the suffering, the mourning, those in prison, and teach the ignorant and those that are out of the way.

III. And now, lastly, WHAT IS THEIR WORD AND LESSON TO US THIS MORNING? Bending from their shining thrones, being dead they yet speak—and they say to us:

First, by way of encouragement, Brethren, *follow on*. Be not dismayed. We fought the same battles that you fight and passed through the same tribulations. Yet we have not perished, but enjoy the eternal reward. Press on! Heaven awaits you—vacant thrones are here for you—crowns which no other heads can wear—harps that no other hands must play. Follow courageously, faithfully, trusting in Him who has begun the good work in you and who will carry it on.

Hear them, again, as they say—Mark the footsteps that we trod. For only in one way can you reach our rest. We have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. They say to all the world, If you would be clean wash there, too. None but Jesus can save your souls. Trust in Him. Repose in His atonement, confide in His finished work! Flee to His sacrificial blood. You shall be saved by faith in Him, even as we have been—

***“I asked them from where their victory came.
They with united breath
Ascribed their conquest to the Lamb,
Their triumph to His death.”***

Friends! Are you trusting in Christ? My Hearers, many of you are perfect strangers to me this morning. I ask you, are you putting your trust in Christ? Have you come under the shadow of His Cross, to find a refuge from His vengeance? If not, no golden crown can be for you. No harp of gold. But, whoever you may be, if you will believe in Christ Jesus and put your soul into His hands, you shall be a partaker of the glories which He has laid up for them that love Him.

Lastly, they say to us, as they look down from the battlements of Heaven—Are you getting ready to join our ranks, to take up our occupations and to sing our songs? Answer for yourself, my Brothers and Sisters, as I must answer for myself. Are you living for your own pleasure? Then you must die. For, “he that sows to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption.” Are you living for Christ? Then shall you live, “because He lives you shall live also.” Are you a priest to God today? You shall bear the golden bowl in Heaven. Are you instead a servant of your own body, your own lusts, your own gain, your own pleasure? Then the lowest depths must be your portion. Heaven is “a prepared place for a prepared people.” Are we prepared?

Brothers, Sisters, can we say, “We hope in Christ. He is our only trust.” And do we endeavor to live to Him? And though with many failings and frailties, yet can we still say, “For me to live is Christ”? Oh, if it is so,

“Come, death and some celestial band, to bear our souls away!”

But if it is not so, then our end must be destruction, because our god has been our belly.

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ROYAL HOMAGE

NO. 1102

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

***“And cast their crowns before the throne.”
Revelation 4:10.***

THERE are a great many things we should like to know about Heaven. Our curiosity has been excited full often to ask a vast number of questions, but after being excited it has never been gratified, for God’s Word has told us little about the details of that happy realm. I suppose the Lord thought it better to leave the future shrouded in mystery that we might think more of the common everyday duties of the life that now is. Therefore the Revelation He has made directs our faith to Himself and to His dear Son—and does not distract our attention with descriptions of scene and circumstance into which our imagination would fondly rise.

He has thus saved the details about the next world until we get there, to make surprises of them, so that Heaven might be all the brighter because it so infinitely exceeds anything that we had conceived. We are not told, for instance, where Heaven is. There have been very learned conjectures about certain stars and constellations which are supposed to be the center of all the celestial system and therefore may be the center of the universe and, therefore, the place where the Throne of God is absolutely located and the Presence of God peculiarly revealed. When all is said, it is only, “it may be,” and it is just as unlikely as it is likely.

I regard such speculations as stargazing to be idle and unseemly, impertinent and unprofitable—a pure waste of time and perhaps worse. We are not told anything even about the social communion of Heaven. We do know, or at least we think we have abundant reason for believing, that saints know each other—that they are not like men in a great mass, indistinct and undistinguishable—but that there is fellowship among the saints. We think that Abraham is Abraham, and Isaac is Isaac, and Jacob is Jacob—and the redeemed ones from among men sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as such—in the kingdom of God.

The New Jerusalem is said to have its streets, and streets imply intercourse, but there is little said about that—just an outline, as it were, such as an artist might make with charcoal—none of the filling up and the bright colors. We are told little of the food of Heaven, or whether there is any—whether the bodies need food to feed on for their nourishment and nectarious draughts for their refreshment, albeit, when the manna once dropped from Heaven men did eat angels’ food. And we are told little of the

celebrations of Heaven, whether the worship will be uniform, or whether there will be certain days joyous above the rest, high days, feasts and festivals, jubilees and glorious times of the unveiling of God's Presence in sevenfold splendor when the harps shall pour forth more melodious tunes!

Of all these things we should like to have known something, but our heads cannot hold much. One thing would have pushed out another. Passages like this we could not spare—"The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost." Concerning such a sentence I will venture to say every single syllable in the verse is worth more than whole volumes about Heaven might have been, though the Spirit of God might have inspired them—worth more for present and practical purpose to us who are yet among the sons of men.

Are there any dear Brethren who understand the Book of Revelation, the Book of Ezekiel and the Book of Daniel? I am pleased to hear it. But if the Lord will help me to understand Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, I shall be perfectly satisfied to go on preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, for I think I shall get up to them by-and-by, in their knowledge of prophecy and mystery, when I come into clearer light and see the Master face to face! Meanwhile, there are sinners to be saved! We must go about doing this soul-saving business in His name, with the simple means put before us in the Gospels and Epistles which we are enabled to understand by the Spirit of God through our own personal experience of the revealed Truth of God.

Now, tonight, let us take a glimpse, just a glimpse, within the veil, such as our text affords us. We find the 24 elders, (who, without straining the passage, we might conceive to be and who doubtless are, the representatives of the Church), sitting on their thrones before the august Majesty of God. They have crowns upon their heads and they are represented as casting those crowns before the Throne of God. From this sublime picture I gather two things—first, that these representative men, representatives of the Church of God, will all be crowned—they have crowned heads. And secondly, that they all cast their crowns before the Throne of God. When we have talked of these things, we will gather a few lessons of practical moment for this present life.

I. Brethren, THE SAINTS IN HEAVEN ARE ALL CROWNED. I say, "all," for these represent the whole. The 24 elders are represented as saying, "You have redeemed us out of every people, and language, and nation," so that they represent *all*. It may be that there are degrees in Glory. It may be that there are none. I do not attempt to solve the question. But if there are, yet there is no degree below a crowned head in Heaven. All the saints have their crowns—"A crown of life that fades not away" is the very lowest portion of the very least saint who is admitted into Glory!

Now, how is it they come to be crowned? Our answer will be six fold. They are all kings *Dei Gratia*. You know how our monarchs like to put it on their coins, "*Dei Gratia*"—"by the Grace of God," though I don't know with what propriety—for on the whole they are about as graceless a lot of individuals as are to be found anywhere—kings and emperors and all hereditary rulers. If one were to take promiscuously half-a-dozen kings and half-a-dozen paupers, I think, in respect to moral character, the paupers would probably not have the most cause to blush. And I am sure there is a larger percentage of the poor on earth than of the richest among men who are heirs of the kingdom of Heaven.

But what they take for themselves as being by the Grace of God, everyone in Heaven may say of himself. Truly, they are all kings by the Grace of God. Ah, ask them and they will tell you it was the sovereign will of God, alone, that set them apart—it was the Lord, their heavenly Father—who chose them from among the sons of men that they should be His sons and daughters! And it was the Grace of God which first led them to know anything about reigning with Christ. Grace came and enlightened their understanding. Grace influenced their wills. Grace changed their affections. Grace made them to be heirs of Heaven and they will tell you it was Grace that kept them where Grace brought them—that they did not merely *begin* in the spirit to be afterwards made perfect in the flesh—but that as Grace was Alpha, it was Omega.

The Spirit of God which worked in them mightily, made them diligent in every good word and work and willing to be and to do according to God's good pleasure. And every crowned head there will tell you that the very last act of faith, before he entered into fruition, was as much based upon Grace and as much the fruit of Grace as was the first act of believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is not a king in Heaven that has his crown on any other terms than this, "by the Sovereign Grace of God." But, though it may seem astonishing, in the second place they are all kings by hereditary descent! "How?" you say, "They were born in sin and shaped in iniquity! They are of the fallen Adam, heirs of eternal misery."

Quite so, but they have been born-again, and it is in their new nature that they are before the Throne of God. They have been "begotten, again, unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." "Beloved, know you not that they are the sons of God," and though, "it does not yet appear what they shall be," yet they are truly God's sons and, therefore, when Christ shall appear they, also, will appear with Him in Glory? There are none in Heaven but God's sons! The angels, it is true, are there, and they are His ministering servants. But there are none of the human race there that are merely servants. They are *all* sons.

Some were prodigal sons and some, at times, had got into the bad temper of the elder brother in the parable. But they are all sons and they are there because they are sons. They have come to their crown by inheri-

tance, as much as any Prince of Wales ever succeeded in this country to his crown. There is born in the image of God's Son a new and peculiar race with Heaven as their inheritance—an inheritance which Hell can never spoil. They are kings, then, by hereditary descent. But, thirdly, they are kings by another right. They are kings by marriage alliance. There are some that come to royal dignity by being affianced and betrothed to kings.

There is many a crowned head that would not have been so by descent, but has come to be so by being given in wedlock to a royal consort. Now the Church of God is the Bride, the Lamb's wife and, because Jesus is crowned, therefore He will have it that His Church shall be crowned, too. He gave her Himself—He gave her everything that He had—He relinquished Heaven for her sake. He suffered on earth for her, bled on the Cross for her, went into the grave for her and now He will make her partaker of all He has. As He took all her shame, so she shall take her share in all His Glory. He went to the Cross for her and she shall come to the crown with Him!

Therefore are they before the Throne of God and serve Him day and night in His Temple, because they are one with Jesus. Because He lives, they also live. And because He, as the only begotten Son, stands always in His Father's love, therefore do they stand in the same. But fourthly (and you will think surely that all the rights in this world meet in these crowned heads, and so they do), they are kings by right of conquest and of victory. A crown should signify and did signify, in the olden times, struggling, battling and contending. The first crowns, I suppose, were given to those who were the strongest men and had fought best in the day of battle.

Well, we have already said that the crowns in Heaven are all the *gifts* of Divine Grace and yet at the same time it is true that those who have the crowns have fought for them—"These are they that came out of great tribulation." It was not that tribulation procured them their crowns, still it seems to be a rule—the usual rule in God's Church—that those of His servants who are to be rewarded should work, and those who are to be crowned should fight. At any rate, if you and I suppose we shall get the crown without contending for it, we shall find ourselves mistaken! Canaan belonged to the Israelites—it was theirs by a Covenant of Salt—but they had to fight for it and dispute every inch with the Hittite and the Canaanite and the Jebusites, and so must we.

We shall get to Heaven by God's Grace, but we must go on pilgrimage to get there. There is no chariot to carry us all along the road. We must foot it. We must climb the Hill of Difficulty and go down to the Valley of Humiliation. And he that endures to the end—the same shall be saved. Master Bunyan's picture of the bright spirits on the top of the palace who sang, "Come in! Come in! Eternal Glory you shall win"—would not have been complete if he had not pictured the armed men at the bottom of the

stairs who stood there to keep back any who sought to enter the house—would not have been complete without the description of the man of the grave countenance.

The man with the ink-horn said, “Set down your name,” and when he had put down his name, he drew his sword and fought desperately until he seemed to die—yet by-and-by he was seen on the top of the palace for he had won the day—

***“Lord, I must fight if I would reign,
Oh bear me safely through.”***

They are kings, then, because they have fought with sin and with temptations! They are not crowned without having contended for the victory. And you know how sharply some of them have had to contend, even unto blood have they resisted, striving against sin. Yes, the brightest and fairest of them have had to bear the brunt of most fierce persecutions, fights with lions—even to die at the stake and through sufferings that cannot be told have they entered into rest.

Then, fifthly, the crowned heads in Heaven have their crowns and their crowns befit them well, because of the nobility of their character. If honors were fairly distributed among men, we should not so often see the meanest spirit in the loftiest place. It is always one of the hardships of this life. Of this the wise man complained—that he had seen servants on horseback and masters walking in the mire—the great spirits in the world in rags and the mean spirits clothed in scarlet—the men that deserved well lying at the gate licked by dogs and the men that deserved ill faring sumptuously every day and clothed in scarlet and fine linen!

Now it is not so in Heaven. There, in Heaven, nobility is given to the noble and to the upright in character the reward of the righteous, for though it is not of debt, but of Grace, yet the pure in heart shall see God and they that are undefiled in the way shall inherit the blessing. O how bright those spirits are that are crowned! The crowns do well demean them—they are without fault before the Throne of God. There is no infirmity about their character or imperfection about their constitution. If you should dwell with them a thousand ages you would never hear them speak an idle word and if you could inspect their hearts with Omniscient eyes you would not read therein one godless thought. They are sanctified perfectly, delivered from every taint of corruption and now they are like their Lord Himself in holiness of character! Well should they be crowned whose character has thus been made glorious by the work of the Spirit of God within them!

And, once more, they have another right to their crowns, because those crowns represent real possessions. There are little princes in this world whose principalities are about as large as ordinary kitchen gardens and they account themselves very great, indeed. The man of great esteem is like John R. in English history, who had not a foot of ground. The less the

man's possession, often the man's greater self-possession. But in Heaven there are no pauper princes. There they are rich to all the intents of bliss. They have their crowns, and they have their kingdoms. All things are theirs—the gift of God—and God is theirs and Christ is theirs. They are clothed with honor and majesty—not outwardly, only, but inwardly—and they have all the accompaniments that should go with royal dignity.

Does it not seem, however, like a dream, as one thinks it over and tries to realize it? Let us pause a moment and follow the reverie, to which a well assured faith gives substantial reality. You and I, if we believe in Jesus, will soon sit with Jesus where we shall be crowned! We are poor today, obscure and ignoble—we have no influence, it may be, and possibly are of little account among our fellows—but within a short time, perhaps before this year or even this month shall have run out its anxious days, we shall be with crowns upon our heads spiritually. We shall be before the Throne in spirit, and then, by-and-by, when the Lord shall come, we shall in body, as well as in spirit, sit there raised from the dead and made perfect, forever enjoying the rank of kings and priests unto our God, for we shall reign forever and ever!

Can you conceive of it? Bunyan represents Mercy as laughing in her sleep. Truly, as we think this over, one feels inclined to laugh for very joy of heart! Shall I wear a crown? Those who were despised and rejected of men and counted fools—will they be kings? Those saints that were made to lie in prison for their Master's sake and no names of ignominy were thought base enough for them—will they be kings? Will the angels be courtiers while these humble ones, raised and changed, but yet the same, sit as kings in the midst of the courts of Heaven, there to abide forever? Even so it will be!

Come! If the head aches tonight, let the reflection that it will soon be crowned be a consolation to you. Come! If you have had much to worry you throughout the day, let the sweet thought that you will soon be where not a wave of trouble shall ever cross your peaceful breast be a rich consolation to you. There is a throne in Heaven that no one can occupy but you! And there is a crown in Heaven that no other head can wear but yours! And there is a part in the eternal song that no voice can ever compass but yours! And there is a glory to God that would be missing if you did not come to render it! And there is a part of infinite majesty and glory that would never be reflected unless you should be there to reflect it!

Therefore comfort one another with this, that before long you shall be there! Because the Grace of God has elected you, you have an hereditary right through the new birth. You have a marriage right by reason of union with Christ. You have rights of conquest as a warrior. You shall have the rights of character, for your character will be perfect before long. And you have the rights of possession, for God has given you all that which goes with the crown.

II. Well, now, secondly we come to a department of our subject which seems more easy to believe. Though they all have crowns, **THEY ALL CAST THEM BEFORE THE THRONE.** We can well conceive that, for to many of us that would be the first impulse of our minds. If ever we get to those sacred heights we will do adoring homage and if ever we receive any honors we will present them to Him to whom all the honor is due!

Why, then, you ask now, do they cast their crowns at the foot of the Throne? There are four answers which may very properly be given. The first, no doubt, is for the reason of solemn reverence. They see more of God than we do, therefore are they more filled with awe and thrilled with admiration. From what we—who worship, as it were, in His outer courts and get but distant glimpses of His majesty and His mercy—from what we at present know of God we should be constrained to say, “Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Your name give glory for Your mercy and Your Truth’s sake.” But where God more gloriously reveals Himself and where His attributes are more clearly seen, no doubt there is more overwhelming emotion and more intense reverence—therefore at once, and of spontaneous impulse—the soul pays all the homage that it can before the Throne of God.

I think it would seem to them as though it could not be that they could sit with crowned heads in the Presence of the King of kings! That head that once was crowned with thorns, when we see it adorned with the royal diadem, surely we should not bear to be crowned in the Presence of such an One! For what are we, and what is our Father’s house? God has done all He can for us, yet what shall we be as compared with Him, the Infinite and Eternal! And as compared with Christ, the ever-blessed who died for us? O, our reverence will always make us feel in the lowest state of self-abasement at the foot of the Throne!

Moreover, they are, no doubt, actuated by sincere humility. Reverence to God always brings a humble opinion of one’s own self. Here below, Beloved, we sometimes murmur at the Divine will when His appointments cross and foil our inclinations. Were we more humble and less self-opinionated we should utterly distrust ourselves and put implicit confidence in Him. We should at once cast our wills at the Lord’s feet. Here we set up our own opinion in opposition to the revealed will of God. We would not do that if we knew ourselves, but we should lay our judgment at the foot of the Throne. But up there they judge righteous judgments and, knowing God and beholding His Glory, they shrink into nothing and lay themselves at His feet—much more do they renounce their will.

They feel, they know, they confess that any honor or desert they have has been obtained through the Grace of God—that they must fully, heartily, unreservedly ascribe to Grace that which they dare not arrogate to themselves. Doubtless, also, they do this for another reason, namely, because of their profound gratitude. They bless God that they are where

they are and what they are. If you ask those before the Throne, they will tell you that not only do they owe their crowns to Grace, but every single gem in their crowns. They have not one single star in their diadem but what the Lord put there and there is not a single sparkle of any crystal sapphire that is in their coronet but what they may trace the flashing gleam to the Sovereign Grace of God.

Therefore, how could they keep anything to themselves? Gratitude constrains them to lay their crowns where their crowns came from. And, above all, they are actuated by intense affection. They love their Lord, and loving their Lord they do anything to adore Him. Self-denial is the name we give on earth to that Grace which not only ignores but consumes one's self in the fervor of zeal, in the passion of love. What word would answer for the like?—Though the greater vehemence of those in Heaven I cannot tell. They are glad to fling their richest goods, their choicest trophy, their most cherished treasure at His feet—they love Him so. Here we love ourselves and cherish some fond attachment to our fellow creatures, also. And our hearts are stolen away by some earthly object. But there they love God intensely, continually, undividedly, without a flaw—and consequently they cast everything down before Him—and they lay their crowns at His feet.

As we see what they do, let us consider what we should do, and anticipate what we *shall* do when we join that august assembly. I would like to have a bright crown, bright with many gems of souls turned to righteousness, for they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as stars forever. But I think the sweetness will be to have a bright crown to lay at His feet, not for the sake of wearing it but *giving* it, if thereby a saved one might give honor to His Savior. You will notice they do not attempt to put the crown upon the Lord's head. No, we cannot add to His splendor! He is infinitely glorious! Without creatures, without servants, without saints He is glorious—we cannot add to His Glory—we can but lay our crowns at His feet. We cast them at the feet though we cannot put them on the monarch's head.

And would not we wish to have as bright a crown as possible for the sake of placing it there? O, fight, you soldier of Christ, and bear hardness that your crown may be a precious one! Pray, minister of God, that you may preach with all your heart and soul and strength, that your diadem may be a sparkling one! Dear Sister in your tent, or dear Brother out in the battle, be valiant for God, for we all agree in this, that whatever the crown shall be, at His dear feet we cast it!

III. Now I come to the practical lessons which these simple facts should teach us. There is at first sight a simple, obvious reflection which will readily occur to the thoughtful Hearer. By this text, we can know whether we are on the way to Heaven or not, because no man goes to Heaven to

learn for the first time heavenly things. We must be scholars in Christ's school here, or else we cannot be taken into Christ's college above.

If you and I should walk into some great cathedral where they were singing and ask to be allowed to sing in the choir, they would ask whether we had ever learned the tune, and they would not let us join unless we had. Nor can we expect that untrained voices should be admitted into the choirs above. Now, dear Brothers and Sisters, have you learned to cast your crowns at the Savior's feet already? Have you been professors of religion for some years and been honored in the Sunday school class, or in the ministry, and have you been enabled to maintain an upright character? Well, in some measure, you have a crown. Are you in the habit continually of casting that at His feet?

Let me put it to you—have you anything that you call your own to boast of? Have you some good things that you have done that you could speak of? Could you say, like one of old, “Lord, I thank You that I am not as other men”? Have you been very good and industrious, very consistent and persevering and do you feel you deserve a good deal of esteem and honor as an acknowledgment of your distinguished services? My dear Friend, I am afraid you are learning a music that will never answer in Heaven! There is no one in Glory that ever says—“I have done well. I deserve credit and honor.” Quite the reverse! There, the one music is, “Non nobis Domine!” “Not unto us, Lord! Not unto us!” Have you learned that? Is that your spirit every day?

O, I think I hear one say, “Yes, indeed it is, for I have nothing whatever that I can boast of. I cannot say that I lay my crown at His feet—I do not seem to have any.” Yet, very likely, the person who is saying that is the one who is serving God more zealously than any of us, for, it is the mark of God's children that the more beautiful they are the more uncomely they think themselves. They that are very lovely, themselves, all unconscious of their own attractions, can see a loveliness in others, while they perceive nothing to recommend their own character. When you, yourself, are mourning and lamenting that you are so deformed or so deficient, it is a mark that you are better than you think. The spirit that gives all glory to God and takes no glory to itself, is the spirit that is on the road to Heaven! May you judge yourselves by that!

The next lesson, Beloved, is a lesson of unanimity. Our text says they *all* cast their crowns before the Throne of God. There are no divided opinions in Heaven, no denominations and parties, no schisms there. They are all in perfect harmony and sweet accord. What one does, all do. They cast their crowns, without exception, before the Throne. Let us begin to practice that unanimity here. As fellow Christians, let us get rid of everything that would divide us from each other, or separate us from our Lord. I do not read that there was a single elder who envied his brother's crown and said, “Ah, I wish I were such an one as he is, and had his crown.” I do not

read that one of them began to find fault with his Brother's crown, and said, "Ah, his jewels may be bright, but mine have a peculiar tint in them, and are of greater excellence."

I do not read anything of dissension. They were all unanimous in casting their crowns at Jesus' feet. They were all unanimous in glorifying God. And it is high time we gave over congratulating ourselves, or censuring our fellow Christians! Rest assured there is *something* in the man you condemn, if he is a child of God, which condemns *you*—and you might do well to become a scholar of his in some respects. If any honorable rivalries occur among Brethren, let both cast their crowns at the foot of the Cross, or at the foot of the Throne and ascribe all to Him who gave them. Those that have obtained the prize are unanimous in their ascription of praise.

Do you ask the reason? I suppose, first, it is because their understanding is alike transparent. Here our understandings are divided—one cannot see this, and another cannot see that. There are a great many differences of opinion, though there is only one Truth of God, after all. The fault must be in our perception and, doubtless, the blame may be distributed among us. But none the less, our allegiance to Truth demands that we stand by our own convictions, or rather, by God's Revelation. We cannot *all* be right—it is no use our professing that we are. When a person says, "You must give up this, and you must give up that for the sake of charity," they do but ask us to practice benevolence at the expense of honesty. What right have I to give up a Truth of God? Truth is Truth and we must fight for it, and die for it, if need be.

Every effort to promote union among Christians by compromise is treachery to the Most High. If you are right and I am wrong, contradict me. Or if I am right and you are wrong, I will contradict you. Yet I will not outrage charity, I will rather cherish it. Is my opponent poor, I would supply his need without regard to his creed. Be he a Jew or a Papist, give him his civil rights. Let them benefit by our good works, but let us never connive at their evil. The way to unity is to find the Truth of God out and acknowledge it together. When we come to the Word of God, all of us, we shall come together. But any patching up, making this compromise and that unwarrantable concession is all wrong! If it did lead to a unity, the unity would be worse than a division!

In Heaven the understandings are clarified and purified. They understand that their salvation is of Grace alone and they all cast their crowns at Jesus' feet. Wesley does it. So does Toplady. The Arminian that preached doctrines that sounded like the will of the flesh casts his crown as freely as the Antinomian who was known to say, "It is of Grace. It is of Grace, alone." There are no differences *there*! They have come to see eye to eye because they see with the eyes of the pure in heart who have been made to see God. But then they are all agreed in heart as well as in understanding. They love each other and they love God—all their affections

flow in one channel and in one direction. Therefore they cast their crowns before the Throne.

Brethren, let us stick together closely in unity of judgment and heart. We have done so many a year to my marvel and astonishment. May the same Spirit of God who has made us a three-fold cord in our unity with Christ, keep us so in years to come, if it please Him to spare our lives. May we in this Church be like the 24 elders, always casting our crowns before the Throne. Once again, these redeemed ones in Heaven teach us the true way of happiness. They set before us what perfect bliss is. You observe, it does not consist in selfishness. Never believe that possible. If a man says, "I shall make myself happy," he will rather mar than make happiness for himself. But when he seeks the Glory of God he will be happy in the pursuit as well as in the attainment of his object.

Did you ever go out for a day to enjoy yourself? If you went out with that intent I am sure you would find yourself hard to please. But if you went out to enjoy the society of other people, or to help them to enjoy themselves, you will most likely have been very well rewarded. There is no happiness beneath the clouds like the happiness of unselfishness. Strip yourself and you clothe yourself. Throw money away and you grow rich—I mean in a *spiritual* sense. To scatter is to gather. To give is to grow rich. It is a hard lesson for some minds to learn, but it is a lesson which Christ taught us. He saved others but Himself He could not save. And yet He has glorified both Himself and His Father by that very Sacrifice of Himself!

Happiness, again, consists in adoration, for these blessed spirits find it to be their happiness to adore God. The happiest days you ever spent are those in which you worshipped God most. If you are doing a great deal, but have your minds far off from God, your labor will be irksome, your spirits will flag and you will lack the stimulus of His approbation. Mary was happy at her Master's feet because she was there adoring Him. Mind you have much of Mary's spirit and adore God all day long, for that is the vestibule of Heaven! But then they were not merely happy because they were self-denying and adoring, but because they were practical. They took off their crowns and laid them before the Throne. And our joy on earth must lie in practically carrying out our principles.

The best religion in the world laid by will is of no good. You shall only get joy out of it when you throw it into the winepress in clusters and tread it in practical service. Cast your ability to do and to suffer, as well as the crown of your labor and patience, at the feet of your God—serve Him with all your heart and wisdom and strength, and thus your self-denial and adoration being mixed, you shall realize on earth as much as possible a foretaste of what the joy of Heaven may be. O, that our souls may be always aspiring towards this blessed place where we are to dwell! May we be granted Grace to always prove the sincerity of our faith by fighting under God's banner for the crown! May we always live in the spirit of adoption

whereby we prove our right to our crown by cultivating daily communion with Christ! May we be granted Divine Grace to prove our union with Him by always ascribing all honor, power and blessing to the Lord our God! May we always anticipate the homage of Heaven.

Brothers and Sisters, be not slack in worship. I am afraid we are. We are sometimes told that in the Church of England the most prominent thing in worship is *prayer*, but that *we* do not come together so much to pray as to hear a sermon. There may be some truth in the charge that is thus preferred against us, and if there is truth in it, do not let it be so any longer. But I hold that hearing a sermon is worship. If it is practically heard it is worship and if it is applied to the soul, there is no higher adoration on the part of the entire man than listening to the Truth which God will speak through the minister to our ear and heart. It is a part of worship, and a very blessed part, too.

But mind you make it so, and let it be so to us that while some worship within walls we worship *everywhere*, live worshipping, live adoring! Remember, sermons are, as it were, but the wet block, but adoration is the great end of preaching. "Praying is the end of preaching," says Herbert. So it is, but praising is the end of praying—the result which is to come out of it all. It is that for which praying exists, that God may be glorified! Pray God to help you to do so in every breath you draw, in every act you do! Let your common actions be a part of your holy, priestly life and be priests and kings in your doings in the house, in the shop, in the barn, and in the field.

The Lord bless you, dear Friends. And as to those here present who know not Christ, you will never be crowned if you abide in ignorance of Him, or in enmity against Him. Oh, that the Lord would change your hearts and lead you to the Savior! May you see Him crowned with thorns and trust in Him, and then you shall come to be crowned with the royal diadem hereafter. The Lord grant it for His name's sake. Amen!

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Revelation 4 and 7.

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THE LAMB IN GLORY

NO. 2095

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, JULY 14, 1889,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“And I beheld and, lo, in the midst of the Throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the Throne.”
Revelation 5:6, 7.***

THE Apostle John had long known the Lord Jesus as the Lamb. That was his first view of Him, when the Baptist, pointing to Jesus, said, “Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.” He had been very familiar with this blessed Personage, having often laid his head upon His bosom, feeling that this tender goodness of the Savior proved Him to be in nature gentle as a lamb. He had beheld Him when He was brought “as a lamb to the slaughter,” so that the idea was indelibly fixed upon his mind that Jesus, the Christ, was the Lamb of God.

John knew that He was the appointed Sacrifice, set forth in the morning and evening lamb and in the Paschal Lamb, by whose blood Israel was redeemed from death. In his last days the beloved disciple was to see this same Christ, under the same figure of a lamb, as the great revealer of secrets, the expounder of the mind of God, the taker of the sealed book and the looser of the seals which bound up the mysterious purposes of God towards the children of men. I pray that we may have on this earth a clear and constant sight of the sin-bearing Lamb and then, in yonder world of glory, we shall behold Him in the midst of the Throne and the living creatures and the elders.

The appearance of this Lamb at the particular moment described by John was exceedingly suitable. Our Lord usually appears when all other hope disappears. Concerning the winepress of wrath, it is He who says, “I have trod the winepress alone and of the people there was none with Me.” In the instance before us, the strong angel had proclaimed with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof?” And there was no response from Heaven, or earth, or Hell. No man was able to open the book, neither to look therein.

The Divine decrees must remain forever sealed in mystery unless the once slain Mediator shall take them from the hand of God and open them to the sons of men. When no one could do this, John wept much. At that grave moment the Lamb appeared. Old Master Trapp says, “Christ is good at a dead lift,” and it is so. When there is utter failure everywhere else, then in Him is our help found. If there could have been found another

bearer of sin, would the Father have given His Only-Begotten to die? Had any other been able to unfold the secret designs of God, would he not have appeared at the angel's challenge?

But He that came to take away the sin of the world now appears to take away the seals which bind up the eternal purposes. O Lamb of God, You are able to do what none beside may venture to attempt! You come forth when no one else is to be found. Remember, next time you are in trouble, that when no man can comfort and no man can save, you may expect the Lord, the ever sympathetic Lamb of God, to appear on your behalf.

Before the Lamb appeared, while as yet no one was found worthy to look upon that book which was held in the hand of Him that sits on the throne, John wept much. By weeping eyes the Lamb of God is best seen. Certain ministers of this age, who make so little of the doctrine of substitutionary sacrifice, would have been of another mind if they had known more contrition of heart and exercise of soul. Eyes washed by repentance are best able to see those blessed Truths of God which shine forth from our incarnate God, the bearer of our sins. Free Grace and dying love are most appreciated by the mourners in Zion.

If tears are good for the eyes, the Lord send us to be weepers and lead us round by Bochim to Bethel. I have heard the old proverb, "There is no going to Heaven but by the Weeping Cross." And there seems no way of even *seeing* Heaven and the Heavenly One, except by eyes that have wept. Weeping makes the eyes quick to see if there is any hope. And while it dims them to all false confidences, it makes them sensitive to the faintest beam of Divine light. "They looked unto Him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed." Those who have laid eternal matters to heart so much as to weep over their own need and that of their fellow men, shall be the first to see in the Lamb of God the answer to their desires.

Yet observe, that even in this case human instrumentality was permitted, for it is written, "One of the elders said unto me, Weep not." John the Apostle was greater than an elder. Among them that are born of women, in the Church of God we put none before John, who leaned his head upon his Master's bosom. And yet a mere elder of the Church reproves and instructs the beloved Apostle! He cheers him with the news that the Lion of the tribe of Judah had prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals.

The greatest man in the Church may be under obligations to the least—a preacher may be taught by a convert—an elder may be instructed by a child. Oh that we might be always willing to learn—to learn from anyone, however low! Assuredly, we shall be teachable if we have the tenderness of heart which shows itself in weeping. This will make our souls like waxen tablets, whereon the finger of Divine Truth may readily inscribe its teaching. God grant us this preparation of heart!

May we come in a teachable spirit to the texts and may the Lord open our eyes to see and learn with John! It is no small favor that we have the record of the vision. Does not the Lord intend us to be partakers in it? The

vision is that of a Lamb, a Lamb that is to open the book of God's secret purposes and loose the seals thereof. The teaching of the passage is that the Lord Jesus, in His sacrificial Character, is the most prominent Object in the heavenly world. So far from substitution being done with and laid aside as a temporary expedient, it remains the object of universal wonder and adoration.

He that became a Lamb that He might take away the sin of the world, is not ashamed of His humiliation but still manifests it to adoring myriads and is, for that very reason, the very Object of their enthusiastic worship. They worship the Lamb even as they worship Him that sits upon the Throne. And they say, "Worthy is the Lamb," because He was slain and redeemed His people by His blood. His atoning sacrifice is the great reason for their deepest reverence and their highest adoration. Some dare to say that the *life* of Jesus should alone be preached and that no prominence should be given to His death. We are not of their religion. I am not ashamed of preaching Christ Jesus in His death, as the sacrifice for sin.

On the contrary, I can boldly say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." We do not so believe the doctrine of Atonement as to leave it in the dark as a second-rate article of faith. But we hold it to be the first and foremost teaching of inspiration, the greatest well of the Believer's comfort, the highest hill of God's glory. As our Lord's sacrificial Character is in Heaven most prominent, so would we make it most conspicuous among men. Jesus is to be declared as the Sin Bearer, and then men will believe and live. May God the Holy Spirit help us in our attempt this morning!

I. Jesus in Heaven appears in His sacrificial Character. And I would have you note that THIS CHARACTER IS ENHANCED BY OTHER CONSPICUOUS POINTS. Its glory is not diminished but enhanced, by all the rest of our Lord's Character—the attributes, achievements and offices of our Lord all concentrate their glory in His sacrificial Character and all unite in making it a theme for loving wonder.

We read that he is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, by which is signified the dignity of His office as King and the majesty of His Person, as Lord. The lion is at home in fight and "the Lord is a man of war—the Lord is His name." Like a lion, He is courageous. Though He is like a lamb for tenderness, yet not in timidity. He is terrible as a lion—"who shall rouse Him up?" If any come into conflict with Him, let them beware—for as He is courageous, so is He full of force and altogether irresistible in might.

He has the lion's heart and the lion's strength. And He comes forth conquering and to conquer. This it is that makes it the more wonderful that He should become a lamb—

***"A lowly man before His foes,
A weary man and full of woes."***

It is wonderful that He should yield Himself up to the indignities of the Cross, to be mocked with a crown of thorns by the soldiers and to be spit upon by subjects. O wonder, wonder, wonder, that the Lion of Judah, the

offshoot of David's royal house, should become as a lamb led forth to the slaughter!

Further, it is clear that He is a champion—"The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed." What was asked for was worthiness, not only in the sense of holiness but in the sense of valor. One is reminded of a legend of the Crusades. A goodly castle and estate awaited the coming of the lawful heir—he, and he only could sound the horn which hung at the castle gate. But he who could make it yield a blast would be one who had slain a heap of heathens in the fight and had come home victorious from many a bloody fray.

So here—no man on earth or in Heaven had valor and renown enough to be worthy to take the mystic roll out of the hand of the Eternal. Our Champion was worthy. What battles He had fought! What feats of prowess He had performed! He had overthrown sin. He had met face to face the Prince of Darkness and had overcome him in the wilderness. Yes, He had conquered death, had bearded that lion in his den. He had entered the dungeon of the sepulcher and had torn its bars away. Thus He was worthy, in the sense of valor, on returning from the far country to be owned as the Father's glorious Son, Heaven's hero—and so to take the book and loose the seals.

The brilliance of His victories does not diminish our delight in Him as the Lamb. Far otherwise, for He won these triumphs as a Lamb, by gentleness and suffering and sacrifice. He won His battles by a meekness and patience never before known. The more of a conqueror He is, the more astounding is it that He should win by humiliation and death. O Beloved, never tolerate low thoughts of Christ! Think of Him more and more, as did the blessed Virgin, when she sang, "My soul does magnify the Lord." Make your thoughts of Him great. Magnify your God and Savior, and then add to your reverent thoughts the reflection that still He looks like a lamb that has been slain. His prowess and his lion-like qualities do but set forth more vividly the tender, lowly, condescending relationship in which He stands to us as the Lamb of our redemption.

In this wonderful vision we see Jesus as the familiar of God. He it was who, without hesitation, advanced to the Throne and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon it. He was at home there—He counted it not robbery to be equal with God. He is "very God of very God," to be extolled with equal honor with that which is given unto the Lord God Almighty. He advances to the Throne, He takes the book, He communes with Jehovah, He accepts the Divine challenge of love and unseals the mysterious purposes of His glorious Father.

To Him there is no danger in a close approach to the infinite glory, for that glory is His own. Now, it is He who thus stood on familiar terms with God, who also stood in our place and bore for us the penalty of sin. He who is greater than the greatest and higher than the highest, became lower than the lowest, that He might save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him. He who is Lord of All, stooped under all the load and

burden of sin. Fall down on your faces and worship the Lamb. For though He became obedient unto death, He is God over all, blessed forever, the Beloved of the Father.

We observe, in addition to all this, that He is the Prophet of God. He it was that had the seven eyes to see all things and discern all mysteries. He it is that opened the seven seals and thus unfolded the parts of the Book one after another—not merely that they might be read but might be actually *fulfilled*. And yet He had been our *Substitute*. Jesus explains everything—the Lamb is the open sesame of every secret. Nothing was ever a secret to Him. He foresaw His own sufferings. They came not upon Him as a surprise—

***“This was compassion like a God,
That when the Savior knew
The price of pardon was His blood,
His pity never withdrew.”***

Since then He has not been ignorant of our unworthiness, or of the treachery of our hearts. He knows all about us. He knows what we cost Him and He knows how ill we have repaid Him. With all that knowledge of God and of man, He is not ashamed to call us Brothers and Sisters. Nor does He reject that truth, so simple, yet so full of hope to us, that He is our sacrifice and our Substitute. “He who unveils the eternal will of the Highest, is the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world.”

Our Lord always was, and is now acknowledged, to be Lord and God. All the Church does worship Him. All the myriads of angels cry aloud in praises unto Him. And to Him every creature bows, of things in Heaven and things on earth and things that are under the earth. When you call Him King of kings and Lord of lords, lofty as these titles are, they fall far below His Glory and majesty. If we all stood up with all the millions of the human race and with one voice lifted up a shout of praise to Him, loud as the noise of many waters and as great thunders, yet would our highest honors scarcely reach the lowest step of His all-glorious Throne.

Yet, in the glory of His Deity, He disdains not to appear as the Lamb that has been slain. This still is His chosen Character. I have heard of a great warrior, that on the anniversary of his most renowned victory, he would always put on the coat in which he fought the fight, adorned, as it was, with marks of shot. I understand his choice. Our Lord today and every day, wears still the human flesh in which He overthrew our enemies and He appears as one that has but newly died—since by death He overcame Satan. Always and forever, He is the Lamb. Even as God’s Prophet and Revealer, He remains the Lamb.

When you shall see Him at last, you shall say, as John did, “I beheld and, lo, in the midst of the Throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain.” Write, then, the passion of your Lord upon the tablets of your hearts and let none erase the treasured memory. Think of Him mainly and chiefly as the Sacrifice for sin. Set the atonement in the midst of your minds and let it tinge

and color all your thoughts and beliefs. Jesus, bleeding and dying in your place, must be to you as the sun in your sky.

II. In the second place, let us note that, IN THIS CHARACTER, JESUS IS THE CENTER OF ALL. “In the midst of the Throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain.”

The Lamb is the center of the wonderful circle which makes up the fellowship of Heaven. From Him, as a standpoint, all things are seen in their places. Looking up at the planets from this earth, which is one of them, it is difficult to comprehend their motions—progressive, retrograde, or standing still. But the angel in the sun sees all the planets marching in due course and circling about the center of their system. Standing where you please upon this earth and within human range of opinion, you cannot see all things aright, nor understand them till you come to Jesus—and then you see all things from the center.

The man who knows the incarnate God, slain for human sins, stands in the center of the Truth of God. Now he sees God in His place, man in his place, angels in their place, lost souls in their place and the saved ones in their place. Know Him whom to know is life eternal and you are in the position of vantage from which you may rightly judge of all things. The proper bearings and relationships of this to that and that to the next and so on, can only be ascertained by a firm and full belief in Jesus Christ as the atoning Sacrifice—

***“Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find.
The Holy, Just and sacred Three,
Are terrors to my mind.
But if Immanuel’s face appears,
My hope, my joy begins—
His name forbids my slavish fears,
His Grace removes my sins.”***

In Christ you are in the right position to understand the past, the present, and the future. The deep mysteries of eternity and even the secret of the Lord are all with you when once you are with Jesus. Think of this and make the Lamb your central thought—the soul of your soul, the heart of your heart’s best life.

The Lamb’s being in the midst, signifies also, that in Him they all meet in one. I would speak cautiously but I venture to say that Christ is the summing up of all existence. Do you seek the Godhead? There it is. Do you seek manhood? There it is. Do you wish the spiritual? There it is in His human soul. Do you desire the material? There it is in His human body. Our Lord has, as it were, gathered up the ends of all things and has bound them into one. You cannot conceive what God is. But Christ is God. If you dive down with materialism which by many is regarded as the drag and millstone of the soul, yet in Jesus you find materialism, refined and elevated and brought into union with the Divine nature.

In Jesus all lines meet and from Him they radiate to all the points of being. Would you meet God? Go to Christ. Would you be in fellowship with all Believers? Go to Christ. Would you feel tenderness towards all that God has made? Go to Christ. For, “of Him and through Him and to Him are all things.” What a Lord is ours! What a glorious being is the Lamb. For it is only as the Lamb that this is true of Him! View Him only as God and there is no such meeting with man. View Him as being only man and then He is far from the center—but behold Him as God *and* Man *and* the Lamb of God—and then you see in Him the place of rest for all things.

Being in the center, to Him they all look. Can you think for a moment how the Lord God looks upon His Only-Begotten? When Jehovah looks on Jesus, it is with an altogether indescribable delight. He says, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” When He thinks of the passion through which He passed and the death which He accomplished at Jerusalem, all the infinite heart of God flows high and strong towards His Best-Beloved. He has rest in His Son as He has nowhere else. His delight is in Jesus. Indeed, He has so much delight in Him that for His sake He takes delight in His people.

As the Father’s eyes are always on Jesus, so are the eyes of the living creatures and the four-and-twenty elders which represent the Church in its Divine life and the Church in its human life. All who have been washed in His blood perpetually contemplate His beauties. What is there in Heaven which can compare with the adorable Person of Him by whom they were redeemed from among men? All angels look that way, also, waiting His august commands. Are they not all ministering spirits, whom He sends forth to minister to His people?

All the forces of nature are waiting at the call of Jesus. All the powers of Providence look to Him for direction. He is the focus of all attention, the center of all observation throughout the plains of Heaven. This, remember, is as “the Lamb.” Not as King or Prophet chiefly, but pre-eminently as “the Lamb,” is Jesus the center of all reverence and love and thought, in the glory-land above.

Once more—let me say of the Lamb in the center, that all seem to rally round Him as a guard around a king. It is for the Lamb that the Father acts—He glorifies His Son. The Holy Spirit also glorifies Christ. All the Divine purposes run that way. The chief work of God is to make Jesus the First-born among many Brethren. This is the model to which the Creator works in fashioning the vessels of Divine Grace—He has made Jesus Alpha and Omega—the beginning and the end. All things ordained of the Father work towards Christ as their center.

And so stand all the redeemed and all the angels waiting about the Lord, as swelling His Glory and manifesting His praise. If anything could enter the minds of heavenly beings that would contribute to lift Jesus higher, it would be their Heaven to speed throughout space to carry it out.

He dwells as a King in His central pavilion and this is the joy of the host—that the King is in the midst of them.

Beloved, is it so? Is Jesus the center of the whole heavenly family? Shall He not be the center of our Church life? Will we not think most of Him—more of Him than of Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas—or any party leaders that would divide us? Christ is the Center. Not this form of doctrine nor that mode of ordinance—but the Lamb, alone. Shall we not always delight in Him, and watch to see how we can magnify His glorious name? Shall He not be also the center of our ministry? What shall we preach about but Christ! Take that subject away from me and I am finished. These many years I have preached nothing else but that dear name and if that is to be dishonored, all my spiritual wealth is gone—I have no bread for the hungry, nor water for the faint.

After all these years my speech has become like the harp of Anacreon, which would resound love alone. He wished to sing of Atreus and of Cadmon but his harp resounded love alone. It is so with my ministry—with Christ and Christ alone am I at home. Progressive theology? No string of my soul will vibrate to its touch. New divinity? Evolution? Modern thought? My harp is silent to these strange fingers. But to Christ, and Christ alone, it answers with all the music of which it is capable. Beloved, is it so with you? In teaching your children. In your life at home, in your dealing with the world—is Jesus the center of your aim and labor?

Does His love fill your heart? In the old days of Napoleon, a soldier was wounded by a bullet and the doctor probed deep to find it. The man cried out, “Doctor, mind what you are at! A little deeper and you will touch the Emperor.” The Emperor was on that soldier’s heart. Truly, if they search deep into our life they will find Christ. Queen Mary said that when she died they would find the name of Calais cut upon her heart. For she grieved over the loss of the last British possession in France.

We have not lost our Calais but hold still our treasure. For Christ is ours. We have no other name engraved on our heart but that of Jesus. Truly can we say—

***“Happy if with my last breath
I may but gasp His name;
Preach Him to all and cry in death,
‘Behold, behold the Lamb!’ ”***

III. Thirdly, our Lord is seen in Heaven as the Lamb slain and IN THIS CHARACTER HE EXHIBITS PECULIAR MARKS. None of those marks derogate from His Glory as the sacrifice for sin. But they tend to instruct us therein.

Note well the words—“Stood a Lamb as it had been slain.” “Stood.” Here is the posture of life. “As it had been slain.” Here is the memorial of death. Our view of Jesus should be twofold. We should see His death and His life—we shall never receive a whole Christ in any other way. If you only see Him on the Cross, you behold the power of His death. But He is not now upon the Cross. He is risen, He forever lives to make intercession for

us and we need to know the power of His life. We see Him as a lamb—"as it had been slain." But we worship Him as one that "lives forever and ever."

Carry these two things with you as one—a slain Christ, a living Christ. I notice that feeling and teaching in the Church oscillates between these two, whereas it should always comprehend them both. The Romish Church continually gives us a baby Christ, carried by His mother. Or a dead Christ, on the Cross. Go where we may, these images are thrust upon us. Apart from the sin of image worship, the thing set forth is not the whole of our Lord.

On the other hand, we have a school around us who endeavor to put the Cross out of sight and they give us only a living Christ, such as He is. To them Jesus is only an example and teacher. As a true and proper expiatory Substitute they will not have him. BUT WE WILL. We adore the Crucified One upon the Throne of God. We believe in Him as bleeding and pleading—we see Him slain and behold Him reign. Both of these are our joy—neither one more than the other but each in its own place. Thus, as you look at the Lamb, you begin to sing, "You are He that lives and were dead and are alive forever more." The mark of our Savior is life through death and death slain by death.

Note, next, another singular combination in the Lamb. He is called, "a little lamb." For the diminutive is used in the Greek. But yet how great He is! In Jesus, as a Lamb, we see great tenderness and exceeding familiarity with His people. He is not the object of dread. There is about Him nothing like, "Stand off, for I am too holy to be approached." A lamb is the most approachable of beings. Yet there is about the little Lamb an exceeding majesty. The elders no sooner saw Him than they fell down before Him. They adored Him and cried with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb."

Every creature worshipped Him, saying, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto the Lamb." He is so great that the Heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. Yet He becomes so little that He dwells in humble hearts. He is so glorious that the seraphim veiled their faces in His Presence—yet He is so condescending as to become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh! What a wonderful combination of mercy and majesty, grace and glory! Never divide what God has joined together—do not speak of our Lord Jesus Christ as some do—with an irreverent, unctuous familiarity.

But, at the same time, do not think of Him as of some great Lord for whom we must feel a slavish dread. Jesus is your next-of-kin, a Brother born for adversity and yet He is your God and Lord. Let love and awe keep the watches of your soul!

Further, let us look at the peculiar marks of Him and we see that He has seven horns and seven eyes. His power is equal to His vigilance. And these are equal to all the emergencies brought about by the opening of the seven seals of the Book of Providence. When plagues break forth, who is

to defend us? Behold the seven horns. If the unexpected occurs, who is to forewarn us? Behold the seven eyes.

Every now and then some foolish person or other brings out a pamphlet stuffed with horrors which are going to happen in a year or two. The whole of it is about as valuable as the Norwood Gypsy's Book of Fate, which you can buy for two-pence. But still, if it were all true that these prophecy-mongers tell us, we are not afraid. For the Lamb has seven horns and will meet every difficulty by His own power, having already foreseen it by His own wisdom. The Lamb is the answer to the enigma of Providence. Providence is a riddle but Jesus explains it all.

During the first centuries, the Church of God was given up to martyrdom—every possible torment and torture was exercised upon the followers of Christ—what could be God's meaning in all this? What but the glory of the Lamb? And now, today, the Lord seems to leave His Church to wander into all kinds of errors—false doctrines are, in some quarters, fearfully paramount. What does this mean? I do not know. But the Lamb knows, for He sees with seven eyes. As a Lamb—as our Savior, God and Man—He understands all and has the clues of all labyrinths in His hands. He has power to meet every difficulty and wisdom to see through every embarrassment. We should cast out fear and give ourselves wholly up to worship.

The Lamb also works to perfection in nature and in Providence. For with Him are "the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." This refers not merely to the saving power of the Spirit which is sent forth unto the elect, but to those powers and forces which operate upon all the earth. The power of gravitation, the energy of life, the mystic force of electricity and the like, are all forms of the power of God. A Law of nature is nothing but our observation of the usual way in which God operates in the world. A Law in itself has no power—Law is but the usual course of God's action.

All the Godhead's omnipotence dwells in the Lamb—He is the Lord God Almighty. We cannot put the atonement into a secondary place. For our atoning Sacrifice has all the seven Spirits of God. He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him. Let us come to God by Him. He has power to cope with the future, whatever it may be. Let us secure our souls against all dangers, committing ourselves to His keeping.

How I wish I had power to set the Lord before you this morning evidently Glorified. But I fail utterly. My talk is like holding a candle to the sun. I am grateful that my Lord does not snuff me out—perhaps my candle may show some prisoner to the door and when he has once passed it, he will behold the Sun in its strength. Glory be to Him who is so great, so glorious, and yet still the Lamb slain for sinners—whose wounds in effect continually bleed our life—whose finished work is the perpetual source of all our safety and our joy.

IV. I close with my fourth point, which is this—Jesus appears eternally as a Lamb and IN THIS CHARACTER HE IS UNIVERSALLY ADORED.

Before He opened one of the seals this worship commenced. When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four-and-twenty elders fell down before the Lamb and sung a new song, saying, "You are worthy to take the book." While yet the book is closed, we worship Him. We trust Him where we cannot trace Him. Before He begins His work as the revealing Mediator, the Church adores Him for His work as a Sacrifice. Jesus our Lord is worshipped not so much for what benefits He will confer as for Himself.

As the Lamb slain He is the object of heavenly reverence. Many will reverence Him, I do not doubt, when He comes in His second Advent, in the glory of the Father. Every knee will bow before Him, even of apostates and infidels, when they shall see Him take to Himself His great power and reign. But that is not the worship which He accepts, nor that which proves the offerer to be saved. You must worship Him as a Sacrifice and adore Him in His lowly character, as the "despised and rejected of men." You must reverence Him while others ridicule Him, trust His blood while others turn from it with disdain and so be with Him in His humiliation. Accept Him as your Substitute, trust in Him as having made atonement for you. For in Heaven they still worship Him as the Lamb.

That adoration begins with the Church of God. The Church of God, in all its phases, adores the Lamb. If you view the Church of God as a Divine creation, the embodiment of the Spirit of God, then the living creatures fall down before the Lamb. No God-begotten life is too high to refuse obedience to the Lamb of God. Look at the Church on its human side and you see the four-and-twenty elders falling down and worshipping, having every one harps and vials. Well may the whole company of redeemed men worship the Mediator, since in Him our manhood is greatly exalted!

Was ever our nature so exalted as it is now that Christ is made Head over all things to His Church? Now are we nearest to God, for between man and God no creature intervenes. Immanuel—God-With-Us—has joined us in one. Man is next to the Deity, with Jesus only in between, not to divide, but to unite. The Lord in Christ Jesus has made us to have dominion over all the works of His hands. He has put all things under our feet—all sheep and oxen—yes, the fowl of the air and fish of the sea and whatsoever passes through the paths of the sea. O Lord our God, how excellent is Your name in all the earth!

The Lord is adored by the Church in all forms of worship. They worship Him in prayer. For the vials full of sweet odors are the prayers of saints. They worship Him with a new song and with the postures of lowliest reverence. But, beloved, the Lamb is not only worshipped by the Church—He is worshipped by angels. What a wonderful gathering together of certain legions of the Lord's hosts we have before us in this chapter! "Ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands." Their company cannot be imagined in human arithmetic. With perfect unanimity they unite in the hallowed worship, shouting together, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

No, it is not merely the Church and angels, but all creation, east, west, north, south, highest, lowest—all adore Him. All life, all space, all time, immensity, eternity—all these become one mouth for song and all the song is, “Worthy is the Lamb.”

Now, then, dear Friends, if this is so, shall we ever allow anybody in our presence to lower the dignity of Christ, our Sacrifice? [“No.”] A friend says, emphatically, No. And we must say, No. As with a voice of thunder, we say—No—to all attempts to lower the supreme glories of the Lamb. We cannot have it—our loyalty to Him will not permit it. Besides, no man will willingly lose his all. Take the Lamb away and you take all away. “Who steals my purse, steals trash”—who steals my Christ, steals myself and more than myself—my hopes that are to be my future joys.

Life is gone when His death is rejected, His blood despised. Our souls burn with indignation when this vital Truth of God is assailed—

***“Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
You soldiers of the Cross!
Lift high His royal banner,
It must not suffer loss!”***

Wherever you are, to whatever Church you belong, do not associate with those who decry the atonement. Enter not into confederacy with those who, even by a breath, would disparage His precious blood. Do not bear that which assails the Lamb—grow indignant at the foul lie! The wrath of the Lamb may with safety be copied by yourself in this case—you will be angry and sin not. Once more, if this is so, if the glorious sacrifice of our Lord Jesus is so much thought of in Heaven, cannot you trust it here below? O you that are burdened with sin, here is your Deliverance—come to the sin-bearing Lamb. You that are perplexed with doubts, here is your Guide—the Lamb can open the sealed books for you. You that have lost your comfort, come back to the Lamb, who is slain for you and put your trust in Him anew. You that are hungering for heavenly food, come to the Lamb, for He shall feed you.

The Lamb, the Lamb, the bleeding Lamb—be this the sign upon the standard of the Church of God. Set that ensign to the front and march boldly on to victory and then, O Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world, grant us Your peace! Amen.

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GOLDEN BOWLS FULL OF INCENSE NO. 1051

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 19, 1872,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Golden vials full of incense, which are the prayers of saints.”
Revelation 5:8.***

I SHOULD not have addressed you upon the subject of intercession today if this week had not been set apart for general prayer, for it was only two Sabbaths ago that I endeavored to set before you the duty and privilege of intercession [Sermon #1049, *Intercessory Prayer*.] However, as our mind is now directed to it again, it may be that the line upon line, the precept upon precept, the here a little and there a little, may not be without benefit to us. The vision before us is a very remarkable one. We do not intend, for we have not the time, to go into all the details of it. No doubt it is a vision referring to some special occasion, but at the same time we may regard it as descriptive of the usual worship which is offered before the Throne of God and the Lamb.

We have sometimes in continental galleries seen a mediaeval painting representing the assembly of the great council of the ancient German Empire. There is the emperor surrounded by the various kings, princes, electors, dukes, and counts. Yonder are the knights of the Golden Fleece. There are the bishops and the cardinals, the barons, knights, and burghers of various degrees making up a marvelous spectacle of pomp and pageantry. If we made minute enquiries we should, perhaps, discover the one particular Diet which the picture represented—but even without such investigation the painting is instructive—we know that if it represents the Diet on one occasion, the one might stand for all.

And so in the great assembly of Heaven, the outline which the seer of Patmos gives us here may, if we wish to be very accurate, be referred to some one particular event. But it will suffice for us to believe that it represents in general the homage which is rendered at the Throne of the Eternal. In considering the brilliant scene before us, note carefully that the worship described is not confined to the occupants of Heaven's immediate courts. Moses Stuart, believing that we have here an entirely celestial scene, concludes that these, “golden vials full of incense, which are the prayers of saints,” represent the intercessions of glorified spirits.

He makes the remark that the saints in Heaven still continue to pray. To this last statement I do not object, for in the sixth chapter the souls under the altar are said to cry for vengeance, and I see no reason why the perfect saints above should not pray. But I very greatly question whether we can draw that inference from this particular passage, for the prayers here intended are not those of Heaven only, since from the 13th verse we are taught that the scene represents the adoration of the Lamb by the entire universe. “Every creature which is in Heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them,

heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto Him that sits upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.”

The presence angels lead the strain. The saints made perfect join the rapturous hallelujah, and then 10,000 times 10,000 angels swell the growing strain. Meanwhile, from every starry orb comes up its note of worship and the firmament rings with music. Earth from afar has heard the sound and wakens all her life to take its part in the harmony! The fowls of the air and the fish of the sea, the songsters of the forest and the monsters of the deep render with zeal their tribute of grateful praise. 'Tis not the inner circle, alone, which thus resounds Jehovah's praise but widening and widening, the praise encompasses all space and fills immensity! Not Heaven alone, but all *creation* yields the Lord His praise.

Now, dear Brothers and Sisters, let us, by faith, pass into the inner circle, draw near to the Throne of God and gaze upon the golden vials full of incense, for with these we have to do this morning. It is probably known to all of you that the idea conveyed to us, by “golden vials,” is as far removed from the meaning of the Greek word as well could be, for a vial is to us generally a deep but narrow vessel. But the vessel here meant is both shallow and broad. A better rendering would be “golden *bowls*,” or “golden *goblets* full of incense which are the prayers of saints.” The idea is that each one of the 24 elders bears an open bowl or censor filled with smoking incense which pours forth a sweet perfume before the Lord—and this is the symbol of the supplications of the people of God.

Leaving the figure, the thoughts before us are just these. The prayers of God's people are sweet as incense to Him. Secondly, their blended prayers are peculiarly acceptable in His sight. And, therefore, thirdly, let us unite our supplications with the general prayer.

I. THE PRAYERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE ARE AS SWEET TO HIM AS INCENSE. This is not due to any natural excellence or merit which they possess in themselves and by themselves. Far from it. In the best prayer that was ever offered by the holiest man that ever lived, there was enough sin in it to render it a polluted thing if the Lord had looked upon it by itself. When we approach nearest to the Throne of Grace, we still fall very far short of being where and what we ought to be. The sins of our holiest thoughts are, alone, enough to condemn us! We often come before God in prayer unfit to pray, and spoil the action in the very outset by having an unprepared *heart*.

At other times, when we are in the midst of devotion—when we are being borne up upon the wings of zeal, *pride* will intrude—and we congratulate ourselves upon the excellence of our worship. Alas, one dash of that spirit mars all—it is the Pharisaic spirit, and is the bane of devotion. At other times, just as our supplication is closing, we are assailed with suspicions as to the faithfulness of God—doubts as to the success of our pleas—or else some other unhallowed thought pollutes the sacrifice. Alas, how hard it is to begin, continue, and end a prayer in the Spirit! If any one of our prayers were put into the scales of the sanctuary, alone and of itself, the only verdict upon it must be it is weighed in the balances and found wanting.

No, my Brothers and Sisters, the prayers of the saints, of themselves considered, would rather be an offense unto Divine holiness than a sweet savor unto God. Our consolation lies in this—that our beloved Intercessor who stands before God for us, even Christ Jesus—possesses such an abundance of precious merit that He puts fragrance into our supplications and imparts a delicious aroma to our prayers! He makes our intercessions to be, through His merit, what they could not have been without it—acceptable before the Majesty of Heaven. I think it is Ambrose who uses a very pretty figure concerning Believers' prayers. He says we are like little children who run into the garden to gather flowers to please their father, but we are so ignorant and childish that we pluck as many weeds as flowers—and some of them very noxious! And then we carry this strange mixture in our hands, thinking that such base weeds would be acceptable to Him!

The mother meets the child at the door, and she says to it, "Little One, you know not what you have gathered." She unbinds this mixture and takes from it all the weeds and leaves only the sweet flowers. And then she takes other flowers sweeter than those which the child has plucked and inserts them instead of the weeds. And then she puts back the perfect bouquet into the child's hand, and it runs with it to its father. Jesus Christ, in more than motherly tenderness, thus deals with our supplications. If we could see one of our prayers after Christ Jesus has amended it, we should scarcely know it again! He has such skill that even our good flowers grow fairer in His hands. We clumsily tied them into a bundle but He arranges them into a fair bouquet, where each beauty enhances the charm of its neighbor.

If I could see my prayer *after* the Lord has prayed it, I should miss so much, and I should find so much there that was not mine that I am sure its fullest acceptance with God would not cause me a moment's pride but rather make me blush with grateful humility before Him whose boundless sweetness lent to me and my poor prayer a sweetness not my own. So then, though the prayers of God's saints are as precious incense, they would never be a sweet smell unto God were it not that they are accepted in the Beloved! Note well that true, acceptable intercession must be composed of the prayers of saints. "Golden bowls full of the prayers of saints."

Nothing is here said of the prayers of officials, hirelings, and functionaries. It is thought most important by some Churches that there should be kept up a daily repetition of certain words and sounds. This is not done by persons selected for their eminent spirituality or prevalence in prayer, but by *officials* whose appointment is arranged on very different principles. These persons are not qualified for the function in their ordinary dress, but derive some mystic qualification from garments more or less savoring of the bleaching starch of the laundry. Then, having certain words before them, they have nothing to do but with appointed bows and scrapes to go through them—and in going through them they believe they have offered unto God acceptable prayer!

I have always been expecting to hear that before long praying to God would come to be managed by machinery. Our friends have, for a

considerable time, praised God in that way—and a little inventiveness might surely arrange the same for prayer! There is now scarcely a place of worship dedicated to Christian worship but what the most of the praise to God is done by an organization of wind and pedals—sometimes with the addition of electricity—and doubtless it is quite as consistent. And they surely would believe it quite as acceptable to God, too, that we commence to pray by wind, or water, or fire, or magnetism, or, better still, by steam! I cannot see why what is done in many cathedrals and churches by machines which eat bread and meat, could not as equally be well done by engines consuming coal and coke. The making of sounds is a mechanical business and needs only a little attention, and we might soon have a whole service performed by figures filled with clock-work.

There is a certain note of the organ called *vox humana* which certainly is amazingly like the human voice, and as long as you have no need of heart and soul, it cannot matter much whether the sound is made by the *vox humana* of an organ or the real human voice. The fact is, vocal prayers are nothing in themselves, whether they are said or sung, whether they are read or intoned—it is the *heart* which alone prays acceptably. I cannot believe in a God who finds any satisfaction in the ritualistic services which I have witnessed. I have asked myself, “What kind of a being must he be who could find pleasure in this sort of thing?” Thought is disgusted, reason sickened, intellect provoked, contemplation annoyed—only a florid taste and a childish love of display are gratified. The God of these Popish ceremonialists must surely be a huge, almighty doll-loving baby—certainly not an intelligent Being, such as Scripture reveals to us in the God that made Heaven and earth!

Alas, the frivolous sons of men imagine, because they go to their operas and listen to sweet music, and because in their drawing rooms they delight in the perfume which they scatter from their handkerchiefs, and because they are pleased to array themselves in silk and satin and the like, that God is like *themselves*, and is pleased with chants, and robes, and incense! Truly, the God they make is like themselves! They do not know the ever-blessed Lord! If He would be adored with glittering blue, look at the azure of the sky, or the deep blue of the sea! If He would be worshipped with lamps and candles, behold yon stars, and sun, and moon! If He would be revered with music, hark how the thunder rolls like drums in His awful march!

Is the Infinite mind to be worshipped by vain shows? O you sons of earth, will you thus worship Him that rides on the heavens, before Whom you all are but as grasshoppers? The prayers which the Lord accepts are not the chants of functionaries, the litanies of priests, or the devout tones of a mechanical service—they must be the prayers of saints! The sweetness lies in the life, the character, the soul! The acceptance comes not unless they are the prayers of saints! And who are the saints? They are men and women whom the Lord has made holy by the power of His Spirit. They are those whose nature He has purified. They are those whom He has washed in the precious blood of Jesus and so sanctified unto Himself! He has filled them with His Spirit and so set apart to His worship.

These persons love Him, praise Him, bow before Him with solemn awe! They lift their whole souls up in adoring love—these are they who can offer sweet incense—their thoughts, their desires, their longing, their confessions, their pleading, their praises—these are sweet to God! This is music to Him! This is perfume to His heart! This is delightful to His infinite mind, pleasant to His sacred Spirit—for God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth—and after no other fashion is a spiritual God to be worshipped!

Then, in the matter of intercession, one of the most important things is the *character* of the person. If I live in constant sin and then go and say, “Our Father, which are in Heaven,” surely I might feel His hand closing my mouth while I hear Him say, “How can you speak so? How dare you say, ‘Hallowed be Your name,’ when you do constantly defile it? How can you say, ‘Your kingdom come,’ when you will not submit to My rule, nor yield allegiance to My government? How dare you mutter out before Me the words, ‘Your will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven,’ when you rebel against My will, and set up your own will instead of Mine.”

Such prayers—what would they be but an insult to the Hearer, instead of sweet perfume offered before the Most High? Yes, and note too, my Brethren—and I would note it myself with deep solemnity—that even where the man who presents intercessory prayer is a *child of God*, yet, unless he maintains, in the power of God’s Spirit, his character as a saint, he will not preserve the prevalence of his prayers. For though our heavenly Father does not hear our prayers because of any merit in us, yet it is written, “If you abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.” If we turn aside from the Lord’s commands we shall lose power in prayer and our petitions will cease to bring down answers of peace.

It is certain that every child of God who has watched it will know that there is nothing which so weakens prayer as sin, and that to be a man like Elijah, who can prevail with God upon Carmel, you must walk in the Lord’s ways. If you walk contrary to Him, He will walk contrary to you. In the golden bowls the sweet incense is not the prayers of hypocrites or formalists, but the prayers of *saints*. We must, by the Spirit’s power, maintain the saintly character. We must walk apart from worldliness and covetousness. We must put aside uncleanness, anger, wrath, and every evil thing, or else we shall not be able to present unto the Lord such sweet odors as He delights in.

Note next that these prayers must be compounded of precious Divine Graces, for they are compared to *incense*, and, as you know, the incense used in the Temple was made up of many sweet spices, compounded, “according to the work of the apothecary.” Stacte and onycha, and galbanum were mixed with pure frankincense, tempered together and beaten small. Now, in prayer, that which is sweet to God is not the *words* used, though they ought to be appropriate and care should be taken with the language, which is as the golden bowl. But the sweetness lies not in anything perceptible to the outward senses, but in secret qualities, comparable to the essence and aroma of sweet spices. In the incense there lies a subtle and almost spiritual essence which is fetched forth from it by

the burning coals which causes the latent sweetness to spread itself abroad till all around confesses its power.

So it is in prayer. Beloved Brothers and Sisters, our prayers may be very comely in appearance, and, if printed, might read most correctly and appear to be the very paragon of devotion, but unless there is a secret *spiritual* force in them they are vain things! We must speak to God believing that He is, and that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Faith must be a part of the savor of prayer. Now I am not able to tell, when I hear a Brother pray, whether he prays in faith or not, any more than I might, with my eyes, be able to tell whether what is presented to me as incense has in it the proper pungency. But God perceives the faith or the absence of it, and the prayer is received or rejected as the case may be.

So, too, in prayer there must be the true frankincense of love. How can I pray as a child to a Father whom I do not love? If my heart is cold towards God my prayer will be frozen to death. There is need, moreover, of the Grace of humility to be mixed, like precious stacte, with the other ingredients—for he who does not pray humbly will be no more justified than the Pharisee. There was much of this precious spice in the publican's prayer, when he dared not lift so much as his eyes towards Heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." Much of this ought to lie in every prayer. But I cannot stay to tell you what all the separate spices ought to be which are necessary to make up the incense of an acceptable prayer. Only let me remind you that the incense of the Temple was mingled "according to the art of the apothecary."

Let us bless God that the Holy Spirit is the Believer's Apothecary. He it is who knows the proper quantity of each ingredient in prayer—how much of faith, how much of love, how much of repentance, how much of humility there ought to be in every supplication. He helps each Believer's infirmities and makes for us a mixture of all choice Graces so that when we pray our pleadings are accepted as sweet incense because they contain an harmonious amalgamation of all the things which are sweet to the Lord God of Sabaoth. In passing onward, let us observe that this incense, in order to be accepted before God, must *burn*. It might be the best incense in the world. It might be well compounded and put into the golden bowls—but it was never accepted by God till it was set on fire.

Live coals must be taken from off the altar and applied to the spices, and then the clouds of the sweet smoke began to rise up towards Heaven. Ah, Brethren, here many men's prayers fail! They are correct but cold, excellent but lifeless. They lack life, vigor, earnestness—fire! Some make up for this deficiency by noise and wild-fire, but it will not do. The Holy Spirit alone can give us true fervor. I confess that I have too often prayed in this pulpit and have not used the holy violence which wins with Heaven. And in our Prayer Meetings I have heard excellent supplications which have failed only in this—that the living fire had never touched them. How often in the family we go through the usual petitions, praying for ourselves and for the Church of God, and for the heathen, and so on—and then we go our way.

We knelt down mechanically and we continued there mechanically, and we rose up mechanically, and though the prayer was extemporaneous, yet I fear there is no more heart in it than if we had read it from a book! Remember well this Truth of God—that neither extemporaneous prayer nor any other is of any use unless holy fire consume it! We must have the live coals! I have heard prayers made up of broken, fragmentary, ill-assorted sentences—but the man who presented them has been all alive—and I have blessed God and felt I could say, “Amen, amen, the Lord hear that Brother’s petition.” Beloved, have you not gone to your closet and felt, “I have only one thing upon my mind, but oh, how heavily that weighs upon me! I could not construct an elaborate prayer if it were to save my life, for I am so distressed about that one thing”?

But then, that one petition has poured forth from you with all your soul and you have been heard concerning it. The Lord teach us to pray in earnest! May He send upon the continent of Europe, and upon America, and upon all the world at this time His own fire and the heavenly flame of His Spirit, the Spirit of Grace and of supplication—that saints may know how to pray—for we must have the fire with the incense! Then the fire, being with the incense, it was necessary for acceptance that it should ascend. If the wind had blown the smoke of the incense downward, scattering it to the right and to the left, it would have been an ill omen. The incense was accepted with God as it went straight up into the air, mounting till it seemed to join the clouds and lose itself.

Brothers and Sisters, our intercessions, when they are sweet to God, go straight up to Him. Do your prayers always do that? Have you ever prayed thinking, “Well, that is a very nice expression which I have used. My learned Brethren will be pleased with that. My spiritual friends will be able to join in that and they will think, ‘What a spiritual man he is to pray as he is now doing.’” Ah, my Brother, the smoke is blowing down, you see—blowing away towards *man’s* nostrils, and not towards God. So much waste and only waste! The prayer which God accepts is offered to Him alone. He who presents it cares not one atom who likes it or who does not like it—he is talking with his God—he is pleading with the Majesty unseen! He is very careless of the criticism of his fellow creature—his only desire is to please the Lord. The prayers of the Churches will never be accepted before God until they go straight up to Him, only, having respect to Him who is invisible.

Now the question returns, why are the prayers of saints so sweet to God? We reply, partly because they are the work of the Spirit of God. There is no acceptable prayer in the world but that which the Spirit of God has inspired. The Holy Spirit knows what the mind of God is, and He writes it upon the minds of God’s people, “making intercession in the saints according to the will of God.” Now, when God sees His own will reflected in the bosoms of His own children, He cannot but accept the work of His own Spirit. The prayers of His saints are acceptable with Him, also, because they are the pleadings of His Son. The saints are members of Christ’s body, and, as they plead, Christ pleads in them. The very strength of their pleading lies in this—that they urge His merits—and the

Lord delights to be reminded of His Son's excellences—it is a theme that He delights in.

You may ring that bell as long as you ever will—the Father will never weary of it. Tell Him what His Son has done. Remind Him of Gethsemane. Bring up before the Father's mind the Cross of Calvary. Tell Him of His promise to His Son—that He shall see His seed and have a full reward. You cannot by any possibility displease God by dwelling upon this topic. Hold Him with it, yes, hold Him with the resolution of a Jacob, and say, "I will not let You go until You bless me, for I plead the name and merit of Your only begotten Son." Everything about Christ is sweet to God, and because Believers' prayers are full of Christ, therefore they are sweet to God.

And, again, the prayers of the saints are sweet to God because they honor Him, and this they do in many ways— first, they assert His existence. In prayer the people of God declare better than they could by any other means their sure belief that God is, for should we pray to One who has no existence? Our prayer to God, therefore, is our continual assertion that, "The Lord, He is God," "The Lord, He is God." Our asking for special and particular mercies, and expecting them, is a declaration of our belief in a living God, a conscious God, an acting God, a God who is not asleep and far away, but who is near at hand listening to human voices and able to fulfill human desires. This, then, is very agreeable to God that we should believe and testify that He is, and that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

What if I were to say that prayer is, in itself, essentially a doxology? It is an utterance of glory to God in His attributes. Do I ask Him to bless me? Then I adore His power, for I believe He can. Do I ask Him to bless me? Then I adore His mercy, for I trust and hope He will. Do I ask Him to bless me because of such and such a promise? Then I adore His faithfulness, for I evidently believe that He is truthful and will do as He has said. Do I ask Him to bless me not according to my request, but according to His own wisdom? Then I adore His wisdom. I am evidently believing in His prudence and judgment. I say to Him, "Not my will but Yours be done"—I am adoring His Sovereignty. When I confess that I deserve to suffer beneath His hand, I reverence His justice. When I acknowledge that He does right evermore, I adore His holiness. And, when I humbly say, "Nevertheless, deal graciously with Your servant and blot out my transgressions," I am reverencing His Grace. We do not wonder, therefore, that through Jesus Christ the prayers of the saints should be precious to God, since they are a homage to the Supreme of an eminently practical kind.

Brothers and Sisters, after all, perhaps the best reason we can ever give why God loves to hear us pray, is one which comes home to our own hearts. You love to hear your own little children's talk. Now you know very well when your little girl wants a new dress, and you are well aware that your little boy needs fresh school books—there is no necessity whatever that Mary should inform you about her clothes, or that Master John should tell you about his books—for you know what they had need of long before they ask you. But you like them to feel their needs and to recognize

that they are supplied by their father—and, therefore, you like to hear them express their desires.

Sometimes you will stop a bit and say, “No, why should I give you this?” You set them a pleading because you like to hear their little prattling voices and to have them put their little arms around your neck and overcome you with kisses. You let them believe that they master you with their pretty reasoning and fond embraces, and it is pleasant to you as well as to them. Now, our heavenly Father is far above us, and yet He bids us learn His Character from our own feelings as parents. If we, being evil, know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more shall our heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him? The Lord declares that He deals with us as with children.

I know the next word is, “For what son is there whom his father chastens not?” But I do not believe that God’s likeness to a father is limited to His chastening. The text cannot be so cross and crabbed as that. Oh no, there is a likeness to a father in His hearing our cries! He loves communion with His people. The Lord loves to have the hearts of His children talk to Him. He delights to hear them spread out their needs before Him and order their case with arguments and prevail with them. Oh, then never be slack in your pleadings which are pleasant to God as fragrant incense!

II. Now, secondly and briefly, BLENDED PRAYERS ARE PECULIARLY ACCEPTABLE TO GOD. “The prayers of saints.” The prayers of a saint are sweet, but the prayers of saints are sweeter! I had many points here, but I think I must forego them all this morning for the sake of one. United prayers possess the power of harmony. In music there is melody in any one distinct note—but we have all recognized a peculiar charm in harmony.

Now, the prayers of one saint are to God melody, but the intercessions of many are harmony—and to God there is much that is pleasing in the harmony of His people’s prayers. Let us turn the subject over a minute. No two children of God pray exactly alike. There is a difference of tone. If taught of God, each one will pray graciously, but there will be in one prayer what there is not in another. If all the fruits of the garden are luscious, yet each one has its own special flavor. All the bells may be of silver, and yet each one will have its own tone.

For instance, some Brothers and Sisters, when they pray, dwell very tenderly upon the dishonor done to God by sin. They pray as if their hearts would break and they weep at every other sentence. “O God, the idols are placed on Your Throne. Jesus is dishonored, the Law is broken, the Gospel is despised.” Such loving contrition for the sin of others wails itself out in soft, low notes of magic power. But, listen to others, and you will find their prayers pitched upon quite another key. The Brother prays with full assurance that God’s kingdom is established upon the mountains, where its foundation can never be removed. And though the heathens rage, and the people imagine vain things, yet surely God’s kingdom and purpose will stand and He will do all His pleasure.

And as you hear such petitioning, shrill and clear like the sound of a trumpet, you feel that the voice of faith is both musical and prevalent. The

man has no doubt as to God's triumphing! He is quite certain that the Lord's hosts will win the day, and He prays in that spirit. Now, if these varying tones are melted into one, what masterly harmony they make! Therefore the Lord promises great things when two of us agree as touching anything concerning His kingdom. But, now comes in a third petitioner, and his tone of prayer differs from the other two. The same spirit of prayer is in him, but its voice varies. He prays in this way. Bowed down with a sense of awe in the Presence of God, the God of all the earth, he seems to speak measuring out each word, and he cries, "O God, shall not the nations fear You? Such an One as You are, shall they not tremble in Your Presence? Will You not be king to them, O You Creator and Preserver of all things?"

Like the cherubim, he veils his face in the Presence of the excellent Glory, and your soul, by his prayer, is solemnly ushered into the Presence of God and laid prostrate there. But mark yet this *fourth* man, whose prayer is of another mold—he is familiar with the Lord—he seems to have merged his sense of the sublime in that of the condescending, and he speaks somewhat in this way—"O Lord, my Father. You love the sons of men. Will You not come and meet Your prodigal sons who are coming back to You? Have You not given Jesus Christ to be a Man and bought men with Your precious blood? And will You not come to them and press them to Your bosom, and make them Yours?" As the Brother calls on God he appears to come close to Him and lay hold upon Him, and say, "I beseech You have mercy upon my fellow men."

Now, there is something blessed in both those prayers. I do not know which I prefer, but I do know, when I can get the blending of the two, the awe and the holy boldness, the familiarity and the sense of sovereignty, I find a double sweetness fills my heart! Ah, Brothers and Sisters, did you ever hear a prayer of that kind which moved the Lord's heart in the wilderness—I refer to the prayer of Moses, when he said, "If not, blot my name out of the Book of Life." This is the prayer of self-sacrifice, when the man feels, "I must have God glorified. I must have these people saved. I would pawn my soul for it. I would lose myself if but this nation might be redeemed." That is grand praying—it is not all of us who can rise to it! If that were alone and the only prayer, it might grow monotonous, for it lacks compass, but, if you put all these prayers together which I have mentioned—the prayers of the tender and the prayers of the brave, the prayers of the awe-struck and the prayers of the familiar, the prayers of the importunate, the prayers of the self-sacrificing—then they fill the golden bowl full of sweet incense!

For my part, I love, at Prayer Meetings, to hear the prayers of the aged. There is a lack in our Prayer Meetings, and has been for some months through the loss of one dear saint whose prayers used to be marrow and fatness to some of our souls on Monday evenings. The prayers of men on the verge of Heaven are to us as angels to lead us, also, up to the gates of pearl. But it is very pleasant to hear the prayers of young people, also, even the very young, for as they talk before the Lord there is a charming simplicity and frankness too little found in others. And then, the prayers of men in middle life, full of experimental trouble, or, on the other hand,

overflowing with experienced joy! These have their peculiar aroma, and I believe God loves to see them all mixed in the golden bowls!

And, what if I add He would have His people, with their various peculiarities put their prayers together? I, as a Calvinist, remark that our Arminian friends pray wonderfully Calvinistic! I can seldom perceive difference between them and ourselves, but no doubt they do view more than we do some particular parts of the Truth of God. We, on the other hand, pay a higher regard to another part of Truth. Now these various constitutions of Christians affect, in some degree, their prayers. And when they are blended they give a peculiar harmony of sweetness to the incense. At this time it is delightful to my thoughts to think that the prayers of different nationalities are being put into the golden bowl!

Our French Brothers and Sisters always charm me when they pray. There is a tender, filial love—an affectionate gentleness which is most delicious. Our American friends, so bold and sanguine, also delight us with their confidence in God. Their prayers will balance somewhat the timidity of the French utterance. Then, our German Brethren, with their deep thoughtfulness, and their habit of going to the bottom of things—how solidly they make supplication! So with all our Brothers and Sisters of many lands, what a choice amalgam they make!

I have been present at Prayer Meetings when I have heard the various nations pray, and my heart has rejoiced, and I can conceive that to God there is a peculiar harmony in the blended prayers of the many peoples and tongues. Look back and think of the prayers of all the ages as being in the golden bowl at this one time. The prayers of the Apostles, the cries of the persecuted times, the wrestling of the lonely ones of the Middle Ages, the moans from the valleys and mountains of Piedmont—the groans of our Brothers and Sisters during the Marian persecution, the pleadings of Covenanters and of Puritans—all in the golden bowl together! And all with the live coals upon them, coming up from the hand of the great Covenant Angel who stands for them before the Throne, pleading with God on the behalf of His people! Let us rejoice that the blended prayers of the Church are very sweet to the eternal God.

III. And now, lastly, Brothers and Sisters, LET US BLEND OUR PRAYERS, however faulty and feeble they may be, with the general supplications of the period. If united prayer is sweet to God, and we are sure it is, O let us give Him much of it! We cannot make God happier than He is in reality, for He is the infinitely happy God. But yet, if there is anything concerning which He expresses satisfaction, let us abound in it! O Church of God, cry day and night unto Him! If your voice, O Spouse, is sweet in His ears—if He says, “Let Me hear your voice. Let Me see your face, for sweet is your voice and your countenance is comely,” O turn not away your face and let not your voice be silent! But cry, and even in the night watches pour out your heart like water before the Lord your God!

We fail, I am afraid, we Dissenters, in devotion very much because we do not value it aright. In the service of today, I believe the sermon to be a very important part. But I do not believe, as some do, that it is the all-important matter. I have heard friends say, “So-and-so will take the preliminary service,” as if our praying and singing were only a little

preliminary affair to be gotten through, and the preaching was the great concern. But, my Brethren, *praying* is the end of preaching—the preaching is only the stalk—the *real* ear is the devotion which we pay to God. Let us see to this, and seeing God is pleased with prayer, offer it to Him more and more. And remember that if we do so, we shall find a blessing in it ourselves. The more we pray, the more we shall *need* to pray—the more we pray, the more we *can* pray—the more we pray, the more we *shall* pray. He who prays little will pray less, but he who prays much will pray more—and he who prays more will desire to pray more abundantly.

And, dearly Beloved, remember that prayer is effectual with God. We want to see souls saved. Are we not getting weary of living in this world among so many who are going down to Hell? Is it not terrible to think that after all the Church is doing, thousands are being lost every day? We ought to bestir ourselves for men's souls and we cannot do better for them than praying for them. Let us, therefore, bestir ourselves in prayer! In the eighth chapter of the Revelation you will find that the great angel who stood before God with the golden censer in his hand, full of the prayers of the saints, held it up and the smoke went up to God.

But, after a while, when the incense was all burnt out, he took that golden censer and he filled it with coals from off the altar, and then you notice what he did—he emptied the golden censer out upon the earth, and there were voices and thunders and lightning and earthquakes. Read the passage. Now, when the censer of God's Church shall have been well filled with prayer, and that prayer shall have been presented to the Lord, He will begin to work, and that censer which has been before God a weapon to prevail with Him, shall then become against men a weapon to prevail with *them*! God will fill it full of coals and pour it out upon the earth. His Divine power shall then be seen. Then will come voices—preachers here and there will rise, in the newspaper press, in the universities, in the public assemblies—there will be voices denouncing oppression, voices crying against priestcraft, voices preaching the Truth of God—voices declaring Christ!

Then will come thunder, for with the Gospel will go the voice of God, which is like thunder, louder than the voice of man. Then will flash forth lightning, for the light of God's power and Truth will come forth with majesty, and men's hearts shall be smitten with it, and made obedient to it. And then shall earthquakes shake society till the thrones of despots reel—till hoary customs are dashed in pieces—till the land that could not be plowed with the Gospel plow shall be broken up with secret heaviness from the eternal God!

We have but to pray! All things are possible to us! Pray, Brothers and Sisters! You have the key in the door of Heaven, keep it there and turn it till the gate shall open. Pray, Brethren, for prayer holds the chain which binds the old dragon! Prayer can hold fast and retrain even Satan himself! Pray! God girds you with omnipotence if you know how to pray! May we not fail here, but may the Spirit of God strengthen us, and to God shall be glory forever and ever. Amen.

THE HEAVENLY SINGERS AND THEIR SONG NO. 2321

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, AUGUST 13, 1893.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JULY 14, 1889.**

“And when He had taken the Book, the four beasts and twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having, every one of them, harps and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the Book, and to open its seals: for You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and have made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”
Revelation 5:8-10.

THIS morning [Sermon #2095, Volume 35—*The Lamb in Glory*—Read/download entire sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org> .] we had a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ appearing in Heaven in His Sacrificial Character, being adored in that Character, looking like a Lamb that had been slain, and being worshipped under that aspect in the very center of Heaven. I tried, as far as ever I could, to insist upon it that we must never hide the Atoning Sacrifice—that Christ, as the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world—is always to be brought to the front, to be put foremost in our preaching and in our practice, too. In this verse we go a step further. This blessed Lamb appears in Heaven as the Mediator between God and men. At God's right hand was the Book of His Eternal Purposes. None dared even to look upon it—it was hopeless that any creature should be able to loose its seven seals. But there came forward this glorious Lamb who had the marks of His slaughter upon Him and He took the Book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the Throne of God! Thus He acted as Mediator, Interpreter—taking the will of God and translating it—letting us know the meaning of that writing of the right hand of God which we could never have deciphered, but which, when Christ looses the seals, is made clear to us!

Jesus Christ, then, is seen as our Sacrifice in the capacity of Mediator and, in that capacity, He becomes the object of the adoration, first, of the Church, then of all the thousands and ten thousands of angels, and then of every creature that God has made! It would be too large a subject to take in all those hallelujahs and, therefore, in speaking, tonight, I select only these three verses to set forth the song of the Church, the adoration of the Church of God, rendered to the bleeding Lamb as the Mediator between God and men.

I shall have only two divisions. First, *behold the worshippers*. And, secondly, listen to their song.

I. First, BEHOLD THE WORSHIPPERS, for, remember that we must be like they if we are to be with them. It is a well-known rule that Heaven must be *in us* before we can be in Heaven! We must be heavenly if we hope to sit in the heavenly places. We shall not be taken up to join the glorified choir unless we have learned their song and can join their sacred harmony. Look, then, at the worshippers. You are not yet perfectly like they, but you will be, by-and-by, if you have already the main points of likeness worked in you by the Grace of God.

The first point about the worshippers is this, *they are all full of life*. I must confess that I should not like to dogmatize upon the meaning of the four living creatures, but still, they do seem to me to be a picture of the Church in its Godward standing, quickened by the life of God. At any rate, they are living creatures and the elders, themselves, are living persons. Yet alas, alas, that it should be necessary to say so true a thing, but *the dead cannot praise God!* “The living, the living, he shall praise You, as I do this day.” Yet how many dead people there are in this great assembly tonight! If one who had sufficient powers of penetration as to be able to detect the actions of the *spiritual* life of man, were to go round this crowd, “Ah, me,” he would say, “take this one away, take that one away—these are dead souls in the midst of the living in Zion.”

I will not dwell upon this very solemn thought, but I wish the conscience of some here to dwell upon it when the service is over. You are dead people in the midst of life! You joined in the song just now, but there was no living praise in your singing. Prayer was offered by my dear Brother Hurditch very fervently, but there was no living prayer in you. Do you know that it is so? If so, then take your right place and God grant you enough life to know the absence of life, lest He should say of you, “Bury My dead out of My sight,” and you should be taken away to the house appointed to the dead, since you cannot be allowed to pollute the gathering of living saints! Those in Heaven are all full of life! There is no dead worshipper, there, no dull, cold heart that does not respond to the praise by which it is surrounded! They are all full of life.

And further note, that *they are all of one mind*. Whether they are 24 elders, or four living creatures, they all move simultaneously. With perfect unanimity they fall on their faces, or touch their harps, or lift up their golden vials full of sweet odors. I like unanimity in worship here. You remember the lines—

***“At once they sing, at once they pray!
They hear of Heaven, and learn the way.”***

We used to sing that hymn when we were children, but is there always real unanimity in our assembly? While one is praising, is not another murmuring? While one is earnest, is not another indifferent? While one is believing, is not another an infidel? O God, grant to our assemblies, here below, the unanimity that comes of the One Spirit working in us the same result, for so we must be in Heaven, and if we are not of one mind here below, we are not like the heavenly beings above! When little bickerings come in. When sectarian differences prevent our joining in the common adoration, it is a great pity. God heal His one Church of all her unhappy divisions and any one Church of any latent differences that there may be,

that our unity on earth may be an anticipation of the unanimity of Heaven!

Note, next, that as the heavenly worshippers are full of life and full of unity, *so they are all full of holy reverence*. “When He had taken the Book, the four living creatures and twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb,” all reverently fell down before the Lamb! And in the 14th verse, after their song was over and after the angels and the whole creation had taken their turn in the celestial music, we read, “And the four living creatures said, Amen.” It was all that they could say—they were overawed with the majestic Presence of God and the Lamb! “And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshipped Him that lives forever and ever.” They did not say anything, then. They simply fell down and worshipped. It is a grand thing when, at last, we have broken the backs of words with the weight of our feelings—when expressive silence must come in to prove the praises which we cannot utter! It is glorious to be in this reverent state of mind. We are not always so, but they are so in Heaven! They are all ready to fall down before the Lord. Do you not think that we often come into our places of worship with a great deal of carelessness? And while the service is going on, are we not thinking of a thousand things? Or if we are attentive, is there enough lowly worship about us? In Heaven, they fall down before the Lamb—Brothers and Sisters, would not we serve God better if we did more of this falling down to worship the Lamb?

Note, next, that while they are all full of reverence, *they are all in a praising condition*—“Having, every one of them, harps.” They did not pass one harp around and take turns in playing it. Nor was there one who had to sit still because he had forgotten his harp. They had, every one of them, his harp. I am afraid those words do not describe all God’s people here, tonight. My dear Sister, where is your harp? It is gone to be repaired, is it not? My dear Brother, where is your harp? You have left it on the willow tree, by the waters of Babylon, so you have not one here. I must confess that sometimes I have not a harp—I could preach a solemn sermon—but I could not so well render the praise. Our dear friend, Hurditch, seemed to have brought his harp with him, tonight! I am glad he praised the Lord so many times for so many mercies. We do not always have our harps with us, but the living creatures and the elders had, all of them, the apparatus for the expression of their holy joy, “having, every one of them, harps.” Try to be like the spirits above.

But this is not all—*they are all ready for prayer*. In Heaven there is prayer—we must correct the common mistake about that matter—and there is something to pray for. Although we do not ask the intercession of saints and angels—that were far from Scriptural—still, we believe that the saints do pray. Are they not crying, “O Lord, how long?” Why should they not pray, “Your Kingdom come. Your will be done, in earth, as it is in Heaven”? They would understand that prayer better than we do. We know how God’s will is *not* done on earth, but they know how it is done in Heaven! And they could pray, “Your Kingdom come, for Yours is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, forever, Amen.” How sweetly could their lips move over such words as those! Well, they, all of them, had “golden vials full of odors.” Are we always furnished and prepared for

prayer? This ought to be more easy than always to have a harp, but I am afraid that we have not always our golden vials full of odors. I do not know that they are golden vials at all. I am afraid that ours are of the earth, earthy. But in Heaven they have golden vials, pure and precious, and they are full of odors. Sometimes, when you look into your prayer box, my Brothers and Sisters, you have to scrape the bottom to find enough perfume to make even a little incense. But to have our vials full of sweet odors, *this* is the state of mind in which we should always be. God bring us to that! We shall be getting near Heaven when we can always pray, and certainly near Heaven when we can always praise—

***“Prayer and praise, with sins forgiven,
Bring to earth the bliss of Heaven,”***

and make us ready to go up and share that bliss.

Now you see something of what these worshippers were. I do but pause a moment to ask whether we are prepared to go there, whether we are like those who are there. Remember that there is but one place for us besides—if we do not enter Heaven, to praise with those perfect spirits—we must be driven from the Divine Presence to suffer with the condemned! You are not willing to go to Hell—will you not be in earnest to go to Heaven? You recoil at the idea of, “Depart, you cursed!” Oh, why not, even now, accept, “Come, you blessed,” while Jesus repeats His gracious invitation, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”? I wish that I were able to press this invitation upon you, but I do put it before you. In the name of Jesus, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, I invite you to trust in Him and find your sins forgiven and, so doing, you shall be prepared to meet the Lamb who sits upon the Throne of God and there, forever, adore His Sacrifice while you enjoy the blessings that flow from it! May we all meet in Heaven! It would be a dreadful thing if we could know the destiny of everybody here and find, among other things, that some here will never see the Gate of Pearl except from an awful distance—with a great gulf fixed—of which gulf it is said, “They which would pass from here to you, cannot. Neither can they pass to us, that would come from there.” May we be on the right side of that gulf! Be on the right side of it, tonight, for Jesus’ sake!

II. Now, having thus spoken of the worshippers, I want you to LISTEN TO THEIR SONGS. We must listen our best in the short time that we have left. “They sang a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the Book, and to open its seals, for You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and have made us unto our God, kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”

It is rather an unusual thing to take a hymn and treat it doctrinally but, for your instruction, I must take away the poetry for a moment and just deal with the Doctrines of this heavenly hymn.

The first Doctrine is Christ is put in the front—the Deity of Christ, as I hold it. They sing, “You are worthy, You are worthy.” A strong-winged angel sped his way over earth and Heaven, and down the deep places of the universe, crying with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the Book?” But no answer came, for no creature was worthy. Then came One, of whom

the Church cries in its song, "You are worthy, You are worthy." Yes, Beloved, He is worthy of all the praise and honor that we can bring to Him! He is worthy to be called equal with God. No, He is, Himself God, very God of very God, and no man can sing this song, or ever will sing it, unless He believes Christ to be Divine and accepts Him as his Lord and God.

Next, the doctrine of this hymn is that the whole Church delights in the mediation of Christ. Notice, it was when He had taken the Book that they said, "You are worthy to take the Book." To have Christ standing between God and man is the joy of every believing heart. We could never reach up to God, but Christ has come to bridge the distance between us. He places one hand on man and the other upon God—He is the Daysman who can lay His hands upon both—and the Church greatly rejoices in this! Remember that even the working of Providence is not apart from the mediation of Christ. I rejoice in this, that if the thunders are let loose, if plagues and deaths around us fly, the child of God is still under the Mediator's protection and no harm shall happen to the chosen, for Jesus guards us always. All power is given unto Him in Heaven and in earth, and the Church rejoices in His mediatorship!

But now, notice, in the Church's song, what is her reason for believing that Christ is worthy to be a Mediator. She says, "You are worthy, for You were slain." Ah, Beloved, when Christ undertook to be her Mediator, this was the extreme point to which Suretyship would carry Him—to be slain! And He has gone to the extreme point and He has paid life for life. "In the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die," was the sentence pronounced upon Adam. The Second Adam has died—He has bowed His head to the sentence—He has vindicated the Law of God! He has gone to the extreme length of all that His mediatorship could possibly demand of Him and this makes the redeemed lift up the song higher and higher and higher—"You are worthy, for You were slain." Jesus is never more glorious than in His death! His Propitiation is the culmination of His Glory, after all, as it was the very utmost depth of His shame, Beloved, we rejoice in our Mediator because He died!

Well then, notice, that they sing of the redemption which His death effected, but they do not sing of the redemption of *the world*. No, not at all—"You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood *out of* every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." I am not going into a doctrinal discussion, tonight. I believe in the infinite value of the Atoning Sacrifice. I believe that if God had ordained it to be effectual for the salvation of many more, it was quite sufficient for the Divine purpose—but those whom Christ redeemed unto God by His blood are *not all mankind*. All mankind will not sing this song! All mankind will not be made kings and priests unto God! And all mankind are not redeemed in the sense in which this song is lifted up to God. I want to know, not so much about *general* redemption, of which you may believe what you like, but about Particular Redemption, *personal* redemption—"You have redeemed *us*." "Christ loved the *Church* and gave Himself for it." "You have redeemed *us* to God by Your blood *out of* every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

My dear Hearer, can you join in this song? It is all very well to say, "Oh, yes! We are *all* sinners. We are all redeemed." Stop, stop! Are you a sinner? Do you *know* it? Sinners are very scarce in London. "Why, there are millions of them!" you say. Yes, yes, yes—nominally, they will say so—but the bond fide sinner, who knows his guilt, is a scarce article—

**"A sinner is a sacred thing,
The Holy Spirit has made him so."**

If there is a real sinner in this house, tonight, she will be weeping at my Master's feet, washing those blessed feet with her tears! But as for you sham sinners—you are sinners, enough, God knows, but you do not really believe that you are sinners! You have never done anything very wrong, nothing very particular, nothing very important, nothing to break your hearts about. Oh, you—why you cannot even *claim* to come in among the sinners—you are a sham even there! But as for redemption, that redemption that *redeemed everybody* will not do you any good, for it redeemed Judas, it redeemed the myriads that are now in Hell! A poor redemption, that! The redemption that you need is the redemption that would fetch you right out from your fellow sinners, so that you would be separated unto God, according to that word, "Come out from among them, and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters."

A thing that is redeemed belonged, originally, to the person who redeems it, and the redeemed of the Lord always were His—"Yours they were," says Christ, "and You gave them to Me." They always were God's. You cannot go and redeem a thing that does not belong to you! You may *buy* it, but you cannot redeem it. Now, that which belonged originally to God came under a mortgage through sin. We, having sinned, came under the curse of the Law and though God still held to it that we were His, yet we were under this mortgage—sin had a lien upon us. Christ came and saw His own and He knew that they were His own. He asked what there was to pay to redeem them, to take them out of pawn. It was His heart's blood, His life, Himself that was required! He paid the price and redeemed them—and we, tonight, sing, "You have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." He has, by redeeming us, separated us to Himself and made us a peculiar people—bought with blood in a special sense out of all the rest of mankind!

I could tell you a great deal about the universal bearings of Christ's redemption in which I believe, and in the infinite value of that redemption, in which I believe, but I also say that there was, in the design of God, and in the work of Christ, a peculiar form of redemption which was only for His own people, even as His intercession is, for He says, "I pray for *them*, I pray *not for the world*: but for them which You have given Me, for they are Yours." Whatever some may think about it, there is a specialty and peculiarity about the redemption of Christ—and this makes the very highest note of the song of Heaven, "You have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

So much about the heavenly hymn doctrinally.

Now about it *experimentally*—“You have redeemed us to God.” I have said, dear Friends, that you cannot sing this song unless you know something of it *now*. Have you been redeemed? Has the mortgage that was on you through sin been taken off you? Do you believe in Jesus Christ? For, every man who believes in Jesus Christ has the evidence of his eternal redemption. You have been bought back with a countless price if you believe that Jesus is the Christ and you are trusting, alone, in Him! That was their experience—“You have redeemed us.” They felt free. They remembered when they wore their fetters, but they saw them all broken by Christ. Have you been set free? Have you had your fetters broken? Ask the question and then let us pass on.

This redemption is the ground of their distinction—“You have redeemed us to God by Your blood.” I heard one, the other day, say of a certain minister, “Oh, we want another minister, we are tired of this man. He is always talking so much about the blood.” In the Last Great Day, God will be tired of the man who made that speech. God never wearies of the precious blood, nor will His people who know where their salvation lies. They do not, even in Heaven, say that it is a dreadful word to mention. “Oh, but I do not like the word!” says some delicate gentleman. Your lordship will not be bothered with it, for you will not go to Heaven! Do not trouble yourself—you shall not go where they sing about the blood. But, mark you, if you ever *do* go there, you will hear it over and over and over again—“You have redeemed us to God by Your blood.” How they will ring it out! “You, You, You have redeemed us to God by Your blood.” How they will emphasize that pronoun, “You,” and address the praise wholly to Jesus, and sound out that word with the full music of their harps, “You have redeemed us to God by Your blood.” They are not ashamed of the blood of Jesus up there!

It is this redemption that has made them kings. We cannot realize our kingship to the fullest here below, though we do in a measure. There is a poor man here who has but one room to live in. He has no money in his pocket, tonight, yet he is a king in the sight of God! There is one here, perhaps, who used to be a drunk. He could not overcome the evil—he signed the pledge, wore the blue ribbon and so on—but still he went back to the drink. By the Grace of God he has got his foot upon it, now, for he has a new heart and a right spirit. That man is a king! He is a king over his drunken habits! There is one here who used to have a very fierce temper. It was hard to live with him, but Christ has made him a changed man and now he is a king, ruling over his temper! It is a grand thing to be made a king over yourself. There are some who have dominion over millions of others, who have never ruled themselves. Poor creatures! Poor creatures! Thank God, if He has given you the mastery of your own nature—that is a glorious conquest! Yet this is only the beginning of what is in this song of Heaven!

And then they say, “You have made us priests.” Oh, the poor creatures we have, nowadays, in the world, who cannot go to Christ except by a priest! They must go to a priest to confess their sins and go to a priest to get absolution. We have priests not only in the Church of Rome, but elsewhere! We are sorry to see this accursed priestcraft coming in everywhere.

Why, some of you people would like your minister to do all your religion for you, would you not? You take a sitting and leave your religion to your minister. Christ has made every one of His people a priest, and every child of God is as much a priest as I am! And I am a priest certainly, a priest unto God to offer the spiritual sacrifice of prayer, and praise, and the ministry of the Word. But here is the peculiar joy of all Christians—that God has made them priests. If they do not use their priesthood, here, I am afraid that they will never be able to use their priesthood before the Throne of God with their fellow priests. This is the melody of the heavenly song, “Washed in the precious blood, redeemed by that matchless price, we are now made unto our God kings and priests.” Even on earth each saint can sing—

**“I would not change my blessed estate,
For all that earth calls good or great!
And while my faith can keep her hold,
I envy not the sinner’s gold.”**

Thus have I spoken of the song doctrinally and experimentally. Now let me speak of it *expectantly*.

There is something to be expected—“And we shall reign on the earth.” When John heard that song, the Resurrection Day had not yet come. These are the spirits before the Throne of God, disembodied—they are expecting the Day of the Resurrection. When that day will come, who can tell? But when it comes, the dead in Christ shall rise first. Starting up at the midnight cry, they shall quit their beds of dust and silent clay—and the saints that are alive and remain shall join them. I will not go into the details of that time but then shall come a period of halcyon bliss. “The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.” Then shall be a time of the saints’ reigning upon the earth. Their life shall be regal—their delights, their joys and their honors shall be equal to those of kings and princes—no, they shall far exceed them! Do you and I expect to reign upon the earth? It will seem very odd to one who is very poor, obscure, perhaps ignorant, but who knows His Lord, to find that Christ has made Him a priest and a king and that he shall reign even on the earth with Him, and then reign forever with Him in Glory! But it would be more amazing—it would be perfectly monstrous if we were to assert of some persons, and of some here present—that *they* would reign on the earth!

The man who lives for himself shall never reign on the earth! “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth”—not the men who, in their selfishness, trample down everybody else with iron heels! You shall not reign on the earth—you have lived here simply to hoard money, or to make a name for yourself, or to indulge your passions, or to revenge yourselves upon your fellow men. You reign, Sir? You? God’s prison house is the place for you, not a throne! But when He has made us meek, humble, lowly, reverent and pure, *then* we shall become fit to be promoted to this high calling of being priests and kings for Christ unto God in Glory and even here on earth in the day that is coming.

I wish that everybody here would take to searching himself as to whether he is likely to be of that blessed number. Do you with joy accept Christ as your Mediator? Do you see clearly how worthy He is to be the

Mediator? Have you been redeemed from among men? Have you been taken away from old associations? Have you broken loose from habits that held you a slave among the Egyptians? Have you come into a new society? Has God brought you into a new Heaven and a new earth? Has He given you any measure of reigning power over yourself? Do you live as a priest, serving God continually? If you are obliged to keep on saying, "No, no, no," to all these questions, then what shall I say but, "Come to Christ"? May you come to Him, tonight! May He, tonight, begin in you that blessed process that shall make you meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON
PSALM 136.

When the chorus was taken up by the whole of the people, accompanied by a blast of trumpets, this must have been a magnificent hymn of praise.

Verse 1. *O give thanks unto the LORD; for He is good: for His mercy endures forever.* The Psalm begins with the august name, the incommunicable title of the one living and true God, Jah, Jehovah. For this name the Jews had a high respect which degenerated into superstition, for they would not write it in their Bibles—they put another word instead, in which our translators have imitated them, not to the improvement of the version. Surely, if it is, "Jehovah," in the original, we should have it, "Jehovah," here! The name is a very wonderful one, "Je-ho-vah." No man knows exactly how it should be pronounced. It is said to consist of a succession of breathings, therefore is it written, "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord," whose name is a breathing and in whom dwells the life of all who breathe. Let us take care that we never trifle with the name of God! I think that the common use of the word, "Hallelujah," or, "Praise the Lord," is simply profane. Surely, this is not a word to be dragged in the mire—it should be pronounced with solemn awe and sacred joy.

2. *O give thanks unto the God of gods: for His mercy endures forever.* If there is any other god, if there can be imagined to be any, our God is infinitely above them all! The gods of the heathen are idols, but our God made the heavens. If there is any reverence due to magistrates, of whom we read in Psalm 82, "I have said, You are gods," yet are they nothing at all compared with Jehovah, "the God of gods."

3. *O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for His mercy endures forever.* Whatever there is of authority, or lordship, or kingship of any kind in the world, it is all in subjection to Him who is "the Lord of lords." I think I hear the trumpets sounding it out and all the people joining in chorus, "O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for His mercy endures forever." It is always the same strain, the enduring mercy of God, that bore the strain of Israel's sin and Israel's need, and Israel's wandering.

4. *To Him who alone does great wonders: for His mercy endures forever.* Nobody does wonders that can be compared with Jehovah's wonders. Nobody helps Him in the doing of His wonders. He asks no aid from any of His creatures.

5. *To Him that by wisdom made the heavens: for His mercy endures forever.* Every time you lift up your eyes to that one great arch which spans all mankind, praise the name of the great Builder who made that one enormous span, unbuttressed and unpropped! What a work it was! And it was made by mercy as well as by wisdom. If we go into the scientific account of the atmosphere, of the firmament and of the stellar heavens, we see that the hand of mercy was at the back of wisdom in the making of it all—“for His mercy endures forever.”

6. *To Him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for His mercy endures forever.* We ought to praise Him for the making of every country, especially, I think, we who dwell on these favored islands, because He has placed our lot in an island—

**“He bade the waters round you flow.
No bars of brass could guard you so.”**

We might have been beneath the tyrant’s foot if it had not been for “the silver streak” that gives us liberty. The whole earth, wherever men dwell, will afford some peculiar reason for their praise to Jehovah.

7-9. *To Him that made great lights: for His mercy endures forever: the sun to rule by day: for His mercy endures forever: the moon and stars to rule by night: for His mercy endures forever.* Why three verses about one thing? Because we are not known to dwell upon God’s goodness as we should. We are, therefore, told first to remember light in *general*—and then the sun, the moon, the stars—each one in *particular*. And each time we do so, we may say, “His mercy endures forever.” We are not left in the daytime without the sun and, when the day is over, the darkness of the night is cheered either by the moon or by the stars which show us that not only day unto day, but night unto night, He thinks of us, “for His mercy endures forever.” Praise Him, praise Him, whether it is high noon or midnight, when the day is renewed or when the curtains of your rest are drawn, still praise Him, “for His mercy endures forever.”

10. *To Him that smote Egypt in their firstborn: for His mercy endures forever.* It is not a common mercy of which we have to sing, but a peculiar theme for thanksgiving. He “smote Egypt in their firstborn.”

11. *And brought out Israel from among them: for His mercy endures forever.* Sing of His goodness to His chosen, even though it involved a terrible stroke upon his proud adversary. There are some who cannot praise God’s left hand, but *we* can—not only the right hand that helps His people out, but the left hand that smites the Egyptians. We praise Him, still, with unabated joy in Him. What He does must be right and in His vengeance there is justice, and justice is mercy to mankind.

12. *With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm: for His mercy endures forever.* In all God’s acts there is some peculiarity which commands especial attention. “He brought out Israel,” praise Him for that. He did it “with a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm,” therefore again praise Him, The ring is precious, but the brilliance in the ring is that to which in this verse you are told to look, namely, Jehovah’s strong hand and stretched out arm.

13, 14. *To Him which divided the Red sea into parts: for His mercy endures forever: and made Israel to pass through the midst of it: for His mercy*

endures forever. And when you, too, come to the Red Sea on your way to the heavenly Canaan—when your path is blocked, God will divide it for you—and as He gently leads you through the very deeps, He will have you sing, “His mercy endures forever.” No floods can drown His love, nor divide you from it. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” Jehovah will split seas in two to make a passage for His people, “for His mercy endures forever.”

15. *But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea: for His mercy endures forever.* This is the deep bass of the hymn, He “overthrew Pharaoh.” “The horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.” We cannot give up that verse! We cannot refuse to sing the Song of Moses. We must praise and bless God for all that He did at the Red Sea, even though terrible were His deeds of righteousness, when the warriors of Egypt sank to the bottom of the sea like a stone.

16. *To Him which led His people through the wilderness: for His mercy endures forever.* Here is another point where you can join with Israel. This world is a wilderness to you, but the Lord leads you through it. By His fiery-cloudy pillar, He conducts you all your journey through. By His manna, gently dropping from Heaven, He still feeds you and He will guide you till He brings you over “Jordan’s stormy banks”—

“To Canaan’s fair and happy land.”

17-20. *To Him which smote great kings: for His mercy endures forever: and slew famous kings: for His mercy endures forever: Sihon king of the Amorites: for His mercy endures forever: and Og the king of Bashan: for His mercy endures forever.* Here you have the repetitions of God. I have sometimes said that I like the tunes which allow us to repeat the line of a hymn and, certainly, one likes a Psalm which turns over some great mercy of God, and makes us see the various facets of the wonderful jewel. The Psalmist does not merely say that Jehovah smote great kings, but these kings were famous in battle, which rendered their greatness or power the more formidable. But whether men are great, or whether they are valorous, or both, they cannot prevent God’s mercy to His people! He will push a way for them against the horns of their adversaries and they shall be victorious. As if to show the depth of His gratitude, the Psalmist gives the names of these kings and of the countries over which they ruled—and He dwells with emphasis upon these points of the mercy of God to His people in that He slew famous kings—Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og the king of Bashan.

21, 22. *And gave their land for an heritage: for His mercy endures forever: even an heritage unto Israel His servant: for His mercy endures forever.* He gave them those countries which were beyond the land of promise, because these foes tried to stop their journey. He did not limit Palestine but, on the contrary, He stretched the ordained bounds of it and enclosed the land of the Amorites and Bashan within the territory He gave to His people. Now comes a soft sweet verse—I think I hear the harps leading the singing—

23. *Who remembered us in our low estate: for His mercy endures forever.* Can you not sing this tonight? Some of you, who were very poor, very sad, despairing, abhorred of men, slandered, persecuted, very low—perhaps

some here who once were in the slums of this city, now can sing—"Who remembered us in our low estate." Spiritually, our estate was low enough. It had ebbed out till we had no comfort nor hope left—but the Lord remembered us! That is a blessed prayer, "Lord, remember me." That prayer has been answered for many, here! Yes, even before we prayed it! He remembered us in our low estate, "for His mercy endures forever." Dear Heart, are you in a very low estate tonight? Do you feel as if you were at death's dark door and at Hell's dread brink by reason of the greatness and blackness of your sin? "His mercy endures forever!" Catch at that rope! Drowning men clutch at straws, but *this* is no straw—cling to it—it will bear your weight! It has been a means of salvation to myriads before you. Trust God's mercy in Christ and you are saved, "for His mercy endures forever." "Who remembered us"—what next?

24. *And has redeemed us.* This song is climbing up—it begins to ascend the heavenly ladder! It has already reached redemption.

24, 25. *From our enemies: for His mercy endures forever. Who gives food to all flesh: for His mercy endures forever.* God is the great Feeder of the world. What a commissariat is that of the universe! One cannot think of the needs of the five millions in London without shuddering lest, some day, there should not be food enough for them. But there always is. I will not trace it to the mere fact that trade and commerce supply us. No, there is an over-ruling Power at the back of it all, depend upon it! All the world seems eager to supply our markets and to make the loaf for the laborer, but it is God who has planned it all! Let us praise Him "who gives food to all flesh." As for *spiritual* meat, He will give us that, too! I trust we shall all have a portion of meat in due season, tonight. If any shall be hungry at the end of the service, it shall be surely from lack of willingness to be fed rather than lack of suitability in the Word of God to sustain the spirit and bless the soul.

26. *O give thanks unto the God of Heaven: for His mercy endures forever.*

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

JESUS, THE DELIGHT OF HEAVEN

NO. 1225

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

***“And they sung a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and have made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”
Revelation 5:9, 10.***

IF YOU want to know a man's character, it is well to inquire at his home. What do his children and servants think of him? What is the estimate formed by those who are always with him? George Whitefield was once asked his opinion of a person and his answer was very wise, for he replied, “I never lived with him.” Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, see what an estimate is formed of your Lord at Home up yonder, where they know Him best and see Him most constantly, and in the clearest light! They have discovered no faults in Him. The angels who have beheld Him ever since they were created, the redeemed who have been with Him, some of them for thousands of years, have found no spot in Him. Their unanimous verdict expressed freely in joyful song is, “You are worthy; You are worthy; You are worthy.”

If you desire to know a man, it will be well to find out what the best sort of people think of him, for the good opinion of bad men is worthless. “What have I done,” said one of the Greek philosophers, “that you speak well of me?” when he found himself applauded by a man of evil character! A character that comes from men fitted to judge, who know what purity is, who have had their eyes opened to discriminate between virtue and its counterfeit—such a character is well worth having! One would not like to be thought ill of by a saint. We value the esteem of those whose judgment is sound, who are free from prejudice and who love only that which is honest and of good repute.

Now, Beloved, see what your Lord is thought of in the best society! Where they are all *perfect*! Where they are no longer children, but are all able to judge! Where they live in a clear light and are free from prejudice! Where they cannot make a mistake! See what they think of Him! They, themselves, are without fault before the Throne of God but they do not think themselves worthy—they ascribe worthiness to Jesus only. None stood up to take the book from the open hand of the great King. When they saw the Lamb do so, they felt that it was His right to take that prominent and honorable position—and with one accord they said, “You

are worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for You were slain.”

You and I cannot have too lofty thoughts of Jesus. We err in not thinking enough of Him. Let our estimate of Him grow and let us cry with Thomas, “My Lord and my God!” Oh, for great thoughts of Jesus! Oh, to set Him on the highest imaginable throne in the conceptions of our soul, and to make every power and faculty of our manhood fall prostrate like the elders before Him, while whatever of honor God may put upon us we cast always at His feet, and always say, with heart and lip and act, “You are worthy, Jesus, Emmanuel, Redeemer, who have purchased us by Your blood. Worthy are You, worthy forever and forever.”

It is to the estimate of the perfect spirits that I would call your attention. What do you think of Christ, you glorified ones, with whom we shall so soon unite? We have your answer in the words we have read. “You are worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and have made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”

I. Notice, first, that the bright ones before the Throne adore the Lord Jesus as WORTHY OF THE HIGH OFFICE OF MEDIATOR. They adore Him as alone worthy of that office, for there was silence in Heaven when the roll was held in God’s hand and the challenge was given, “Who is worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof?” Dumb were the four living creatures. Silent were the cherubim and seraphim—in mute solemnity sat the 24 elders on their thrones. They put in no claim for worthiness, but by their silence and their subsequent song when Christ came forward, they admitted that He, alone, could unfold the purposes of God and interpret them to the sons of men.

I take it that one of the meanings of our Lord’s taking the book into His hand was this—that He was *the Fulfiller* of that mysterious roll so closely sealed. He came to unfold it and, by transactions in which He should hold the chief place, it was to be fulfilled. The key of the purposes of God is Christ. We do not know what the decrees of God may be until they are fulfilled, but we do know that of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things, and that everything will begin and end with Jesus, for He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

He is the initial letter of all history and He will be the “finis” of it when He shall give up the Throne to God, even the Father, that God may be All in All. As our Lord Jesus is the Fulfiller, so He is *the Interpreter*. He has been with the Father and, “No man knows the Father save the Son, and He to whom the Son shall reveal Him.” He is the great Interpreter to us of the mind of God. His Spirit, dwelling in us, takes of His things and shows them unto us. And in the light of the Spirit we see the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. “No man comes to the Father,” He says, “but by Me,”

for no man can expound the Father to us or conduct us to the Father save Jesus Christ, the sole Interpreter of the Divine secret.

And so I regard the expressions here as setting Him forth as Mediator, for He it is who stands between God and man. He is worthy to take the book in His hands on our behalf and grasp for us the indentures of our inheritance beyond the stars. No one else can go in for us to the august Presence of the Most High and take the title deeds of Grace into His hands on our behalf. But Christ can do it and, taking it, He can unfold it and expound to us the wondrous purpose of electing love towards the chosen ones. Stand back, you sons of antichrist, with your bronze foreheads! How dare you bring forward a virgin, blessed among women, and cause her very name to be defiled by styling her our intercessor before God? How dare you bring your saints and make these to mediate between God and men? “There is one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus.”

The saints in Heaven sing of Him, “You are worthy,” and they salute none other! They reserve no homage for any other intercessor or mediator or interpreter or fulfiller of Divine Grace, for they know of no other. Unto Him they give, and to Him alone, the honor to go in unto the King on the behalf of the sons of men, and to take the book in His hands. Notice carefully to what they ascribe this worthiness—“You are worthy to take the book and open the seals thereof, *for you were slain.*” Now, the case stands thus—God has given to us innumerable blessings in the Covenant of Grace—but they are given upon a *condition*. There are two sides to a covenant.

Jesus Christ is our representative and Covenant Head, and the condition which, as the Mediator, He had to fulfill was this—that in due time He would offer to Divine Justice an honorable amend for all the injury done to the honor of God by our sins. As Mediator, our Lord’s worthiness did not merely arise from His Person as God and perfect Man—this fitted Him to undertake the office, but His right to claim the privileges written in the Magna Charta which God held in His hands, His right to take possession for His people of that seven-sealed indenture lies in this—that He has fulfilled the condition of the Covenant and, therefore, they sing, “You are worthy, for You were slain.”

Not, “You are worthy, for You were born on earth and You did live a holy life,” but, “You were slain.” For He must render recompense to incensed Justice and injured Holiness—and that He did upon the bloody tree. Whenever we begin to talk about this, the believers in the *modern atonement*—which is no Atonement, but a hazy piece of cloudland—say to us, “Oh, you hold the commercial theory, do you?” They know right well that we only use, because the Bible uses them, commercial expressions as metaphors. But I venture to say to them, “You may well assert that there is nothing commercial about your system, for the commercial value of a

counterfeit farthing would be too much to pay for the atonement in which *you* believe.”

I believe in an Atonement in which Christ *literally* took the sin of His people and for them endured the wrath of God, giving to Justice *quid pro quo* for all that was due to it, or an equivalent for it—bearing, that we might not bear, the wrath that was due to us. Jesus, Himself, really “bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” “He was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” There was a *literal*, positive, actual Substitution of “the Just for the unjust to bring us to God.” No other atonement is worth the breath used in preaching of it. It will neither give comfort to the conscience nor Glory to God. But on this rock our souls may rest without fear and it is because of this that they sing in Heaven, “You are worthy, *for You were slain*.”

“You can claim our absolution—You can take the Magna Charta of Your elect into Your hands and unroll the Covenant established with them of old. You can reveal to us the sure mercies of David, for Your part in the Covenant has been fulfilled. Your Substitutionary death has made Your people heirs with You.” Gladly would I fly yonder to join their song, but till then I’ll lisp it forth as best I may—“You are worthy to take the book and open the seals thereof, for You were slain.”

II. Secondly, in Heaven they adore the Lord as their REDEEMER. “You were slain, *and have redeemed us to God by Your blood*.” The metaphor of redemption, if I understand it, signifies this—a thing which is redeemed, in the strictest sense, belonged beforehand to the person who redeemed it. Under the Jewish law, lands were mortgaged as they are now. And when the money lent upon them, or the service due for them, was paid, the land was said to be redeemed. An inheritance first belonged to a person and then went away from him by stress of poverty. But if a certain price was paid it came back.

Now, “all souls are Mine” says the Lord, and the souls of men belong to God. The metaphor is used and, mark, these expressions are but *metaphors*. But the sense under them is no metaphor—it is fact. Our souls had come under mortgage, as it were, through the sin committed, so that God could not accept us without violating His Justice until something had been done by which He, who is infinitely Just, could freely distribute His Grace to us. Now, Jesus Christ has taken the mortgage from God’s inheritance. “The Lord’s portion is His people.” That portion was hampered till Jesus set it free. We were always God’s, but we had fallen into slavery to sin. Jesus came to make recompense for our offenses, and thus we return to where we were before, only with additional gifts which His Grace bestows.

In Heaven, they say, “You have redeemed us.” And they tell the price, “You have redeemed us to God *by Your blood*.” There lay the price—the sufferings and death of Jesus have set His people free from the slavery

into which they were brought. They are redeemed and they are redeemed unto God. That is the point—they come back to God as lands come back to the owner when the mortgage is discharged. We come back to God, again, to whom we always and ever did belong, because Jesus has redeemed us unto God by His blood.

And please notice that the redemption they sing about in Heaven is not *general* redemption. It is *particular* redemption. “You have redeemed *us* to God by Your blood *out of* every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” They do not speak of the redemption of every tongue, and people, and nation, but of a redemption *out of* every tongue, and people, and nation! I thank God I do not believe that I was redeemed in the same way that Judas was, and no more. If so, I shall go to Hell as Judas did. General redemption is not worth anything to anybody, for of itself it secures to no one a place in Heaven—but the special redemption which does redeem, and redeems men *out of* the rest of mankind—is the redemption that is to be prayed for, and for which we shall praise God forever and ever.

We are redeemed from among men. “Christ loved His Church and gave Himself for it.” “He is the Savior of all men”—let us never deny that—“but especially of them that *believe*.” There is a wide, far-reaching sacrificial Atonement which brings untold blessings to all mankind, but by that Atonement a special Divine object was aimed at, which will be carried out—and that object is the actual redemption of His own *elect* from the bondage of their sins—the price being the blood of Jesus Christ. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, may we have a share in this particular, efficient redemption, for this, alone, can bring us where they sing the new song!

This redemption is one which is personally realized. You have redeemed *us* to God. Redemption is sweet, but, “You have redeemed *us*” is sweeter, still! If I can but believe He loved me and gave Himself for *me*, that will tune my tongue to sing Jehovah’s praise, for what did David say? “Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness.” He repeated that several times over, but it would never have been carried out unless he had said, “Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He has redeemed out of the hand of the enemy.” In vain he called upon others, their tongues were dedicated to their pleasures! But the redeemed of the Lord are a fit choir to magnify His name.

The pith of what I have to say is this—in Heaven they praise Jesus Christ because He has redeemed them—my dear Hearer, has He ever redeemed you? “Oh,” says one, “I believe He has redeemed everybody!” But of what use is that? Do not the great mass of mankind sink to perdition? If you rest upon such a redemption, you rest upon what will not save you! He redeemed His own elect, or, in other words, He redeemed Believers. “God so loved the world” is a text much cried up, but pray go on with it. How much did He love the world? “That He gave His only begotten Son *that whoever believes in Him* should not perish.”

There is the specialty of it—"Whoever believes in Him," and if you do not believe in Him, you have no part or lot in His redemption! You are slaves to sin and Satan, and so will you live and so will you die. But believing in the Lord Jesus you have the marks of being specially and effectually redeemed by Him. And when you get to Heaven this will be your song—"You have redeemed us unto God by Your blood out of every kindred, and people, and tongue." Blessed be God for this! Some of all sorts are saved, some of all colors, ranks, nations and ages are saved! Some of all conditions of education and morals, some of the poorest, and some of the richest are redeemed—so that when we all assemble in Heaven, though we make a motley throng on earth, we shall constitute a united choir, having all our voices tuned to this one note, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

III. Thirdly, and briefly, in Heaven they praise Christ, not merely as Mediator and as Redeemer, but as the DONOR OF THEIR DIGNITIES. They are kings and they reign. We, too, are kings, but as yet we are not known or recognized, and often we, ourselves, forget our high descent. Up there they are crowned monarchs, but they say, "*You have made us kings.*" They are priests, too, as we are now, every one of us. When a fellow comes forward in all sorts of curious garments and says he is a priest, the poorest child of God may say, "Stand away and don't interfere with my office—I am a priest—I know not what *you* may be. You surely must be a priest of Baal, for the only mention of the word *vestments* in Scripture is in connection with the temple of Baal."

The priesthood belongs to all the saints! They sometimes call you laity, but the Holy Spirit says of all the saints, "You are God's *cleros*"—you are God's clergy. Every child of God is a clergyman or a clergywoman. There are no priestly distinctions known in Scripture. Away with them! Away with them forever! The Prayer Book says, "Then shall the *priest* say." What a pity that word was ever left there. The very word, "priest," has such a smell of the sulfur of Rome about it, that so long as it remains, the Church of England will give forth an ill savor. Call yourself a priest, Sir? I wonder men are not ashamed to take the title, when I remember what priests have done in all ages—what priests connected with the "church of Rome" have done!

I repeat what I have often said—I would sooner a man pointed at me in the street and called me a devil than called me a priest, for bad as the devil has been, he has hardly been able to match the crimes, cruelties and villainies which have been transacted under the cover of a special priesthood. From that may we be delivered! But the priesthood of God's saints, the Priesthood of Holiness, which offers prayer and praise unto God—*this* they have in Heaven, and they say of it, "*You have made us priests.*" What the saints are, and what they are to be, they ascribe to Jesus. They have no glory but what they received from Him, and they know it, and are per-

petually confessing it. Let our hearts sing with the redeemed—"All for Jesus, for all is *from* Jesus! All for Jesus, for Jesus has given us all we have." Let us begin that music here.

IV. Once again. They in Heaven adore the Savior as DIVINE. I am not straining the words of my text at all, but keeping the whole passage before me. If you read the two chapters you will find that while they sing to God, "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive honor and glory and power," they sing to the Lamb, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom." The ascriptions which are given to the Creator are also offered to the Lamb, and He is represented as sitting on the same Throne. Mark carefully that the adoration which they give to Him, He does not resent.

When John fell down to worship one of the angels, he received an earnest protest, "See you do it not." Now, if the worship given to Christ had been wrong, the thrice holy Savior would have exclaimed most earnestly, "See you do it not." But He intimates no objection to the worship, although it is freely rendered by all the intelligent beings before the Throne. Depend upon it, my Hearer, you will never go to Heaven unless you are prepared to worship Jesus Christ as God. They are all doing it there—you will have to come to it—and if you entertain the notion that He is a mere *man*, or that He is anything *less* than God, I am afraid you will have to begin at the beginning and learn what true religion means. You have a poor foundation to rest upon.

I could not trust my soul with a mere man, or believe in an Atonement made by a mere man! I must see God Himself putting His hands to so gigantic a work. I cannot imagine a mere man being thus praised as the Lamb is praised. Jesus is "God over all, blessed forever." When we ever speak at all severely of Socinians and Unitarians you must not be surprised at it, because if we are right, they are blasphemers! And if they are right we are idolaters—there is no choice between the two. We never could agree and never shall while the world stands. We preach Christ, the Son of God, as very God of very God, and if they reject Him, it is not for us to pretend that it makes no difference, when, in fact, it makes all the difference in the world!

We would not wish them to say more than they believe to be true, and they must not expect us to say less than we believe to be true. If Jesus is God, they must believe it, and must worship Him as such, or else they cannot participate in the salvation which He has provided. I love the Deity of Christ! I preach His Humanity with all my might, and I rejoice that He is the Son of Man, but oh, He must be the Son of God, too, or there is no peace for me—

***"Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find.
The holy, just, and sacred Three
Are terrors to my mind.***

But if Emmanuel's face appears,

My hope, my joy begins:

His name forbids my slavish fear;

His Grace removes my sins."

Now I have almost done, only this is the outcome of the subject. You see the opinion they have of Jesus in Heaven. My dear Friends, are you of the same mind with them? You will never go there till you are! There are no sects in Heaven—no two parties. They all hold the same views about Jesus. Let me ask you, then, are you of the same persuasion as the glorified saints?

They praise Jesus *for what He has done*. It is very wonderful to my mind that when they are adoring the Savior they seem to strike that one key—they praise Him for what He has done—and they praise Him for what He has done for *them*. They might have praised Him for what He *is*, but in the text they do not. Now, this reason which has such say in Heaven is the very same which moves us here—"We love Him because He first loved us," and as if to show that this kind of love is not an inferior love, the love of gratitude seems to be the very sum and substance of the love of Heaven—"You were slain, and have redeemed us." Can you praise Him for redeeming you?

Dear Hearer, you have heard about Jesus hundreds of times. Has He saved *you*? You know there is a fountain filled with blood which cleanses from all sin—has it cleansed *you*? You know He has woven a robe of righteousness which covers His people from head to foot—has He covered *you* with it? You will never praise Him till that is the case—and you cannot go to Heaven till you are ready for His praise. "Well, but I go to my place of worship." So you may. But *that* will not save you till you get a personal hold on Christ for yourself. "My mother and father were godly people." I am glad they were. I hope they won't have an ungodly son.

You must have a *personal* religion—something done by Jesus Christ *for you*. Young woman over yonder, has Jesus Christ redeemed you from among the mass of the people? Has He brought you out from your sins and separated *you* to Himself? Have you had the blood applied to *your* soul—the precious blood of sprinkling which speaks peace in the conscience? Time is flying and you have been hearers month after month—will it always be so? Will you never cry unto God, "Lord, let me know Your redemption! Let me have a share in the precious blood! Let me be washed from my sins"?

Remember, you must be able to praise Him for what He has done *for you*, or else you are not of the opinion of those in Heaven and into Heaven you cannot go! It is clear from the song I have been reading that in Heaven Christ is everybody and everything. Is Christ so with you? It is a solemn question to put to persons. Is Christ first and last and middle with you, top and bottom, foundation and pinnacle, All in All? He knows not Christ who does not know that Christ is All in All! Christ and company will never

do. Christ is the sole Savior, the sole Trust, the one Prophet, Priest and King to all who accept Him.

Is He everything to *you*? Ah, there are some who *think* they love Christ! They *think* they trust Christ! But if He were to come to their house He would have a seat at the far end of the table if they treated Him as they treat Him now. They give Him *part* of the Sabbath—they were loafing about all the morning, they were only able to get here this evening—and even now they have not come to worship, but only out of curiosity. A chapter in the Bible—how long is it, young Man, since you read one? Private prayer—ah, I must not go into *that*! It is such a sorry story that you would have to tell.

If anybody said to you, “You are not a Christian,” you would be offended. Well, I will say it, and you may be offended if you like, but remember you *should* be offended with *yourself* rather than with me. If you offend my Lord I am not at all afraid of your being offended with His servant, and therefore I tell you, if Christ is anything short of Lord and King in your soul, Christ and you are wide apart! He must be in the front rank, Lord High Admiral upon the sea, and Commander-in-Chief on the land. He is not going to be a petty officer, to come in at your odd times to be a lackey to you! You must take Him to be Head, Lord and Master. Is it so with you? If not, you differ from those in Heaven, for He is All in All to them!

Once more. Can you join with the words of our text and say, “He is worthy, He is worthy”? I hope there are many here who, if they for a moment heard that full burst of song, “He is worthy,” would join it very heartily, and say, “Yes, He is worthy.” I seemed, tonight when I was praying, as if I could hear them sing, “He is worthy,” and I could hardly restrain myself from shouting, “Well sing you so, you spirits before the Throne! He is worthy!” If we were to loose our silence for a moment, and break the decorum which we have observed through the sermon, and with one unanimous shout cry, “Yes, He is worthy,” I think it would be a fit thing to do!

Jesus is worthy of my life, worthy of my love, worthy of everything I can say for Him! He is worthy of a thousand times more than that, worthy of all the music and harps on earth, worthy of all the songs of all the sweetest singers, worthy of all the poetry of the best writers, worthy of all the adoration of every knee! He is worthy of all that every man has, or can conceive or can compass! He is worthy to be adored of all that are in the earth and under the earth, and in the sea, and in the heavens, and in the Heaven of heavens! He is worthy!

We say, “worthy,” because we cannot tell how worthy. I think these good singers in Heaven desired to give to the Lamb His due and then they paused, and said to themselves, “We cannot give Him the praise He deserves, but we know that He is worthy. We cannot pretend to give Him what He is worthy of, but we will say, ‘He is worthy.’” Yes, He is worthy! If

I had 50,000 lives in this poor body, He is worthy that they should all be poured out, one after another, in martyrdom! One should be burned alive, and another should be broken on the wheel, and another should be starved by inches, and another should be dragged at the heels of a wild horse—and He would deserve them all! He is worthy, and if we had all the mines of India—silver and gold and gems, the rarest treasures of all the kings that ever lived, if we were to give it all up to Him and go barefoot—He is worthy!

And if, after having done that, we were to abide day and night in perpetual work without rest, all for His sake, and if each one of us were multiplied into a million, and all of us labored so, He is worthy! Worthy! I would make every drop of dew sparkle with His praise and every leaf in the forest bear His name! I would make every dell and every mountain vocal with adoration and teach the stars, and teach the angels above the stars, His praise—

***“Oh for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer’s praise!”***

Let time and space become one mouth for song, and all eternity sound forth that mighty word, “He is worthy.” Do you feel that He is worthy? If you do *not*, you cannot be admitted where they sing that song, for if you could enter there you would be unhappy. Never hope to enter there until your soul can say, “I have rested in His blood. I am, by it, redeemed unto God and the Redeemer is worthy! And I will bear witness of His worthiness till time shall be no more.”

God bless you all, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Revelation 4:5.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—412, 416, 417.***

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

THE KINGLY PRIESTHOOD OF THE SAINTS

NO. 10

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 28, 1855,
 BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
 AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

*“And has made us unto our God kings and priests.
 And we shall reign on the earth.”
 Revelation 5:10.*

“MUSIC has charms.” I am sure sacred music has. For I have felt something of its charms while we have been singing that glorious hymn just now. There is a potency in harmony, there is a magic power in melody which either melts the soul to pity or lifts it up to unspeakable joy. I do not know how—it may be with some minds they possibly may resist the influence of singing. But I cannot. When the saints of God, in full chorus, “chant the solemn lay,” and when I hear sweet syllables fall from their lips, keeping measure and time, then I feel elevated—and, forgetting for a time everything terrestrial—I soar aloft towards Heaven! If such is the sweetness of the music of the saints below, where there is much of discord and sin to mar the harmony, how sweet must it be to sing above with cherubim and seraphim! Oh, what songs must those be which the Eternal always hears upon His Throne! What seraphic sonnets must those be which are thrilled from the lips of pure immortals, untainted by sin, unmingled with a groan—where they always warble hymns of joy and gladness, never intermingled with one sigh, or groan, or worldly care! Happy songsters! When shall I join your chorus? There is one of your hymns that runs—

“Hark! How they sing before the Throne!”

And I have sometimes thought I could “hark! How they sing before the Throne.” I have imagined that I could hear the full burst of the swell of the chorus, when it pealed from Heaven like mighty thunders and the sound of many waters. I have almost heard those lull-toned strains, when the harpers harped with their harps before the Throne of God! Alas, it was but imagination. We cannot hear it now. These ears are not fitted for such music. These souls could not be contained in the body, if we were once to hear some stray note from the harps of angels! We must wait till we get up yonder. Then, purified like silver seven times from the defilement of earth, washed in our Savior’s precious blood, sanctified by the purifying influence of the Holy Spirit—

***“We shall, unblemished and complete,
 Appear before our Father’s Throne
 With joys Divinely great!
 Then loudest of the crowd we’ll sing,***

***While Heaven's resounding mansions ring
With shouts of Sovereign Grace."***

Our friend, John, the highly favored Apostle of the Apocalypse, has given us just one note from Heaven's song. We shall strike that note and sound it again and again. I shall strike this tuning fork of Heaven and let you hear one of the key notes. "And have made us unto our God kings and priests. And we shall reign on the earth." May the great and gracious Spirit, who is the only illumination of darkness, light up my mind while I attempt, in a brief and hurried manner, to speak from this text.

There are three things in it—first, *the Redeemer's doings*—"and have made us." Secondly, *the saints' honors*—"and have made us kings and priests unto our God." And, thirdly, *the world's future*—"and we shall reign upon the earth."

I. First, then, we have THE REDEEMER'S DOINGS. They who stand before the Throne sing of the Lamb—the Lion of the tribe of Judah who took the Book and broke the seals thereof—"You have made us kings and priests unto our God." In Heaven they do not sing—

***"Glory, honor, praise and power
Be unto ourselves forever!***

We have been our own Redeemers—Hallelujah,"

They *never* sing praise to themselves. They glorify not their own strength—they do not talk of their own free will and their own might. But they ascribe their salvation from beginning to end, to God. Ask them how they were saved and they reply—"The Lamb has made us what we are." Ask them from where their glories came and they tell you—"They were bequeathed to us by the dying Lamb." Ask from where they obtained the gold of their harps and they say, "It was dug in mines of agony and bitterness by Jesus." Inquire who stringed their harps and they will tell you that Jesus took each sinew of His body to make them. Ask them where they washed their robes and made them white and they will say—

***"In yonder fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins."***

Some persons on earth do not know where to put the crown, but those in Heaven do. They place the diadem on the right head. And they always sing—"And He has made us what we are."

Well, then, Beloved, would not this note well become us here? For "what have we that we have not received?" Who has made us to differ? I know, this morning, that I am a justified man. I have the full assurance that—

***"The terrors of Law and of God
With me can have nothing to do.
My Savior's obedience and blood
Hide all my transgressions from view."***

There is not a sin against me in God's Book—they have all been forever obliterated by the blood of Christ and cancelled by His own right hand. I have nothing to fear. I cannot be condemned. "Who shall lay anything to

the charge of God's elect?" Not God, for He has justified. Not Christ, for He has died. But if I am justified, who made me so? I say—"And has made me what I am." Justification from first to last is of God. Salvation is of the Lord alone!

Many of you are sanctified persons, but you are not perfectly sanctified. You are not redeemed altogether from the dross of earth. You have still another law in your members, warring against the law of your mind and you always will have that law while you tabernacle in faith. You never will be perfect in your sanctification until you get up yonder before the solemn Throne of God—where even this imperfection of your soul will be taken away—and your carnal depravity rooted out. But yet, Beloved, there is an inward principle imparted. You are growing in Grace—you are making *progress* in holiness. Well, but who made you have that progress? Who redeemed you from that lust? Who ransomed you from that vice? Who bade you say farewell to that practice in which you indulged? Cannot you say of Jesus, "And has made us"? It is Christ who has done it all—and to His name be honor, glory, praise and dominion!

Let us dwell one moment on this thought and show you how it is that it can be said that Christ has made us thus. When did Christ make His people kings and priests? When could it be said, "And has made us kings and priests unto our God"?

1. First of all, He made us kings and priests, virtually, when He signed the Everlasting Covenant. Far, far back in eternity, the Magna Charta of the saints was written by the hand of God and it needed one signature to make it valid. There was a stipulation in that Covenant that the Mediator should become Incarnate, should live a suffering life and at last endure a death of ignominy! And it needed but one signature—the signature of the Son of God—to make that Covenant eternally valid and "ordered in all things and sure." I think I see Him now, as my imagination pictures the lofty Son of God grasping the pen. See how His fingers write the name. And there it stands in everlasting letters—"THE SON!" O sacred ratification of the treaty! It is stamped and sealed with the great seal of our Father in Heaven. O glorious Covenant—then forever made secure! At the moment of the signature of this wondrous document, the spirits before the Throne—I mean the angels—might have taken up the song and said of the whole body of the elect, "And have made you kings and priests unto your God." And could all the chosen company have started into existence, they could have clapped their hands and sung, "Here we are by that very signature, constituted kings and priests unto our God."

2. But He did not stop there. It was not simply agreeing to the terms of the treaty. But in due time He filled it all—yes, to its utmost jot and tittle. Jesus said, "I will take the cup of salvation," and He did take it—the cup of our deliverance. Bitter were its drops—gall lay in its depths. There were groans and sighs and tears within the red mixture. But He took it all and drank it to its dregs and swallowed all the awful draught. All was

gone. He drank the cup of salvation and He ate the bread of affliction. Look at Him as He drinks the cup in Gethsemane, when the fluid of that cup did mingle with His blood and make each drop a scalding poison. Mark how the hot feet of pain did travel down His veins. See how each nerve is twisted and contorted with His agony. Behold His brow covered with sweat. Witness the agonies as they follow each other into the very depths of His soul. Speak, you Lost! Tell what Hell's torment means. But you cannot tell what the torments of Gethsemane were. Oh, the unutterable deep! There was a depth which couched beneath, when our Redeemer bowed His head—when He placed Himself betwixt the upper and nether millstones of His Father's vengeance—and when His whole soul was ground to powder. Ah, that wrestling Man—God—that suffering Man of Gethsemane. Weep over Him, Saints—weep over Him when you see Him rising from that prayer in the Garden, marching forth to His Cross! When you picture Him hanging on His Cross four long hours in the scorching sun, overwhelmed by His Father's passing wrath—when you see His side streaming with gore—when you hear His death-shriek, "It is finished!"—and see His lips all parched—moistened by nothing save the vinegar and the gall—ah, then prostrate yourselves before that Cross, bow down before that Sufferer and say, "*You have made us—You have made us what we are. We are nothing without You.*" The Cross of Jesus is the foundation of the glory of the saints. Calvary is the birthplace of Heaven. Heaven was born in Bethlehem's manger. Had it not been for the sufferings and agonies of Golgotha we would have had no blessing. Oh, Saint! In every mercy, see the Savior's blood—look on this Book—it is sprinkled with His blood. Look on this House of Prayer—it is sanctified by His sufferings. Look on your daily food—it is purchased with His groans. Let every mercy come to you as a blood-bought treasure. Value it because it comes from Him. And evermore say, "You have made us what we are."

3. Beloved, our Savior Jesus Christ finished the great work of making us what we are by His Ascension into Heaven. If He had not risen up on high and led captivity captive, His death would have been insufficient. He "died for our sins," but He "rose again for our justification." The Resurrection of our Savior, in His majesty when He burst the bonds of death, was to us the assurance that God had accepted His Sacrifice. And His Ascension up on high was but as a type and a figure of the real and actual ascension of all His saints—when He shall come in the clouds of judgment—and shall call all His people to Him. Mark the Man-God as He goes upward towards Heaven. Behold His triumphal march through the skies, while stars sing His praises and planets dance in solemn order. Behold Him traverse the unknown fields of ether till He arrives at the Throne of God in the seventh Heaven! Then hear Him say to His Father, "I have finished the work which You gave Me to do, behold Me and the children You have given Me. I have fought a good fight. I have finished

My course. I have done all. I have accomplished every type. I have finished every part of the Covenant. There is not one iota I have left unfulfilled, or one tittle that is left out. All is done.” And hark, how they sing before the Throne of God when thus He speaks—“You have made us unto our God kings and priests. And we shall reign on the earth.”

Thus have I briefly spoken upon the dear Redeemer’s doings. Poor lips cannot speak better, faint heart will not rise up to the height of this great argument. Oh, that these lips had language eloquent and lofty, that they might speak more of the wondrous doings of our Redeemer!—

“Crown Him! Crown Him!

Crowns become the Savior’s brow!”

II. Now, secondly, THE SAINTS’ HONORS—“And have made us unto our God kings and priests.” The most honorable of all monarchs have always been esteemed to be those who had a right not only to royalty, but to sacerdotal supremacy. Those kings who could wear at one time the crown of loyalty and at another the miter of the priesthood—who could both use the censer and hold the scepter—who could offer intercession for the people and then govern the nations. Those who are kings and priests are great, indeed! And here you behold the saint honored, not with one title, or one office, but with two. He is made not merely a king, but a king and a priest—not merely a priest, but a priest and a king! The saint has two offices conferred upon him at once—he is made a priestly monarch and a regal priest!

I shall take, first of all, the royal office of the saints. They are **KINGS**. They are not merely to be kings in Heaven, but they are also kings on earth. For if my text does not say so, the Bible declares it in another passage—“You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood.” We are kings *even now*. I want you to understand that—before I explain the idea. Every saint of the living God not only has the prospect of *being a king* in Heaven, but positively, in the sight of God, he *is a king* now! And he must say, with regard to his Brothers and Sisters and himself, “And have made us,” even now, “unto our God kings and priests. And we shall reign upon the earth.” A Christian is a king! He is not simply *like* a king, but He *is* a king, actually and truly! However I shall try and show you how He is like a king.

Remember *his royal ancestry*. What a fuss some people make about their grandfathers and grandmothers and distant ancestors. I remember seeing in Trinity College the pedigree of some great lord that went back just as far as Adam and Adam was there digging the ground—the first man! It was traced all the way up. Of course I did not believe it. I have heard of some pedigrees that go back further—I leave that to your own common sense to believe it or not! A pedigree in which shall be found dukes, marquises and kings and princes—oh, what would some give for such a pedigree? I believe, however, that it is not what our *ancestors were*, but what *we are*, that will make us shine before God. It is not so

much in knowing that we have royal or priestly blood in our veins, as knowing that we are an honor to our race—that we are walking in the ways of the Lord and reflecting credit upon the Church and upon the Grace that makes us honorable. But since some men will glory in their descent, I will glory that the saints have the proudest ancestry in all the world! Talk of Caesars, or of Alexanders, or tell me even of our own good Queen—I say that I am of as high descent as Her Majesty, or the proudest monarch in the world! I am descended from the King of kings. The saint may well speak of his ancestry—he may exult in it, he may glory in it—for he is a child of God, positively and actually. His mother, the Church, is the Bride of Jesus. He is a twice-born child of Heaven—one of the blood royal of the universe. The poorest woman or man on earth, loving Christ, is of a royal line. Give a man the Grace of God in his heart and his ancestry is noble. I can turn back the roll of my pedigree and I can tell you that it is so ancient, that it has no beginning. It is more ancient than all the rolls of mighty men put together—from all eternity my Father existed—and therefore, I have indeed a right royal and ancient ancestry!

And then, again, *the saints, like monarchs, have a splendid retinue.* Kings and monarchs cannot travel without a deal of state. In olden times, they had far more magnificence than they have now. But even in these days we see much of it when royalty is abroad. There must be a peculiar kind of horse, a splendid chariot, outriders with all the etceteras of gorgeous pomp. Yes, and the kings of God, whom Jesus Christ has made kings and priests unto their God, have also a royal retinue. “Oh,” you say, “but I see some of them in rags. They are walking through the earth, alone, sometimes without a helper or a friend.” Ah, but the fault is in your eyes. If you had eyes to see, you would perceive a body-guard of angels always attending every one of the blood-bought family! You remember Elijah’s servant could not see anything around Elijah till his master opened his eyes. Then he could see that there were horses and chariots round about Elijah. Lo! There are horses and chariots about *me!* And you, saint of the Lord—wherever you are—there are horses and chariots! In that bedchamber, where I was born, angels stood to announce my birth on high. In seas of trouble, when wave after wave seems to go over me, angels are there to lift up my head. When I come to die, when sorrowing friends shall, weeping, carry me to the grave, angels shall stand by my bier—and, when put into the grave, some mighty angel shall stand and guard my dust and contend for its possession with the devil. Why should I fear? I have a company of angels about me! And whenever I walk abroad, the glorious cherubim march in front. Men see them not, but I see them. For “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” We have a royal retinue—we are kings, not merely by ancestry, but by our retinue!

Now, notice *the insignia and regalia of the saints*. Kings and princes have certain things that are theirs by perspective right. For instance, Her Majesty has her Buckingham Palace and her other palaces, her crown royal, her scepter and so on. But, has a saint a palace? Yes. I have a palace! And its walls are not made of marble, but of gold. Its borders are carbuncles and precious gems. Its windows are of agates. Its stones are laid with fair colors—around it there is a profusion of every costly thing—rubies sparkle here and there, yes, pearls are but common stones within it! Come, call it a mansion. But I have a right to call it a palace, too, for I am a king! It is a mansion when I look at God. It is a palace when I look at men, because it is the habitation of a prince. Mark where this palace is. I am not a prince of India—I have no inheritance in any far-off land that men dream of—I have no El Dorado, or Home of Prester John. But yet I have a substantial palace! Yonder, on the hills of Heaven it stands—I know not its position among the other mansions of Heaven, but there it stands—and “I know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, I have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

Have Christians a crown, too? O yes, but they do not wear it every day. They have a crown, but their coronation day is not yet arrived. They have been anointed monarchs, they have some of the authority and dignity of monarchs—but they are not crowned monarchs yet. But the crown is made. God will not have to order Heaven’s goldsmiths to fashion it in later—it is already made—hanging up in Glory! God has “laid up for me a crown of righteousness.” Oh, saint, if you did just open some secret door in Heaven and went into the treasure chamber, you could see it filled with crowns. When Cortez entered the palace of Montezuma, he found a secret chamber bricked up and he thought the wealth of all the world was there, so many different things were there stowed. Could you enter God’s secret treasure house, what wealth would you see? “Are there so many monarchs,” you would say, “so many crowns, so many princes?” Yes and some bright angel would say, “Mark that crown? It is yours.” And if you were to look within, you would read, “Made for a sinner saved by Grace, whose name was ____.” And then you would hardly believe your eyes, as you saw your own name engraved upon it! You are indeed a king before God, for you have a crown laid up in Heaven! Whatever other insignia belongs to monarchs, saints shall have. They shall have robes of whiteness. They shall have harps of glory. They shall have all things that become their regal state, so that we are, indeed, monarchs, you see. Not mock-monarchs, clothed in purple garments of derision and scoffed at with, “Hail, King of the Jews.” But we *are real* monarchs—“He has made us kings and priests unto our God.”

There is another thought here. *Kings are considered the most honorable among men*. They are always looked up to and respected. If you should say, “a monarch is here!” A crowd would give way. I should not

command much respect if I were to attempt to move about in a crowd. But if anyone should shout, “here is the Queen!” everyone would step aside and make room for her. A monarch generally commands respect. Ah, Beloved, we think that worldly princes are the most honorable of the earth, but if you were to ask God, He would reply, “My saints, in whom I delight, these are the honorable ones.” Tell me not of tinsel and gewgaw. Tell me not of gold and silver. Tell me not of diamonds and pearls. Tell me not of ancestry and rank. Preach to me not of pomp and power. But oh, tell me that a man is a saint of the Lord—for then he is an honorable man! God respects him. Angels respect him and the universe one day shall respect him, when Christ shall come to call him to his account and say, “well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord.” You may despise a child of God now, Sinner. You may laugh at him, you may say he is a hypocrite. You may call him a saint, a Methodist, a cant and everything you like—but know that those titles will not mar his dignity—he is the honorable of the earth and God estimates him as such!

But some persons will say, “I wish you would prove what you affirm, when you say that saints are kings, for, if we were kings, we should never have any sorrows—kings are never poor as we are and never suffer as we do.” Who told you so? You say if you are kings, you would live at ease? Do not kings ever suffer? Was not David an anointed king? And was he not hunted like a partridge on the mountains? Did not the king, himself, pass over the brook Kidron and all his people weeping as he went, when his son Absalom pursued him? And was he not a monarch when he slept on the cold ground, with no couch save the damp heather? O yes, kings have their sorrows—crowned heads have their afflictions—

“Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.”

Do not expect that because you are a king you are to have no sorrows! “It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes strong drink.” And it is often so. The saints get but little wine here. It is not for kings to drink the wine of pleasure. It is not for kings to have much of the intoxicating drink and the surfeits of this world’s delight. They shall have joy enough up yonder, when they shall drink it new in their Father’s Kingdom! Poor Saint! Do dwell on this. You are a king! I beseech you let it not go away from your mind. But in the midst of your tribulation, still rejoice in it! If you have to go through the dark tunnel of infamy, for Christ’s name. If you are ridiculed and reviled, still rejoice in the fact, “I am a king and all the dominions of the earth shall be mine!”

This last idea and I have done with this part of the subject. *Kings have dominion.* Do you know I am a fifth monarchy man? In Cromwell’s time, some said there had been four monarchies and the fifth would come and overturn every other. Well, I never wish to do as they did. But I believe with them, that a fifth monarchy shall come. There have now existed four great empires, arrogating universal dominion and there never shall be

another world-wide monarchy until Christ shall come. Jesus, our Lord, is to be King of all the earth and rule all nations in a glorious spiritual, or personal reign! The saints, as being kings in Christ, have a right to the whole world.

Here am I this morning and my congregation before me. Some persons say, "Keep to your own place and preach." I have heard the advice, "Do not go out of your parish." But Rowland Hill used to say he never went out of his parish in his life—his parish was England, Scotland and Wales—he never went out of it. I suppose that is my parish and the parish of every Gospel minister. When we see a city full of sin and iniquity, what should we say? "That is ours, we will go and storm it"? When we see a street or some crowded area where the people are very bad and wicked, should we say, "That is our alley, we will go and take it"? When we see a house where people will not receive the Gospel, should we say, "That is our house, we will go and attack it"? We will not go with the strong arm of the Law. We will not ask the policeman or government to help us! But we will take with us "the weapons of our warfare" which "are not carnal but spiritual and mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds." We will go and, by God's Spirit, we shall overcome! There is a town where the children are running about the street uneducated. We will go and take those children—kidnap them for Christ! We will have a Sunday school. If they are ragged urchins who cannot come to a Sunday school, we will have a Ragged School. There is a part of the world where the inhabitants are sunk in ignorance and superstition—we will send a missionary to them. Ah, those who do not like missionary enterprises, do not know the dignity of the saint! Talk of India, talk of China. "They are mine," says the saint. All the kingdoms of the earth are ours. "Africa is my wash pot—I will triumph over Asia. They are mine! They are mine!" "Who shall bring me into the strong city?" Is it not You, O Lord? God shall give us the Kingdom of Christ! The whole earth is ours. And by the power of the Holy Spirit, Baal shall bow, Nebo shall stoop, the gods of the heathen, Buddha and Brahma shall be cast down and all nations will bow before the scepter of Christ. "He has made us kings."

Our second point, upon which I shall be very brief, is, "He has made us kings and PRIESTS." Saints are not only kings, but priests. I shall go to it at once, without any preface.

We are priests, because *priests are Divinely chosen persons* and so are we. "No man takes this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." But we have that calling and election. We were all ordained to it from the foundations of the world. We were predestinated to be priests and in process of time we had a special Effectual Call, which we could not and did not resist! And it at last overcame us that we became at once the priests of God. We are priests, Divinely constituted. When we say we are priests, we do not talk as certain parties do, who say they are priests, wishing thereby to arrogate to themselves a distinction. I

always have an objection—I must state it strongly—to calling a clergyman, or any man that preaches, a priest! We are no more so than you are! All saints are priests. But, for a man to stand up and say he is a priest, any more than those he preaches to, is a lie! I detest the distinction of clergy and laity. I like *Scriptural* priestcraft, for that is the craft or work of the people who are all priests. But all other priestcraft I abhor. Every saint of the Lord is a priest at God’s altar and is bound to worship God with the holy incense of prayer and praise. We are priests, each one of us, if we are called by Divine Grace. For thus we are priests by Divine constitution.

Then, next, we are priests because *we enjoy Divine honors*. None but a priest might enter within the veil. There was a court of the priests into which none might ever go except the called ones. Priests had certain rights and privileges which others had not. Saint of Jesus! Heir of Heaven! You have high and honorable privileges which the world knows not of! Have you ever been within the veil in communion with Christ? Have you ever been in the court of the Lord’s House, the court of the priests, where He has taught you and manifested Himself to you? Have you? Yes, you know you have—you enjoy constant access to God’s Throne! You have a right to come and tell your griefs and sorrows into the ears of Jehovah. The poor worldling must not come there, the poor child of wrath has no God to tell his troubles to. He must not go within the veil—he has no wish to go—but you may. You may come to God’s ear, swing the censor before the Throne and offer your petition in the name of Jesus! Others have not these Divine honors. You are Divinely honored and Divinely blessed!

Then another remark, to finish up with, shall be, *we have a Divine service to perform*. And as I want you all, this morning, to turn this chapel into one great altar—as I want to make you all *working* priests and this the temple for sacrifice—look earnestly at your service! You are all priests, because you love His dear name and have a great sacrifice to perform—not a propitiation for your sins—for that has been once offered—but a sacrifice this day of *holy thanksgiving*. Oh, how sweet in God’s ears is the prayer of His people! That is the sacrifice that He accepts. And when their holy hymn swells upwards towards the sky, how pleasant it is in His ears, because then He can say, “My hosts of priests are sacrificing praise.” And do you know, Beloved, there is one point in which most of us fail in our oblations before God? We offer our prayer. We present our praise. But how little do we sacrifice of our substance unto the Lord! I had thought, this morning, seeing I desire to make you amazingly liberal, to have made this my text, “Honor the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all your increase—so shall your barns be filled with plenty and your presses shall burst out with new wine.” And I had thought of showing that our substance was the Lord’s—that we were bound to devote no small portion of it to Him—and that if

we did do so we might expect prosperity even in worldly business, for He would make our barns full and our presses burst with new wine! However, I conceive it to be needless to preach a collection sermon—I thought I would rather tell you about your honor and dignity—and then you shall just give what you like, for the only free will I like, is a free will offering! Suffer, Beloved, a few words! God has said in His Word that you are to honor Him with your substance. As a priest of the Lord will you not sacrifice something to the Lord this day? Here we have a great objective before us. We need more room for the crowds who come to hear the Gospel. It seems important, when such a throng is gathered, that none should go away. Ought we not to bless God that they come? There was a time you were few, indeed, and the cry was, “Who has believed our report?” But God has given us great success. The ministry here has been blessed to the conversion of not a few souls. I have many cases, now in this Chapel, of broken hearts and contrite spirits. Doubtless, there are many more than I know of and I believe the blessed Spirit will bring them out in due time. Oh, do you not grieve that any should have to turn away from the voice of the ministry—that any who come here should have to go away, perhaps to spend the Sabbath in sin? You know not where they have to go, when they cannot get within these walls! The thing is we have come to the resolution that this Chapel should be enlarged so that there should be accommodation for a larger number. Now, you priests, sacrifice to the Lord! Let the priests build the house of Lord. Let those who worship in the sanctuary take up the trowel today! Let the mortar and the brick be laid and let this house be once more filled with the Glory of the Lord and an abundant congregation!

III. Now I have to close up with THE WORLD’S FUTURE. “We shall reign on the earth.” I have not much time for this and I dare say it is expected that I shall tell you about the millennium and the personal reign of Christ. I shall not at all, because I don’t know anything about it! I have heard a great many people talk of it. If anybody shows me a book on the millennium, I say, “I cannot read it just yet.” A good man has lately written a book on it and a gentleman recommended it to me so strongly that I could not but buy it out of courtesy. But I elevated it to the aristocratic region of my library—in the higher ranks—and there it rests in quiet repose! I do not think myself capable of threading the labyrinths of the subject and I do not believe the very respectable author can do it either! It is a subject so dark and I have read so many different views upon it, that it is all a phantasmagoria with me. I believe all the Bible says of a glorious future, but I cannot pretend to be a maker of charts for all time. Only this I gather as a positive fact—that the saints will one day reign on the earth! This Truth appears to me clear enough, whatever may be the different views on the millennium. The saints do not reign visibly *now*. They are *despised*. They were driven, in old times, into dens and caves of the earth—but the time is coming when kings will be saints and princes

the called ones of God—when queens shall be the nursing mothers and kings the nursing fathers of Christ’s Church. The hour is coming when the saint, instead of being dishonored, shall be honored. And monarchs, once the foes of Truth, shall become its friends! The saints shall reign. They shall have the majority. The Kingdom of Christ shall have the upper hand. It shall not be cast down—this shall not be Satan’s world any longer—it shall again sing with all its sister stars, the never ceasing song of praise! Oh, I believe there is a day coming when Sabbath bells shall sprinkle music over the plains of Africa—when the deep thick jungle of India shall see the saints of God going up to the sanctuary and I am assured that the teeming multitudes of China shall gather together in temples built for prayer! As you and I have done, they, too, shall sing to the ever glorious Jehovah—

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow.”

Happy day! Happy day! May it speedily come!

Now, to close up, one very practical inference. You are kings and priests unto your God. Then how much ought kings to give to the collection this morning? Thus speak you to yourselves. “I am a king. I will give as a king gives unto a king.” Now, mark you, no paltry subscriptions! We don’t expect kings to put down their names for trifles. Then, again—you are a priest. Well, priest, do you mean to sacrifice? “Yes.” But you would not sacrifice a crippled lamb, or a blemished bullock, would you? Would you not select the best of the flock? Very right. Then select the very best of the Queen’s coins and offer, if you can, sheep with golden fleece.

Excuse my pressing this subject. I want to get this Chapel enlarged. So do you. We are all agreed about it. We are all rowing in one boat. I have set my mind on £50 and I must and will, have it today, if possible. I hope you won’t disappoint me. It is not my *own* cause, but my Master’s—at other times you have given liberally—I am not afraid of you—but hope to come forward, next Sabbath morning, with the cheering announcement that the £50 is all raised. Then I think my spirit will be so elevated, that, by the help of God, I will venture to promise you one of the best sermons I am capable of delivering!

[The Christian reader will be pleased to learn, that after this appeal, the sum of £50, 11 1/2d. was collected at the doors towards defraying the expenses of the enlargement.]

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.**

THE MULTITUDE BEFORE THE THRONE

NO. 3403

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 1914.

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

***“After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, tribes, people and tongues stood before the Throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sits upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb.”
Revelation 7:9, 10.***

IT seems as though a dash of wonderment thrilled through his soul and a flame of admiration burst from his tongue, when John exclaims, “After this I beheld, and lo!” He had already seen much. His attention was fixed. His thoughts were strained. All of a sudden, then, a fresh scene breaks on his view and he betrays his surprise. At what, you say? Evidently he was astonished that the vision was not yet complete. Ah, Brothers and Sisters! In order to understand the deep things of God, we need to be patient in our contemplation. Had John turned away his eyes, relaxed his study, or withdrawn his gaze from the marvelous panorama, he would not have seen the better part of his vision! As a Jew, when he had seen the twelve tribes pass before him, he might have been tempted to say, “It is enough! There is a remnant according to the election of Grace in Israel! Lord, Your servant is content! I would now open my eyes again to earth and forget these mysteries.” This is what many have done practically when they have been looking at a Gospel Truth. They have not been desirous to see it all, though glad enough to see some part of the Truth of God which seemed to suit their prejudice—they have taken their eyes away from the excellent glory before they have seen the whole of the Truth, as though they were afraid of discovering too much, as though they were always glad not to learn anything beyond, for fear it would not square with what they had learned before! John, however, being patient and taught of God, continued to look—and when the august assembly of the 144,000 had passed before him, he saw a far greater multitude of the Gentile race and he heard from them a louder song than he had heard from the chosen multitude before, as they said, “Salvation to our God who sits upon the Throne and unto the Lamb.” Be steadfast, then, you searchers into the Truths of God. Look long! Look earnest! Ask the Lord to let you see as much as you may. Then that petition being granted, comfort yourselves with this reflection, “What you know not now you

shall know hereafter.” Some things He will not tell you because you cannot bear them now, but let there be nothing hid from you because your interest flags and you do not wish to see it! Be willing to learn and let your eyes be open to see the whole of the Truth which Jesus would reveal. Turning, then, to the vision described in our text, the first thing in it that we ought to meditate upon is—

I. THE GREAT CENTER OF THE HEAVENLY WORLD.

It seems that all the saints and angels that John saw surrounded one common rallying place—the Throne of God and of the Lamb. They were not broken up into groups, some of them considering this subject, and others investigating that. They were not divided into parties, some calling themselves by one name, and some by another. All in one group they stood, though their number was beyond all human count, and every eye was directed to one common object—yes, and every heart went with every eye—and every tongue sounded the same song, and that a song of adoration to the same One who was the center of all!

Does not this teach us *that God is the very center of Heaven?* We might have guessed this, for He is center of all the new creation. Even now all those that are born-again live in Him, inheriting all the blessings of eternal life in their union to Christ, and their fellowship with Him. From Him they derive all their light—to Him and upon Him they reflect all the light, again, giving all the glory unto Him from whom they received all the Grace. He who built Heaven, He who supports Heaven, He who chose every inhabitant in Heaven, He who fashioned every inhabitant *for* Heaven, He who bought every inhabitant of Heaven with His precious blood, He who is the Father of all and the Friend of all, may well be the center of all joy, of all observation, and of all worship in the eternal world!

Note, however, particularly, that the center of the heavenly worship is not God in the act of Creation, but *God upon the Throne*. Divine Sovereignty is the very center of Heaven! John saw God on the Throne. Here, below, if we speak upon Divine Sovereignty too plainly, we have to encounter the objections of many who pronounce it a hard saying and ask “Who can bear it?” That the Potter shall have power over the clay to do as He wills with each lump, that He should have mercy upon whom He will have mercy, and do as He wills with His own, grates harshly on their ears! I know it is because hearts are hard upon earth, for in that place where every heart is right with God, they are all too glad to let Him sway the scepter. This is the very crown of their song—“The Lord God Omnipotent reigns.” His will is their supreme delight. They understand that His will, despotic as it may seem, and unquestioned by any creature, is a will of mercy, of tenderness, of wisdom, of holiness, and of truth! Therefore, they pay their adorations to Him as King of kings and Lord of lords. This is a peculiar subject of their joy—that God has a Throne, that He sits upon it and that He rules over all things, and all things do His bidding. The central thought of Heaven, then, is Divine Sovereignty.

You will remark that we are told *there was also the Lamb upon the Throne*—as if to teach us that even in Heaven, the glory of the reigning God, working all things according to the counsels of His will, were a sight all too bright even for those pure spirits, unless they saw side by side with Him the Substitute, the Lamb of God! They see Jesus still under the form of a Sin-Bearer, Jesus represented by the symbolic emblem of a Lamb, a Lamb that had been slain, Jesus the Sufferer, Jesus the Crucified, Jesus who once died for sin and has forever put it away by His blood. Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, how I love these two doctrines as I see them side by side—God, a Sovereign, makes me tremble—Christ, the Lamb, makes me rejoice with trembling! God, a Sovereign, overawes me! I take off my shoes, like Moses at the burning bush, but the Lamb has a voice that bids me draw near and have fellowship even with the God who is a consuming fire!

Oh, how much this ought to be the object of our thoughts on earth, seeing that it is the main object of their thoughts in Heaven! We have often heard statements made by persons of what they mean to do in Heaven. I read in a biography the other day of one who had not told another person certain feelings of his, as he meant to tell them in the other world. Believe me, we shall have something better to do than discourse of trifles in that upper sphere! We may even dismiss that stanza of Dr. Watts—

***“And with transporting joy, recount
The labors of our feet.”***

It is but a poetic fiction! What are “the labors of our feet” that they should engross our attention? The reigning God will absorb our thoughts! How we can serve Him, the Supreme, will occupy our minds! The Lamb who once upon the Cross was slain, but now upon His Throne does reign—how we can make the universe resound with His praises, how we can fly at His bidding, if He wills, from world to world, and proclaim the matchless story of His love! How we may be able to make known to angels, principalities and powers in the heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God—this, it seems to me, will engross our attention far more than any of the trifling circumstances of time, or any of the occurrences that were connected with our pilgrimage here below! Oh, dear Brothers and Sisters, let us, while we are sojourning on earth, keep God upon the Throne uppermost in our hearts and so school ourselves in heavenly contemplation. Let us keep Christ uppermost with us in our meditations, in our conversations and in our actions. Let us be God’s men! Let us be Christ’s men! God upon the Throne, Christ the Lamb upon the Throne—let this be our central attraction. Let us count it to be our pleasure to live here, as it will be our superlative pleasure to live forever hereafter, as worshippers who do homage before the Throne of God and the Lamb! We have seen the Divine Center, now, let us carefully mark—

II. THE DIVINE CIRCLE—the living throng that surrounded the Throne of God.

They are mentioned as “a multitude that no man can number.” This leads me to remark—although I cannot find words to fitly express the thought—that I will call it *the sociality of God*. He was God over all, blessed forever, self-existent, independent, needing no creature to assist Him, or to add to His Glory or His happiness. But He chose to create worlds—how many we can never guess. The revelations of astronomy seem to tell us that He made them as lavishly as men might cast seed when they sow it broadcast over many acres. There they glitter in the expanse of space, and for all we know, every one of them filled with happy beings! We cannot tell. But God would not be alone. He willed not to be alone. He delighted in the habitable parts of the worlds that He chose to make. If you confine your view but to this world, you may discern that He would not be alone. He made this planet. He fitted it up to be the abode of living creatures. The Divine Being has been pleased to create all sorts and forms of beauty and of life—from the tiny animalcule that finds an ocean in a drop of water, up to the leviathan that makes the very deep to boil like a pot and causes the waves thereof to be hoary with his mighty lashings. God was pleased to make the eagle to fly aloft in the heavens and the fish to cut the deep. All these creatures He has fed for many generations. Upon all these He looks with interest and compassion. He hears the young ravens when they cry. What a boundless Creation! If every separate world that He has made has such an amazing catalog of life, what multitudes of creatures now cluster round about the great Eternal One! He dwelt alone, but He chose not to be alone. And now He has built His house and filled His mighty chambers with many mansions into which He has been pleased to put a thousand forms of life. And then He said within Himself, “I will make a creature different from all the rest I have made as yet—it shall be a spirit that can converse with me—intelligent, immortal.” And He created those first-born sons of light. I know not how many they may be, but our Covenant God, Father, Son, and Spirit formed servants suitable for the higher will and loftier behests in the cherubim and seraphim whom He made to be like flames of fire and who cheerfully flash to do His bidding. And then, last of all, He said—and here, the Divine Unity comes into counsel with itself—“Let Us make man after Our own image,” and He made a strange creature, matchless and altogether unique—part of which was taken from the ground and kindred with the soil, which might die if it sinned, but another part of which was immaterial, fitted to tenant any of the spheres in the great universe and should exist forever—a spirit made in the image of God! So He made us and at this day, despite sin which seemed to rob God of all His newborn servants and sons, whom He had created in the loins of Adam, He has a multitude that no man can number, who are nearer to Him than even angels are, associates and friends with Christ,

His Son, brought into union with Christ, married to Him. Is it not a marvelous subject if one could dive into it, this social Character of the Divine Being, that He willed not to be alone, that He still continues to constantly surround Himself with ten thousand times ten thousand spirits whom He ordains to bless? Oh, that I might be among them! Does not each one of you say so? Oh, that I might tread the courts of His house! To be but a hired servant within His gates might well content me, but oh, if I might be His son and as His child, might draw near to Him!—how would I bless that glorious Being from whom I sprang and into whose bosom I would leap back again—the source of my life, the sum total of my bliss, my God, my All! Think that thought over another time. I leave it with you.

Another thought rises out of the text. If there shall be in Heaven a multitude surpassing all human arithmetic, out of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues, *how certain the Gospel is to achieve yet a great success*. We are always fretting. We are in a great hurry for results. We are impatient of the issue, for we cannot see how the Kingdom of God will come and gladly would we want to hasten the wheels of our Lord's chariot. Well, but our fears may be put aside and our disquietude may be allayed when we remember that as surely as Jehovah lives, Christ *must* see of the travail of His soul—and He shall see of it in the ultimate salvation of a number out of all nations that are beyond all human count! Patience, my Brothers and Sisters, patience, but diligence! Let us work at the same time that we wait. Let us serve, for the cause is in good hands. The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in the hands of Christ! He shall not have died in vain! He shall not lose the purchase of His blood! A countless multitude must be saved! As surely as He bought them, so surely will He wash them in the blood which He shed on their behalf! Perhaps the day of the Church's great growth will come when she returns to something like her primitive mode of warfare. Those who first went out to convert the world were but a handful of men—one room contained them all—yet within a few years there was not a nation upon earth that had not heard the Gospel! Even to the remotest isles the Truth of Jesus had been carried, and who were the men who carried it? Brothers, they were men who never framed a syllogism—men who never embellished a sermon with rhetorical art! For the most part, they were men who spoke only the language of the common people—spoke it, I doubt not, earnestly, but certainly not according to the lordly rhetoric of the schools. They were not men who strove to be intellectual. They were not deep thinkers. They were not profoundly learned. They were men who knew but this one thing—that a Savior had come into the world and that they were intent to tell men about Him! They spoke of this and of this only in burning words with tender feelings and fervent appeals to the conscience. But now-a-days, indeed, we are told that the world is to be converted by logic! That it is to be *reasoned* out of its sins! That it is to be enlightened by the ta-

pers of human intellect until the darkness of Hell shall be scattered! Believe me, we are on the wrong tack if we think this! It is not so! “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts,” and the Spirit works with the simple Gospel, and only with the simple Gospel! When we get back to this conviction and return to this practice, we shall begin to see the countless multitudes flocking first to the Church on earth and afterwards to the Church above. I will ask you, my Brothers and Sisters here who have been converted, how were you saved? How were you converted? Was it by learning? Was it by the flash of some glorious speech of some mighty master of rhetoric? I confess that if I were converted to God—and I trust I was—it was through the ministration of a very simple, humble, uneducated man. I believe the confession of the most of God’s children will be such as gives the glory to the Gospel, and not to the preacher’s skill, art or intellect. If you have received comfort, and if you have received light, these things have come to you by the means of one who could not claim the glory, for he was but an earthen vessel—the excellence of the power was conspicuously of God and not of him! Oh, Spirit of God, bring back Your Church to a belief in the Gospel! Bring back her ministers to preach it once again with the Holy Spirit, and not striving after wit and learning. Then shall we see Your arm made bare, O God, in the eyes of all the people, and the myriads shall be brought to rally round the Throne of God and the Lamb! The Gospel must succeed! It shall succeed! It cannot be prevented from succeeding—a multitude that no man can number must be saved!

Kindly allow me to continue on the same point the Divine circle in Heaven. Notice the *variety*. “Out of every nation and tribe, and people, and tongue.” How did John know that? I suppose as he looked at them, he could tell where they come from. There is individuality in Heaven, depend upon it! Every seed will have its own body. There will sit down in Heaven not three unknown patriarchs, but Abraham—you will know him! Isaac—you will know him! And Jacob—you will know him! There will be in Heaven not a company of persons, all struck off alike so that you cannot tell who is who, but they will be out of every nation, and tribe, and people, and tongue. I say not that they will speak the language they spoke on earth, but I do say that there will be certain idiosyncrasies and peculiar marks about them that will permit the onlooker to know, as John knew, that they are not all of one nation, but of all nations, tribes, people and tongues. I like this. The very charm of nature is its variety. If all flowers were alike, where were the glorious crown of summer? And if all bodies in the Resurrection world, or even all spirits in the disembodied state could all be precisely one like another, the very beauty of Heaven would be extinct in a degree. No, there they are from different tribes, nations, peoples and tongues—and this betokens individuality and gives us hope that we shall know each other in Heaven even as we are known!

Yet a *unity* about them, for they all wore white robes, and they all carried palms, and they all sang the same song. There are twelve gates to the New Jerusalem, but they all lead to the same city, and there is the same center. There were twelve foundations, but they were all laid on the one Foundation. So they may be many views and notions of truth that we may hold, but they must all be bottomed on Christ Jesus and founded there. And if they are, we shall all meet in the better land. There is a variety in Heaven, yet there is a unity of experience, and a unity in the gratitude they feel. May you and I be there to help to increase the variety and to certify the unity of the heavenly throng! And now for a few words of running comment on the description given of—

III. THE SACRED COMPANY, THEMSELVES, which will supply us with a third point.

They “stood before the Throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.” That *they stood* is not meant to teach us that they do not sit or rest in Heaven, for they always rest in Heaven. But they stand—that is to say—they are confirmed, they are established, they are secure. Their feet shall never slide. They stand in no slippery places. They stand before the Throne of God! It is the posture of action—they stand like soldiers ready for the march—like servants who but need to have it said to them, “Go,” and they go. Oh, that we could on earth realize this posture of Heaven! The Lord hold us up that we may stand—may our feet never slide—and oh, that we might stand with loins girt ready for whatever He shall bid us do! Alas, we need often to shake ourselves, for we lie upon the bed of sloth and we are given to slumber. If we would be like those who see His face, we should always stand and watch, that whatever the Master says to us, we would be ready to obey.

That they stood “*before the Throne*” shows that they are in the immediate Presence of God. They are not excluded from His Presence, they are not at a distance, but they behold His Glory to peculiar advantage and He is near to them in a remarkably gracious and glorious manner. They stand before the Throne of God. Yes, and this is the charm of Heaven, to dwell in the Presence of God! You have tasted, then, something of what Heaven means, my dear Brothers and Sisters. Sometimes you have been near to Christ and in full fellowship with Him you have sipped of the golden cup from which you shall drink forever! You have tasted of immortal fruit that shall furnish your everlasting food. This is Heaven—forever to behold His face, forever to stand like a courtier in the very court, itself, like a favorite before the Throne—not in the outer courts—not in the court of the Gentiles, but inside the veil, before the Throne, within the glorious mystery, the *sanctum sanctorum*, in the Holy of Holies, right where God, Himself, is! There shall we stand forever and forever!

That they were “*clothed with white robes*” is not a little significant. Nakedness was revealed to man by sin. Before the time when he sinned, he

was naked and not ashamed. But then he strove to make himself a dress and the fig leaf was the result. But Christ has come in and clothed us—clothed us completely. The robes spoken of here seem to have covered them from head to foot. They were “clothed with white robes”—not partly clad, but altogether clad in them. Oh, how comely that righteousness of Christ which He has worked for us, and worked in us wherewith we shall be clothed when we stand before the eternal Throne of God! Brothers and Sisters, rejoice to put it on tonight! Rejoice to feel that His blood and righteousness, even now—

“Your beauty are your glorious dress.”

Anticipate the time when you shall be admired of men and of angels, attired in that complete garment. These robes are said to be “white robes”—white to indicate purity—and “they are without fault before the Throne of God.” White—as distinctive of their priestly order, “for they are kings and priests unto God forever and ever.” *White*—as an emblem of triumph, for now they are victors over every foe.

But why and how came those robes to be white? Their robes are white because His robes were red—*His robes I say*. Oh, how the angels gazed with astonishment, and asked with eagerness, as they saw Him come back from Calvary, “Why are Your garments red? Why are You red in Your apparel as one that has trodden the winepress?” And He answered, “I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Me.” Because the Savior bled and dyed His garments with His own blood for us, therefore, filthy as the saints’ garments once were, they are now robed in pure immaculate white, whiter than any fuller could make them, glistening like the sun!

Oh, the joy of being there! May it soon come to us! It will! It may come now, while yet we are talking here—

“Soon may the hand be stretched

And dumb the mouth that lisps this faltering strain.”

But if it were so, then sudden death would be sudden glory! Are you sure, each one of you, that it would be so? Would your departure out of this life be your entrance into the eternal life? Would the shutting of these poor eyes be the opening of nobler optics upon a brighter scene? Believer, it would be so with you! Then why are you afraid to die? No, rather, be willing at any time to gather up your feet into the bed and die—your father’s God to meet—where the white-robed company see His face!

To complete the description, we will only remark that *the palms in their hands* may refer to their observing that great feast of the Lord, the feast of tabernacles, when the harvest of the earth is complete, when the sabbathism that remains to the people of God is attained and the pleasures which are at God’s right hand forevermore are realized—for so of old it was ordained, as we read in Leviticus—that at this festival the Israelites should take palm branches in their hands and rejoice before

the Lord their God. This seems to have been the acme of felicity in their sacred year.

I wish I had the power to describe this glorious circle—those bright ones before the Throne, that you could see them! I think, as I look upon them, that I can see even now the Apostolic band. I mark the goodly fellowship of the Prophets. I think I see the martyrs with their ruby crowns. Do not I see the ministers and confessors of Christ, some of my own kith and kin that have gone before me—the Covenanters who bled in Scotland, and the heroes of Smithfield? There they stand, and listen!—how they sing! None shall excel them in their song of praise. You have a mother there, perhaps—a sister, or a brother, or your grandfather who, years ago “went over to the majority” to sing among that countless multitude. Oh, if I could but have a vision of all that will be there within the next hundred years, would I see myself, and would I see all this company there? Oh, if it were possible, I would gladly translate you all to Heaven at once—from the Tabernacle to the Temple, from this place where we sing His praises at His footstool to the place where we will sing them to His face more sweetly and more loudly by far! Not one of you, oh, not one of you would we have absent! Though, Friend, you may be out of sight, and almost out of hearing, one who has just managed to crowd in among the multitude that throng this house—oh, may you with all the rest of us have a place among His chosen—and may none of you find your name left out when He, for them, shall call! Are you believing in Jesus? If so, you should be there! Are you an unbeliever? If you die as you are, you must be driven from His Presence—you must be destroyed from the glory of His power—all the joy and bliss that make up life must be crushed out of you and you must live banished from Him forever! And now to close. It seems that—

IV. THIS GOODLY COMPANY WHO SURROUNDED THE CENTRAL THRONE OF GOD WERE ENGAGED IN SONG.

They “cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our GOD which sits upon the Throne and unto the Lamb.” I was reading the other day a book containing the life of a very excellent Primitive Methodist minister, and I was greatly amused to find in his diary an allusion to myself. He says, “Went to Stroud to hear Mr. Spurgeon. He is a rank Calvinist, but a good man.” I was pleased to find that I was a good man, and I was equally pleased to find that I was a rank Calvinist! And when I came to review the book I was obliged to say that our Brother was quite correct about my being a rank Calvinist, and we believed that he was one, too, now that he has gone to Heaven! They are all Calvinists there! Every soul of them! They may have been Armenians on earth—thousands and millions of them were—but they are not after they get there, for here is their song, “Salvation unto our God which sits upon the Throne.” That is all my Calvinism. I am sure that is what Calvin preached, what Augustine

preached, what Paul preached, what Christ would have us preach! And this is what they sing in Heaven—"Salvation unto our God which sits upon the Throne and unto the Lamb." They sing in Heaven that it was God that planned salvation, 'twas God that ordained *them* to salvation, 'twas God that gave them salvation, 'twas the Lamb that brought them salvation, 'twas all of God that that salvation was carried on, and all of God that their salvation was ever perfected! They do not, one of them, say, "Stop, now! Salvation unto our God, yes, but still, free will had a hand in it." Oh, no, no, no! There never was a soul in Heaven that ever thought that! They all feel, when they get there, that although God never violated their free wills, yet He made them willing in the day of His power, and that it was His Free Grace that brought them to come and love the Savior! I am sure, if the verse were given out in Heaven, that we sometimes sing at Communion, they would sing it there—

***"'Twas all of Your Grace we were made to obey,
While others were suffered to go
The road which by nature we chose as our way,
And which leads to the chambers of woe."***

And I think they would sing that other verse that we sing at the Lord's Table—

***"Why was I made to hear Your voice,
And enter while there's room,
While thousands make a wretched choice,
And rather starve than come?
'Twas the same love that spread the feast,
That kindly forced me in,
Else I had still refused to taste,
And perished in my sin."***

This is how they sing in Heaven, then. It is salvation—salvation all of Grace! Salvation of which the glory, from first to last, must all be given to God, and to God alone. They exclude themselves! They give no boasting to themselves. They do not say, "Salvation unto our better nature; salvation to our choicer Grace." No, no! But all unto the Lord, all unto the Lord from first to last! Well, Brothers and Sisters, some of us will not have to change our note much when we get there, for that has been the burden of our song here! It has been the theme of our ministry from our youth up, "Salvation is of the Lord." We have learned it somewhere in the same college as that in which Jonah learned that old Calvinistic theology. He had to go into the whale's belly to learn it, and when he came out, he said, "Salvation is of the Lord." And we, too, in sharp afflictions, pains, and griefs have had to learn it and have it burned into us! And we never believed it more thoroughly in our lives than we do now, that if a sinner is saved, it is God's work that saves him—and God must have all the glory of it.

I pray the Lord to convince any poor needy soul that there is salvation in Him—and enable that poor soul now to come and take it—take it by a

simple act of faith. You have not got to save yourselves. Christ has saved you. You have but to trust Him and you are saved. There is nothing for you to do—nothing for you to be, but simply to be nothing—and to let Christ be All-in-All to you, to look and live, for—

“There’s life in a look at the Crucified One.”

God grant that you may look, and so be among the countless throng who shall sing His praises forever and ever! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
REVELATION 7.**

Verse 1. *And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. A perfect calm there must be till God’s people are saved. Not a leaf shall stir to do them damage. Not a dash of foam upon the waters—no movement of wind, or sea, or tree.*

2, 3. *And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea. Saying, Hurt not the earth neither the sea, nor the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads. Everything exists for the servants of God! Creation is but a scaffold for the Church—and when God’s Church is finished, then all may be taken down—but not till then.*

4, 5. *And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. The order is not that of nature, but of Grace, otherwise Reuben would have come first. And the election of God is not according to birth or blood, but according to His Sovereign will. Judah, then Reuben.*

5-8. *Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Asher were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Naphtali were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasseh were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. And of the last and least tribe, still the same.*

8. *Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand. I think many Believers belong to the tribe of Benjamin—doubting fearing, little in faith and confidence—but Benjamin still has his men.*

9. *After this I beheld—The Gentile Church.*

9. *And, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and tribes, and people, and tongues. It will do some people good to*

see that sight, for they fancy that all the saints go to their place of worship! There are no good people anywhere except those that think exactly as they do. So they seem to fancy. Oh, that their eyes were opened a little, for I am afraid that some Christians are very much like the mouse that had always lived in a box and on some grand occasion climbed up to the edge of the box. He looked over and saw the vast area of the cupboard, and said, "I had no idea the world was as big as that!" And yet it had never been outside the cupboard even then. Oh, for eyes that could see a sight like this! "After this, I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number" (we can count pretty high, too) "of all nations, and tribes, and people, and tongues."

9. *Stood before the Throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes.* Perfectly pure—perfectly happy—arrayed like priests and conquerors, for they had "palms in their hands."

9-11. *And palms in their hands. And cried with a loud voice saying, Salvation to our God who sits upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the Throne.* In the outer ring and about the elders that represent the Church, who stand in the inner ring, nearest to Christ and nearest akin to the Son of Man.

11, 12. *And about the elders and four beasts, and fell before the Throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might be unto our God forever and ever. Amen.* Grand ascriptions of praise to make the worship perfect, as all worship should be which is presented to God—as all worship will be when we shall once get to Heaven.

13. *And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, Who are these?* This vast crowd—who are these?

13-17. *Who are arrayed in white robes? And where did they come from? And I said unto him, Sir, you know. And he said to me, These are they who came out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the Throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His Temple: and He who sits on the Throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb who is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*

—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.**

WHO ARE THESE, AND FROM WHERE DID THEY COME? NO. 1040

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 25, 1872,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, Who are these, arrayed in white robes? And from where did they come? And I said unto him, Sir, you know. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”
Revelation 7:13,14

TOWARDS some subjects even the best of men need that their attention should be drawn. Certain themes need an introduction to our contemplations. We often see and yet do not see—we see that which upon the surface attracts the eye—but we fail to penetrate into the inner and more precious truth. Even in Heaven it would seem that the mind needs directing and needs a friend to suggest inquiry. He who sees the white-robed host may yet need to be led to the consideration of who and what they are. It is very gracious on the part of our heavenly Father that He condescends to send us messengers of different kinds to awaken our attention, to guide our inquiry and to lead us to search deeper than we might otherwise have done.

John looked at the long ranks of triumphant spirits and admired their glory, but his thoughts had not penetrated deep enough and therefore an elder was sent to speak with him. That personage asked him a question, and this he did that John might confess his ignorance, might feel a desire to know more and might be led to inquire upon the point which it was most necessary for him to consider. While we are dwellers here below our minds are very apt to be engrossed with the things which surround us, and we need someone to direct our thoughts to the upper world. And in the same way the mind of a person dwelling above would naturally be most occupied with the things around it in the Glory Land, and it might be necessary to bid him remember facts concerning the lower world.

We generally take that view of a matter which is most consistent with our own present circumstances, whereas to see a thing completely we need to view it from many angles. Therefore the elder suggests to John that he should see these glorified spirits from another point than that which naturally suggested itself to him. He was led to consider them, not as they then were, but as they *had been*. The question was therefore suggested to him, “Who are these, and from where did they come? What was their earthly character? What manner of men were they in the days of their pilgrimage? Were they cherubim, or children of men? Did they come here on wings of fire, or came they here as do the sons of Adam?”

Who are these that now have attained to such dignity and bliss as to be now wearing the white robe of innocence, and waving the palm of victory?" To that enquiry I hope to lead your attention this morning. May it be as profitable to you as doubtless it was to John.

We are frequently tempted to think that our Lord Jesus was not in very truth a Man like ourselves. His actual and proper Humanity is believed among us, but not fully realized. We are apt to fancy that His was another flesh and another Manhood from our own, whereas He was in all things made like unto His brethren and was tempted in all points like as we are, though without sin. It is, therefore, necessary again and again and again to set out the true Brotherhood and kinship of Christ. The same spirit of error leads us into the feeling that those holy men who have attained to felicity must have been something different from ourselves. We set the Apostles up in 12 niches and look upon them as very superior beings. We can hardly imagine that they were partakers of our flesh and blood!

And, as we see the whole white-robed host, we imagine in our hearts that they must have been far different from ourselves. They did well and valiantly, we admit. And we rejoice that they have attained to a blessed reward. But we dream that we, ourselves, cannot do as well nor win as great a recompense. Without exactly defining the feeling, we in some way persuade ourselves that something in *their* persons or in their circumstances entirely separated the glorified saints from us and gave them an advantage over us. And therefore we despair of ever achieving their triumphs. Now, this error must be overcome, because it furnishes convenient excuses for indolence, and represses that holy ardor which is the life of elevated piety.

Brothers and Sisters, the point to which the elder drew John's attention is the one we are now driving at. He would have him note that those were glorified in Heaven who were once tried and tempted as we are! They were, in fact, men of like passions with us. I grant you it would be very delightful for us to contemplate the present condition of joy and immortality possessed by yonder bright spirits, but for the moment it will be more practically useful for us to consider what they *were* and how they came to be what they now are—so that finding that they were of old what *we* now are, we may follow in their tracks—and may obtain to the same blessed rank as that which they now enjoy.

Our sermon on this occasion will consist of an answer to these two questions—"From where did they come?" for though that was the second question asked, it was the first answered. And, secondly, "Who are these?" Our third point shall be, "What of all this?"

I. Concerning the bright spirits in Heaven—FROM WHERE DID THEY COME? These bearing the palms—from where did they come? Reason itself suggests that they came from battle. It is not according to the practice of God to use emblems without a meaning. The palm, the ensign of triumph, indicates most certainly a conflict and conquest. As on earth a palm would not be given if not won, we may conclude that the Lord would not have distributed the prize unless there had been a preceding warfare and victory.

A conflict for a temporal crown is severe—how much more for an unfading palm in Heaven? The winners of these palms must have passed through a battle of battles, an agony of agonies, a great tribulation! Palms which may be waved even before the Throne of the august Majesty of Heaven are not easily come by. From the very fact that the glorified carry palms, we may infer that they did not come from beds of sloth, or gardens of pleasure, or palaces of peace, but that they endured hardness and were men trained for war. The inference is well warranted, for it is even so—and the answer to the question, “From where did they come?” is this—“These are they which came out of great tribulation.”

1. They were, then, like ourselves, for, in the first place, they were tried like others. They came out of great tribulation. Note, then, that the saints now glorified were not screened from sorrow. I saw today a number of lovely flowers—they were as delightful in this month of February as you would have been in the midst of summer. But I did not ask, “From where did they come?” I know very well that they were the products of the conservatory—they had not been raised amid the frosts of this chill season, else they had not bloomed as yet.

But when I look upon God’s flowers blooming in Heaven, I understand from the voice of Inspiration that they enjoyed no immunity from the chill breath of grief. They were made to bloom by the master hand of the Chief Husbandman, in all their glory, amid the afflictions, adversities and catastrophes which are common to men. God’s elect are *not* pampered like spoiled children, neither are they like “the tender and delicate woman who would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness.”

They are, it is true, secured from all fatal injury, but they are not protected from the rough winds and rolling billows which toss every boat which bears a son of Adam. Turn over the roll of the worthies of the Lord from the first hero of faith to the last and you shall not meet with a sorrowless name. Great are their privileges, but immunity from trouble is not among them. Was Adam God’s elect? We hope he was, but certainly in the sweat of his face he ate his bread and through his tears he saw the mangled body of his second son. Did God honor Abraham, and call him His Friend? He was not without family afflictions, among the chief of which was the call to take his son, his only son, and offer him up for a sacrifice.

Moses was king in Jeshurun, but his yoke, as a servant of the Lord, was a very heavy one—for all the day long he was vexed with the rebellions of a wayward people. Was David the man after God’s own heart? You know how deep called unto deep, while all God’s waves and billows went over him! Speak of the Prophets—which of them escaped without trial? Come to the Apostles—which of these enjoyed a life of ease? Did they not, all of them but one, pass through the gates of Death wearing the martyr’s crown? And he who died of old age, had not he been an exile in Patmos? Where, from their day down to this, among the elect of Heaven do you find a single child of God unchastened? Where do you find a solitary branch of the heavenly vine unpruned or one ingot of precious gold untried with fire?

Through flood and through the fire lies the pathway of the chosen. Through troops we must cut our way and over walls we must leap—for to none is there a luxurious path to Heaven. We must fight if we would reign! True, God's people have been found in all ranks, but in every position they have had their sorrows. You find Esther, a queen beloved of God, but what was the trembling of her heart when, with her life in her hand, she went in unto the king to plead against that wicked Haman? Lazarus was in the opposite stage of human circumstance, but he lay suffering at the gate of his ungenerous neighbor and the dogs came and licked his sores.

In palace or in cottage the rod is the sure portion of all the heirs of salvation. Each state to the Believer produces bitter herbs peculiar to itself. He shall never need to search far for the appointed accompaniments to the paschal lamb. I have heard that a great statesman once stopped his horse on a plain to speak with a shepherd who was resting in the midst of his flock. Thinking of his own heavy anxieties, he expressed his envy of the shepherd because his life was so free from vexation. "Sir," said the shepherd, "I may not be troubled exactly as you are, but I have my own worries. Do you see that black ewe there?" "Yes." "If she were dead," continued the shepherd, "I might be a perfectly happy man, but she is a plague to me, for every now and then she takes to going astray, and all the rest are sure to follow her."

Rest assured that there is a black ewe in every flock! Man is born to trouble. All the sons of God in Heaven passed by "weeping-cross." Such burdens as we are now carrying on earth once pressed the shoulders of those now in Glory. Our crosses are reproductions of the old yoke of Christ. Under our personal and relative griefs the glorified have smarted, and our sinking of heart and fears of soul they have experienced, too. "Through much tribulation" they have inherited the kingdom!

Note, next, that they were not even screened from temptation. To the child of God, temptation to sin is a greater grievance than the suffering of pain. The saint has often said, "I could endure adversity, but it is misery to be day after day solicited to evil—to have the bait perpetually dangling before me and to feel something in my soul which half consents to sin, and would altogether surrender were it not for watchful Grace." Brothers and Sisters, temptation, to the pure mind, is very grievous. To be sifted in Satan's sieve is a sore trial. Storms on any sea are to be dreaded, but a whirlwind raised by Satan on the black sea of corruption is horrible beyond conception! Yet do not say you cannot enter Heaven because you are tempted—for all those snow-white bands attained their glorious standing through much temptation, as well as through much affliction.

They, like their Master, were tempted in all points as you are. Let me take you again to the old records and ask you whether you find a single saint untempted? Oh, you young men who lament that you are so often allured to evil—have you forgotten Joseph in Potiphar's house? You who dread the persecutor's frown—have you forgotten Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego? You of riper years who feel your feet almost gone—do you not remember David and how he was tempted? Yes, and worse—how

he fell—and with broken bones had to limp his way to Heaven? Which of the saints has been free of the fiery darts of the Wicked One?

Has not the fowler spread his nets to entangle every one of them? Has he not laid snares for every faithful soul? Review all the ranks of the white-robed squadrons and enquire of every glorified spirit. Say to each one, “And you? Were you, also, tempted? Did the world seek alternately to fascinate and frighten you? Had you a body of sin and death to drag you down? Had you foes among your own household? Did you also cry, ‘Woe is me, for I dwell in Meshach?’” To such questions each one of the perfected saints would reply that their perils were such as ours, and had it not been for Almighty Grace they would have utterly perished from the way! The shields of the mighty which are now so highly exalted were once battered by the blows of temptation—even as ours are at this hour.

We may add to all this, again, that they were men who as keenly felt trial and temptation as we do. Too frequently, when we are forced to admit that the trials of the saints were similar to our own, we persuade ourselves that *their* natures were less tender, their feelings less sensitive, their spirits less vulnerable than our own. We imagine that these ancient heroes wore some secret armor or had their hearts steeled within, or wore a charmed life. And yet we know right well that all flesh of man has the same power to suffer—that a wound in another man’s body bleeds even as it would in our own—and that reproach is as bitter to one spirit as to another. As face answers to face in water, so the heart of man to man.

Good men, because they are good, are not the less sorrowful when their beloved ones are taken from them. Gracious men are not, by Grace, petrified so as to despise the chastening of the Lord! Jacob mourned for Rachel, and David for Jonathan. You do not find the saints less troubled than other men when friendship turned to treachery and love to hate. Tears flowed as readily from holy eyes as from the eyes of the ungodly. They were sons of men, born of women as we are, and subject to the same passions and emotions. Oh, no, they were not stoics, nor men of iron, but made of the same earth as ourselves! Their hearts palpitated to the same tune. Daughter of grief, do you say, “I wish I were as the holy women of old, that in my trouble I might not be so cast down”? Read the history of Hannah and mark how her adversary “vexed her sore to make her fret.” She, too, was a woman of a sorrowful spirit.

That story in the commencement of the First Book of Samuel I am sure must often have cheered the daughters of affliction when they have prayed in the bitterness of their souls, for they have said, “Here was a woman tempted like we are and smarting as we do under unkind remarks and slanderous reports and ungenerous treatment. And yet she rejoiced in God’s salvation.” If your spirit is constitutionally sorrowful and its wounds are often wantonly opened by those about you, read the story of Jeremiah! His plaintive notes in the Lamentations will both help you to express your woes and furnish you with sympathy in them.

Read, too, the sorrowful moans of Job. That grand old Patriarch of Uz is very stout and plays the man right gloriously. He is no ruling child, whining and wincing at a gentle touch of the rod, but patient as he is

and a very king among men, yet how bitterly he curses the day of his birth and how heavily he complains! Nor were New Testament saints less tender, for Mary and Martha wept. Magdalene was bowed down with sorrow at her Lord's death, and the heart of the Virgin was pierced as with a sword. Peter wept bitterly and Paul had continued heaviness. Tribulations abounded and afflictions were multiplied to the first disciples and we wrong both them and us if we dream that it was easier for them to suffer than for us! I grant you that they possessed a secret something which enabled them to endure, but that something was not in their *nature* any more than it is in ours. They were fortified by a secret strength which they found at the Throne of God in prayer—a patience which the Holy Spirit worked in them—and which He is equally ready to work in us.

But, perhaps, it may be thought by some that those holy men who now wave the palm branch were spared some of the keener and more refined tribulations—to which I reply, it certainly was not so. David, especially, appears to have compassed the whole round of affliction. He could say, “all Your waves and Your billows are gone over me.” From all quarters his trials arose. And from his youth to his death they assailed him. Let me remind you of that special grief which came upon him when his darling son excited rebellion against him and his own chosen friend and counselor, Ahithophel, betrayed him. And to this add the scene when that same darling son was slain in red-handed rebellion against his father, and David cried aloud, “O Absalom, my son, my son! Would God I had died for you! O Absalom, my son, my son!”

I should not feel that I had ventured too far if I said that there is no trouble known to any person in this audience which would not find its parallel in the case of the afflicted writer of the Psalms. But, perhaps, you tell me that yours is a *spiritual* grief, and that such a wound is the deepest of all. Turn, then, to the life of the Apostle Paul, and, as far as he unveils his experience you shall find him to be the subject of internal strifes and spiritual contentions of the sharpest kind. Remember, especially, when, with the thorn in his flesh he prayed thrice to God to have it taken away but it was not removed. Sufficient Grace was given him, but he had to bear the inward smart—for, through much tribulation even of that kind must the chief of the Apostles follow his Lord.

What need is there of multiplying words? It is plain to every man that understands, that the children of God have been tried like others and they who have won the victory fought a real battle armed only as we may be—and assailed neither more nor less as we are—by the same enemies and the same weapons. As the Church militant we claim indisputable kinship with the Church triumphant! We are their companions in *tribulation!*

II. Next, we believe that the saints who are now in Heaven *needed* trials like others. The word used in our translation is “tribulation,” and you know that the word is used by the Romans to signify a threshing instrument. When they beat out the corn from the straw, they called it tribulation—and so tribulation is sent to us to separate our chaff from

our wheat. Since the same tribulation happened to those who are now in Heaven, we infer that they needed it as much as ourselves.

To what end do men *need* tribulation? We reply, they often require it to arouse them—and yonder saints who serve God day and night in His Temple once slept as others do and needed to be bestirred. Were they not Apostles who slept at Gethsemane? Yes. Were they not three of the chief of the Apostles who slumbered within a stone's cast of their Master in His agony? The best of men are prone to slumber and need to be awakened by the buffetings of sorrow. They needed trials to chasten them. What son has God ever had, save His First-Born and Well-Beloved, that did not need chastening? Inasmuch as we are all sinners, we have need in our Father's house to suffer from the rod. They needed tribulation as we do to loosen them from the earth, else they would have struck their roots into this poor soil and tried to live as if this world were their portion.

Affliction was also necessary to develop their graces—even as spices need bruising to bring forth their smell, and rose leaves require distilling to draw forth their sweetest perfume—they required adversity to educate them into complete manhood, for they, too, were once babes in Divine Grace. It is in the gymnasium of affliction that men are molded and fashioned in the beauty of holiness, and all their spiritual powers are trained for harmonious action. It was necessary, also, that they should suffer in order to complete their service. Like their Lord, they had to be made perfect through suffering—and if they had not suffered they had not finished the work which He had given them to do. They needed tribulation, moreover, that they might be made like their Savior. A saint untroubled—how can he be like the Man who wore the crown of thorns?

Never struck, never slandered, never despised, never mocked, never crucified—then how could we be like our Head? Shall the servant be above his Master, or the disciple above his Lord? They who are in Heaven passed through tribulation and they *needed* it as much as we do! Let us think of all this, for it may encourage us to press forward. They were knights of the same order as ourselves, and by the same methods obtained the honors which they wear.

III. Again, the children of God who are in Heaven had no other support in their trials than that which is still afforded to all the saints. A miracle was here and there worked, I grant you, but then there are other things to be said on our side—for the Spirit of God was not given, then, as fully as we possess Him now. And Christ had not, then, brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel so that what little advantage they had in miracles is far outweighed by the advantage we have in the Gospel dispensation!

What was it that upheld the saints of old who are now before the Throne of God? Their faith was sustained by the promises of God, but we have the promises, too. They rested on God's faithful Word—that Word is still faithful! We have more promises, by far, than most of them received. They had but here and there a word of Inspiration—we have the whole volume of consolation! Yes, we have a double portion, for we have two

books full of choice and gracious words! We have, therefore, more to cheer us than they had.

They had the Spirit of God, you say, but, I reply, so have we. They had Him *with* them, we have Him *in* us! He visited them occasionally. He *dwells* in us! He never leaves His people but abides in them forever! You will tell me that God worked with them—God works with us. Providence was on their side—and is not Providence on our side, also? All things worked together for their good—they work together for our good in the same manner! The Lord who was at the helm of their vessel when storms assaulted it still stands at the helm for us and holds the tiller with a strong hand. He who walked the waves of Gennesaret and came to the rescue of the storm-tossed disciples, still says to us, “It is I. Be not afraid.”

I see no point in which they had superior resorts to those which are open to ourselves, for the Lord of Hosts is with us! The God of Jacob is our refuge! Their rest lay where our rest still lies—their peace and comfort were the same as our own. The Prince of Wurtemberg, on one occasion in the midst of certain kings and great men, heard them boasting. One bragged of the mines which enriched his dominions. Another of his forests, another of his vineyards. Now the Prince of Wurtemberg was poor, but he said, “I have a jewel in my country which I would not exchange for all your wealth.” And, when they questioned him, he said, “If I were lost in any forest of my territory, or could not find my way along a lonesome road, if I said to the first peasant that I met that I was his king, I could lean my head upon him and lie down to sleep and sleep securely there, feeling certain that he would watch over his king as he would over his child.”

So we feel, and so the saints of old felt a delightful security anywhere beneath the blue heavens of God. If we have not riches. If we have not honor. If we have nothing that flesh could desire, we can lie down *anywhere* and feel that we are perfectly safe in the Divine keeping! The angels watch over us and protect us, for we are the children of God! All things work for our good! The beasts of the field are our friends and stones of the field are in league for our defense. This was the portion of those who are now above—it is our portion, too!

IV. Very hurriedly I must notice, before I leave this first point, that if there was any difference between those saints and ourselves, it lay in their enduring superior tribulations, for, “these are they that came out of great tribulation.” If, I say, we must distinguish them from ourselves at all, it lies in this—that some of them were martyred as we are not—resisted unto blood as we have not and were put to death by cruel torments as probably we shall not be. Theirs was the battle’s brunt. For them the furnace was heated seven times hotter.

My Brothers and Sisters, if their faith sustained them and won them the palm branch, why should not ours do the same for us? The text says, “These are they that come out of *the* great tribulation,” for so it is in the original. It may mean some peculiarly severe tribulation which has befallen or is about to befall the Church. And, if so, it is consoling to observe that the saints shall come out of it unscathed. But I rather take

it to mean the one long tribulation of God's Saints in all ages. It is all one—it is all a part of the sufferings of the body of Christ. The saints in Glory have had their share in the great tribulation, and, if anything, a greater share than we. We feel persuaded then, that as they were men like ourselves, who suffered as we suffer and were supported as we are supported, we shall, through the same Grace, win the same victory!

V. I will not detain you longer on that point, though there is much to be said. I must take you to the second, and that is, WHO ARE THESE? John beheld them all in white robes, and the question to be answered was, "Who are these—these in Heaven?" The reply was, "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," from which we gather, first, that all those in Heaven were *sinner*s for they all needed to wash their robes. No superfluity would have been written down in this Book—had the robes been perfectly white, there had been no necessity to cleanse them, certainly not to cleanse them in Jesus' blood!

They were *sinner*s, then—those glorious ones were sinners like ourselves. Look up at them now! Observe their ravishing beauty! See how guiltless they are! And then, remember what they *were*. Oh, you trembling sinners whose bruised hearts dare not indulge a hope of the Divine favor—those fair ones were once like you! And you are, today, what they were once! They were all shaped in iniquity as you were! They were, every one of them, born of woman, and, therefore, conceived in sin! They were all placed in circumstances which allured them to sin. They had their temptations, as we have shown, and they lived in the midst of an ungodly generation, even as you do. What is more, they all sinned, for mere temptation would not have soiled their robes—actual sin defiled them. There were thoughts of sin. There were words of sin. There were *acts* of sin in all of them!

Did you observe that bright one who sang most sweetly of them all? Shall I tell you a part of his earthly history? He was one of the chief of sinners! He takes rank, now, among the chief of choristers because he has most to sing about since he had most forgiven and loved most! He will not tell you that he was naturally a saintly spirit, and that by mortification and self-denial, and diligent perseverance he won his place in Heaven. No! He will confess that his salvation was all of Grace, for he was like others, a sinner, and had transgressed above many. You will say, perhaps, that none of the saints had committed sins like yours, but there I must flatly contradict you! Among that illustrious company there are those who were once sinners of the deepest dye—the adulterer, the thief, the harlot, the murderer—some who were such are now glorified for we have such characters mentioned in infallible Scripture as having been forgiven, sanctified, and at length glorified!

Whatever your sin may be, and I will not mention it, for the mention of sin does not help to purify us from it—whatever it is—all manner of sin and blasphemy have been forgiven unto men and the precious blood of Jesus has brought into eternal Glory men stained with every form of sin! Jesus has cleansed crimson sinners, deep ingrained with iniquity, and scarlet sinners whose crimes were of the most glaring hue! They all in Heaven were sinners such as we are. Secondly, they all who are in

Heaven needed an atonement and the same Atonement as we rely upon. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb! Not one of them became white through his tears of repentance! Not one through the shedding of the blood of bulls or of goats! They all needed a vicarious Sacrifice, and for none of them was any sacrifice effectual except the death of Jesus Christ the Lord. They washed their robes nowhere but in the blood of the Lamb!

O Sinner, that blood of the Lamb is available now! The fountain filled with blood, drunk from Immanuel's veins, is not closed nor is its efficacy diminished! Every child of Adam now in Heaven came there through the blood of the great Substitute. This was the key that opened Heaven's door—the blood, the blood of the Lamb—it was the one purification of them all, without one exception. If I were in your case, O Sinner, God helping me, I would wash in the blood as they did and enter Heaven as they have done!

You will further notice that the saints in Heaven realized the Atonement in the same way as we must do. They washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. The act which gave them the virtue which lies in the Atonement was the act of faith. They did not bring anything to the blood—any merit, or feeling, or preparation—they only brought their filthy garments to the blood, and nothing else. They washed and were clean! That was all. They did not give—they took! They did not impart—they received! In this same way I have realized the merit of my Savior's passion! And I know that every Believer here will confess that this is his hope—he has washed and he is clean. There is nothing to *do*, and nothing to *feel*, and nothing to *be* in order to forgiveness—we have but to wash and the filth is gone!

Every child of God in Heaven whether he were king or Prophet, or seer, or priest, came there through simply relying and depending upon the blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb, and that is all! You must not dare add to it, or you will sin against the all-sufficient Sacrifice. The text tells us that the sole reason for the saints being in Heaven at all was because they washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb—"Therefore are they before the Throne of God." But, is not one of them there because he had not sinned? There is no answer from all the shining hosts! Is not one of them glorified because a long life of consecration wiped out the small offenses of his youth? No response comes to the enquiry! But, if you ask whether they were there because they have washed in the blood, the, "Yes," which comes from them all is like the voice of many waters and like great thunders!

VI. Now, Beloved, WHAT OF ALL THIS? Why, first of all, we must not draw the conclusion that trouble and temptation are any argument that a man will get to Heaven. Perhaps I may be misunderstood, this morning, and therefore I add a caution. There is a groundless notion abroad that those who are badly off in this world will certainly have it made up to them in the world to come! And I have heard the parable of Lazarus and Dives quoted as though it taught that those who are poor, here, will be rich hereafter. There is not a shadow of reason for any such belief! You may go through much tribulation to get to Hell as well as to Heaven! As a

man may have two heavens, here and hereafter, by living near to God—so may a man have two hells, the Hell which he brings upon himself in this life by his extravagances, his wickedness and his lust—and the Hell that shall be his punishment forever in the world to come.

Believe me, many a ragged, loathsome beggar has been damned! He was as poor as Lazarus, but not as gracious as he, and therefore no angels carried him to Abraham's bosom. There is no efficacy in the tongues of dogs to lick away sin! Neither can a hungry belly atone for a guilty soul. Many a soul has begged for crumbs on earth and has afterwards craved in vain for water in Hell. You must take care not to suck poisonous error out of the flowers of the Truths of God. I would, however, have you learn that no amount of trial which we have to suffer here, if we are Believers in Jesus, should lead us to anything like despair—for however trouble may encompass us today, those in Heaven came through as great a tribulation—and why may not we?

If messengers should come one after the other, with swift feet to bring us heavy tidings. If all our property should melt and our children should die—and even the partner of our bosom should tempt us to curse God—we must still hold fast our confidence! Our faith's motto should be, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." God may *strike* His children, but He never can *cast off* His children! He must love them and He *will* love them forever and forever. Let us also understand that no amount of sin of which we may have been guilty ought to lead us to despair of pardon, salvation and ultimate entrance into Heaven—if we also wash our robes in the blood of the Lamb. Those who are in Heaven have washed their robes white by faith in Jesus, and so may we.

I may be addressing someone who has written his own death warrant. I thank God that the *Lord* has never written it! You may have said, "I know that I never shall have mercy." Who told you that God had set a limit to His Grace? Who has been up to Heaven and found that *your* name is not written among His chosen? Oh, do God the justice to believe that He delights in mercy and that it is one of His greatest joys to pass by iniquity, transgression and sin! And suppose this day you should have in your own person trouble and sorrow united? Suppose you should be going through the great tribulation and at the same time you should have committed sin which has defiled your garment most conspicuously? Though the gall and the wormwood are both in your cup and both are bitterest of the bitter, yet do not despair, for the saints whom John saw had the double blessing of deliverance and cleansing—and why not you?

I boldly tell you that if your troubles were tenfold what they are and your sins, also, were multiplied 10 times, yet there is power in the eternal arm to bear you up under the tribulation, and there is efficacy in the precious blood to remove your sinful stains! By an act of faith cast yourselves upon God in Christ Jesus! If you do, you shall take your place among the white-robed bands when this life ends.

I was led to these reflections this morning by the remembrance of the few short days since our beloved Brother, Mr. Dransfield, whose mortal remains we committed to the tomb last Monday, was among us. You remember his accustomed seat, just here, at the Prayer Meeting? You

remember how there was never an empty seat just over yonder at any of our public services? He was always among us, and he was just like ourselves! I am sure we all felt at home in his presence. He did not walk among us at all as a stilted personage or a supernatural being. He was a father among us. We loved him, esteemed him, revered him—and he was a man of men among us. I have tried to realize the same spirit before the Throne of God, and I think I have been able to grasp the thought.

I know he was like ourselves. I am equally certain that he is yonder, and that he is rejoicing in Christ. None of us doubt that. Now let us each make a practical, commonsense use of that fact and feel, I, too, resting, where he rested—for, oh, how sweetly did he rest in his dying Lord. I, too, hoping as he hoped, shall bear up under troubles as he did during his painful illness. I, too, shall have a joyful death as he did, for his soul triumphed in his God beyond measure! Why should not all of us, his Brothers and Sisters, enter where he is gone? Dear Sister, why should not you? You who are consumptive, you who know that death is drawing near to you because you carry a disease about you which will take you Home?

Just realize the fact now before us. Our dear and well-known friend is really gone to the better land. You shook hands with that dear Brother a few days ago, and now he is with God and is waving the palm and wearing the white robe! It is not a dream, a fiction, or a fancy! It is not the delusion of high-blown fanaticism. It is not a wondrous attainment for some few special and renowned saints! Oh, no, it is for every one of us who believe in Jesus! They in Heaven are those who came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb! It is not said, “These are they that were emperors.” Nor, “These are they who were reared in marble halls.” Nor, “These are they who were great scholars.” Nor, “These are they who were mighty preachers.” Nor, “These are they who were great Apostles.” It is not said, “These are they who lived spotless lives.”

No, but these are they who came through the tribulation of life and were cleansed from their sins, as others must be, in the precious blood of Jesus! Therefore are they before the Throne of God and serve Him day and night in His Temple! Dear Brother Dransfield, you were bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, and yet you are perfected before the Throne of God. We, your Brothers and Sisters are on the way and shall be with you soon! Amen.

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

WHY THE HEAVENLY ROBES ARE WHITE

NO. 1316

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 24, 1876,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb”
Revelation 7:14.*

OUR curiosity inquires into the condition of those who have newly entered Heaven. Like fresh stars they have lit up the celestial firmament with an added splendor. New voices are heard in the choir of the redeemed. In what condition are they at the moment of their admission to the heavenly seats? Their bodies are left behind, we know, to decay back to Mother Earth, but how fare their unclothed immortal spirits? What now occupies those pure and perfect minds? We are not left in the dark upon this matter—our Lord Jesus Christ has brought immortality and life to light—and in the words of our text and the preceding and following verses we are informed as to these new comers, these recruits for the Church triumphant!

Were our text properly translated it would run thus—“these are they that come out of great tribulation,” or who “are coming”—in the present tense. If the word does not distinctly refer to those who have “just come,” it certainly includes such. Those who “come” are those who *have* come and those who *shall* come, but it must also include those who are, at this moment, *arriving*. These are they those whom I venture to call Heaven’s new-born princes, her fresh blooming flowers whose beauty, for the first time, is seen in Paradise. Lo, I see the newly departed passing through the river of Death, ascending the other shore and entering in through the gates into the City.

What are these new comers doing? We find that they are not kept waiting outside, nor put through a quarantine, nor cast into purgatorial fires—but as they arrive from great tribulation they are at once *admitted to holy fellowship*. Therefore are they before the Throne of God—dwelling in the courts of the Great King—to go no more out forever. Earthly courtiers only stand, at times, in their monarch’s presence, but these abide forevermore before the Throne of God and of the Lamb, favored to behold the face of God without a veil between and to see the King in His beauty in the land that is very far off.

How quickly has earth faded from their minds and Heaven’s Glory flashed upon them! The sick bed and the weeping friends are gone—the Throne of their God and Savior fills the whole field of their delighted vision! They are *arrayed for holy service*, and arrayed at once, for they wear white robes fitted for their priestly service. It is true they have no material bodies, but in some mystic sense which is applicable to the spirit world these holy ones wear a vesture which qualifies them for celestial worship

and all the holy service of the heavenly state. They are not only admitted to see God and prepared to engage in His most glorious worship, but they are, at once, *permitted actually to commence their holy lifework* by serving God day and night in His temple.

We find them already engaged in actual adoration, for they cried with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God which sits upon the Throne and unto the Lamb." These pure spirits yet have voices which our God, who is a Spirit, hears and approves. Their song is full of purest Gospel Truth and their earnestness is shown by the loudness of their voices. They need no angels to instruct them in the manners and customs of the upper world, for even while they sojourned on earth their conversation was in Heaven and they are at home at once! They are not waiting till they have learned the song—but they know it already—for Grace is the rehearsal of Glory!

They do not need to be initiated into the sacred mysteries, for they have had access within the veil while here below. They will begin their heavenly life at once, take up the tune just where they find it and join in the hymn just as soon as they arrive! They begin at once to praise Him that sits upon the Throne and to adore the Lamb! How sweet it is to think of those who have lately left us, that, though they broke off this mortal life, as it were, before it was complete and left it a fragment, yet they do not begin life up yonder prematurely or abruptly, but exactly at the right time! The new singer takes his place in the choir just when his part is coming on and takes up the keynote as if he had been there a century! He begins his song with his white robe on and his palm branch in his hand, as one who is well prepared to take his part in the endless adoration.

Sudden Glory does not startle the inhabitants of Heaven as sudden death startles the dwellers upon earth. The immigrants to Heaven are expected and the gates stand always open to welcome them. There are no untimely births into the Church of the First-Born—each one comes in his season. As to the state and condition of the newly glorified, they are described to us still, further, in the verses which follow the text. It seems to me that those pure spirits who are without their bodies as yet are pictured as being like the children of Israel when the great camp was pitched in the wilderness. In the desert the Lord God would have dwelt among them, had it not been for their sins. In Heaven He does dwell in the most supreme sense. "He that sits on the Throne shall dwell among them."

Over the heads of the great camp in the wilderness there hung a cloud of Glory which, in the daytime, sheltered them from the great heat of the sun, and at night lit up the whole camp so that all the streets of that canvas city were brilliant through the whole night. That bright light indicated the Presence of God—He did, as it were, hover over them and cover them with His wing. But in Heaven He shall be nearer, still, and *dwell* among them! His Presence shall sanctify, enlighten and overshadow all. The Shekinah, the holy and mystic light which indicated the Presence of God in the tabernacle, was veiled from the sight of the multitude—but in Heaven all shall behold the Glory of the Lord and be surrounded with it.

The saints above enjoy a conscious nearness and fellowship with the Lord, such as we cannot hope to rival on this side of Jordan. He shall

dwell among them! Happy spirits who have this felicity to have God indwelling them, abiding with them and surrounding them forever! Hence it is that they hunger no more, for as Israel fed upon the manna, so they feast on Divine Love. They thirst no more, for as Israel drank of the Rock, so are the glorified ones with Christ and drink forever of His Love. “The sun shall not light on them nor any heat.” How can it, when they are utterly withdrawn from the influence of materialism and screened from all evil influences of every kind by the matchless Presence of the mighty God who, of old, was vanguard and rearguard to His people and forever is their All in All?

With the Lamb for their Leader, what choice company they keep! What hallowed paths they tread! What sacred communications they receive! What amazing raptures they feel! With the Lamb to lead them to fountains of waters undiscovered by their feet aforetime, what fresh joy shall burst in upon them! With God Himself to be their Comforter, how all regrets at having left beloved ones down below shall be driven away completely! And how completely shall their whole souls be filled with perfect bliss without a single briny tear to mar the joy!

In the vision before us, the most striking point about the newly arrived, according to the speech of the Elder and the remark of John was their *wearing white robes*. The venerable Elder does not appear to have taken notice of much else except this, for he asks the question, “Who are these that are arrayed in white robes, and from where came they?” That was the point to which he would direct John’s thoughts—who can they be that shine so brightly there before the eternal throne? From where have they come in such attire? So this morning we will consider first, *what did their white robes indicate?* Secondly, *how did they come by them?* And lastly, *what is the lesson of the text to us?*

I. WHAT DID THESE WHITE ROBES MEAN? Why were they white robes? Of course it is all symbolism—these spirits wore no garments because they had no bodies—but their robes signify their character, office, history and condition. The white robes show, first, *the immaculate purity of their character*. “They are without fault before the Throne of God.” Into the heavenly place no sin could possibly enter and they have brought no sin with them. No, not so much as a trace or relic or scar of a sin. They are “without spot or wrinkle or any such thing,” presented holy, without blame and faultless in the sight of the Most High.

White signifies *perfection*. It is not so much a color as the harmonious union and blending of all the hues, colors and beauties of light. In the characters of just men made perfect we have the combination of all virtues, the balancing of all excellencies, a display of all the beauties of Divine Grace. Are they not like their Lord and is He not all beauties in one? Down here a saint has an evident excess of the red of courage, or the blue of constancy, or the violet of tenderness—we have to admire the varied excellencies and lament the multiform defects of the children of God. But up yonder each saint shall combine in his character all things which are lovely and of good repute—his garments shall be always white to indicate completeness, as well as spotlessness of character.

We ought to note that the white here meant is bright and shining, to indicate that their characters shall be lustrous and attractive. They shall be the admiration of principalities and powers as they see in them the manifold wisdom of God. In these white garments they shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Our Lord's garments in the transfiguration are not only said to have been "whiter than any fuller could make them," but they are said to have been glistening and "white as the light." The redeemed before the Truth of God shine like stars before the eyes of all who are favored to gaze upon their assembly.

What a glory there will be about the character of a child of God! Even those who have seen it long shall still be filled with wonder at what Grace has done! God, Himself, shall take delight in His people when He has made them "white in the blood of the Lamb." That the white robes must refer to their own character is clear. I have taken it for granted that it is so because the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, which is the righteousness of the saints, cannot possibly be meant here, since that cannot be either defiled or washed. To speak of washing the righteousness of Christ in the blood of Christ would not only be an erroneous idea, but it would involve a conglomeration of metaphors not to be tolerated for a moment! The white robes here intended are the *personal characters* of the saints as they appear before God Himself. They are washed in the blood of the Lamb and so cleansed that they are absolutely perfect.

By, "white robes," we also understand *the fitness of their souls for the service to which they are appointed*. They were chosen before all worlds to be kings and priests unto God—but a priest might not stand before the Lord to minister until he had put on his appointed linen garments. Therefore the souls which have been taken up to Heaven are represented in white robes to show that they are completely fitted for that Divine service to which they were ordained of old—to which the Spirit of God called them while they were here—and in which Jesus Christ leads the way, being a Priest, forever, at their head. They are able to offer acceptably the incense of praise, for they are girded with the garments of their office.

We know not all the occupations of the blessed, but we know that they are all such as can be performed by a royal priesthood and, therefore, the priestly garb betokens that they are ready to do the will of God in all things and to offer, perpetually, the sacrifice of praise unto the Lord. "White robes" also signify *victory*. I should think that in almost every nation, white has indicated the joy of triumph. Often when generals have returned from battle they and the warriors have been clothed in white, or have ridden upon white horses. True, the Romans adopted purple as their imperial color, and well they might, for their victories and their rule were alike bloody and cruel.

But the Christ of God sets forth His gentle and holy victories by white—it is on a "white cloud" that He shall come to judge the world and His seat of judgment shall be "the Great White Throne." Upon a "white horse" He shall ride and all the armies of Heaven shall follow Him on white horses. Lo, He is clothed with a "white" garment down to His feet. Thus has He chosen white as the symbolic color of His victorious kingdom and so the

redeemed wear it, even the newly born, freshly escaped out of great tribulation, because they are, all of them, more than conquerors. They wear the victor's garb and bear the palm which is the victor's symbol.

White is also the color of *rest*. If a man desired to do a day's work in this poor grimy world, a snow-white garment would hardly suit him, for it would soon be stained and soiled. Therefore the garments of toil are generally of another color, more fitted for a dusty world. The day of rest, the day of Sabbatic joy and pleasure is fittingly denoted by white garments. Well may the redeemed be thus arrayed, for they have finally put off the garments of toil and the armor of battle. They rest from their labors in the rest of God. Chiefly, white is the color of *joy*. Almost all nations have adopted it as most suitable for bridal array and, therefore, these happy spirits have put on their bridal robes and are ready for the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Though they are waiting for the Resurrection, yet are they waiting with their bridal garments on, waiting and rejoicing, waiting and chanting their Redeemer's praises, for they feast with Him till He shall descend to consummate their bliss by bringing their bodies from the grave to share with them in the eternal joy! So, you see, the white garments have a great deal of teaching about them. And if it were the object of my discourse to bring it out, I could well spend a full hour in describing what is meant. But I am rather driving at something else and to that I invite you. May the Holy Spirit lead us into it.

II. Secondly, HOW DID THEY COME BY THOSE WHITE GARMENTS? How came they to be so white? It was the whiteness which struck the mind of the Elder and of the Apostle, himself. What could be the cause of it? "From where did they come?" he asked. Those characters were not so pure, or, in other words, those garments were not so white by *nature*. They are washed, you see, and, therefore, they must once have been *stained*. They have "washed their robes." They were not, therefore, always white. No! Original sin has stained the character of all the sons of Adam. There is about us from the very beginning an abundance of leprous spots. The garment is not white when first we put it on. How shall he be clean that is born of woman?

Then, alas, there are by nature upon the robe, the stains of *actual* sin which we committed before conversion. We altogether tremble at the remembrance of it and we would utterly despair if we did not know that it has been washed away in the blood of the Lamb! Then, alas, there are the iniquities we have committed since we have known the Lord. Under some aspects these are the most baneful and the most sinful of all our transgressions, for we have transgressed against eternal Love, since we have known it, and rebelled against an electing, redeeming, forgiving God. Ah, this is sin, indeed!

Among the hosts above there is not one robe but what needed to be washed. They all required it, for by nature they were all stained by sin in many ways. Do not think of one saint who has gone to his reward, above, as being in any way different in nature from yourselves! They were all of like passions with us, ones who had within them the same tendencies to

sin. If we suppose them to have been naturally better, they will not yield us so much stimulus, for then we shall ascribe their victory to the betterness of their nature and shall despair for ourselves! But if we remember that they were just as fallen and just as tainted with inbred sin as we are, we shall then rejoice and take courage, for if they have entered Heaven with unspotted garments, having washed them, why should not we be washed, also, and be white as they?

But it might be suggested that, perhaps, they came to their rest by a cleaner way than that which now lies before us. Possibly there was something about their course of life, their surroundings, the condition of the age in which they lived, which helped them to keep their garments white. No, my Brothers and Sisters, it was not so! They passed along the road of tribulation and that tribulation was not of a less trying kind than ours, but was severe enough to be called “great tribulation.” So they followed the same pathway as ourselves—

**“Once they were mourning here below,
And wet their couch with tears.
They wrestled hard as we do now,
With sins and doubts and fears.”**

Their road was just as miry as ours and, perhaps, even more so. They came through every slough bespattering their garments, even as we do, and sorrowing because of it even as we do! They went where we go, even to the Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness and they washed their garments white. How this ought to assist us to feel that although our pathway is one in which we meet with innumerable temptations, yet inasmuch as all the glorified have come up white and clean from it, by virtue of the atoning blood, even so shall we!

But I want to conduct you a little further into the central meaning of the text. Brothers and Sisters, their garments came to be white *through a miracle of Grace*. Through nothing less than a miracle of Grace because they came through *the* great tribulation, where everything tended to defile them. The word, “*the*” ought to have been in the translation. It is marvelous how the translators came to leave it out! The text should read, “These are they which come out of *the* great tribulation.” Note, also, that the half Latin word, “tribulation,” upon which so many dwell as signifying *threshing*, is not in the Greek, but is merely a translator’s word and, therefore, not to be insisted on.

The original simply signifies *oppression* and *affliction* of any sort. Now, all the children of God have had to go through *the* great oppression and to endure its ills. What am I driving at? I will show you. I do not think that the text refers to some *one* great persecution, but to the great conflict of the ages in which the seed of the serpent perpetually molests and oppresses the seed of the woman. The strife began at the gates of Eden when the Lord said to the serpent, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her Seed: He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”

Satan takes care to nibble at the heel, though his own head has been broken by our great Lord. There is an hereditary conflict, a great tribulation, always to be suffered by the saints below, for he that is born after

the flesh persecutes him that is born after the Spirit. The enmity takes all sorts of shapes, but from the beginning, even until now, it is in the *world*. Now, the white-robed ones had come out of that continuous and general conflict uninjured—like the three holy children who came out of the furnace with not so much as the smell of fire upon them. Some of them had been slandered—men of the world had thrown handfuls of the foulest mud upon them—but they washed their robes and made them white.

Others of them had come out of remarkable temptations from men and devils. Satan himself had poured his blasphemies into their ears so that they verily thought they should, themselves, blaspheme! They were tried by the most defiling of temptations, but they overcame through the blood of the Lamb and were delivered from every polluting trace of the temptation by the efficacy of the atoning Sacrifice! Some of them were persecuted cruelly and trodden down as mire in the streets—and yet they rose to Glory white as snow! They went through fire, through water and wandered without a certain dwelling place. They were made to be as the offscouring of all things, but they came uninjured and unspotted out of it all!

I would have you look upon the text as an exclamation of surprise uttered by the Elder to John as they both mentally looked down upon the great struggle going on in the world below, where temptations and trials of all sorts surround the chosen company of the Church militant. They watched the warring band and marked that a goodly host of men, though they fought in the thick of the battle and were covered with dust and had their garments rolled in blood, yet instead of perishing on the battlefield, as they seemed to do, came up out of it—came up wearing spotless and shining garments! Here was the wonder of it that they were white after such a trial! I have heard this text used as if the great tribulation had assisted in purifying them, whereas it was that which would have in itself *defiled* them! It was that which, by its own natural operation, tended to make them foul! The marvel was that they came out of it and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb!

Now let me conduct you into the thought which we have, at this moment, laid before you, namely, that it was by the operation of the *blood of Christ* and by nothing else, that the glorified saints were made clean! They came out of the great tribulation and they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb! Tribulation, or affliction, or oppression—call it what you will—is overruled by a miracle of Divine Grace so as to benefit the Believer. But in and of itself, the great tribulation is not the cleanser, but the *defiler* of the soul! Affliction of itself does not sanctify anybody, but the reverse. I believe in sanctified afflictions, but not in sanctifying afflictions.

Afflictions of themselves awake the evil which is in us to an unknown energy and place us in positions where the rebellious heart is incited to forsake the Lord. This will be seen if we consider the matter closely. The great tribulation of which I have to speak is, under some aspects, a sin-creating thing. And if the victorious ones had not perpetually gone to the blood of Christ, they would never have had their garments white—it was

the blood, alone, which made and kept them white. They were familiar with the Atonement and knew its cleansing power.

Brothers and Sisters, *some of the trials of the saints are evidently intended, by those who are the instruments of them, to make them sin.* Satan and wicked men assail the saints with this as their end and aim. Satan, for instance, when he tried Job, did it with the distinct intention of causing him to curse God to His face. He did not at all hide his intent, even before the Throne of God, but boldly avowed it, and said, "Put forth, now, Your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse You to Your face." The Lord had other designs, but the object of the affliction, as far as Satan was concerned, was to remove Job from his integrity and cause him to blaspheme.

Satan is very wise and he knows, if we do not, that affliction is an admirable instrument for his purpose and so much tends to make a man sin that if he does not fly to the blood of Jesus to counteract the tendency of the tribulation, he will speedily fall. What would Job have done had he not known that his Redeemer lived? As it is with the prince of tempters, so is it with those who serve him—they vex the saints in order to make them sin. When ungodly men persecute the children of God, whether it is by scoffing at them, or by injuring them in their estates or persons, their direct objective is to make them renounce their religion and forsake Christ! Or if this cannot be done, they aim at making them dishonor their profession by sin.

Has not this been the real object of all persecution, from the days of the chief priests and Pharisees even until now? If they can make the saints sin, their end is gained. So that that part of the great tribulation which comes from Satan and the world is directly designed to make us sin against the Lord. The saints of God are preserved from the great tribulation but the influence of these troubles *does* make them sin, as it made Job sin in a certain way and as, no doubt, it caused the martyrs many a secret sin even though they were triumphant over death. As for this, I say they are cleansed from it by the blood of the Lamb and so the actions of the enemy are defeated at every point.

Tribulation of any kind is pretty sure to make us feel the need of the precious blood because it *brings sin to remembrance.* The widow of Sarepta said to the Prophet, "Have you come to bring my sin to remembrance and to slay my son?" Some sins never trouble the conscience until trials bring them up and makes the heart tender about them. Trouble, like a strong electric light, casts another color over the formerly dark scene and we discover what we had forgotten. Trials work a degree of tenderness of spirit and so make sin conspicuous to the weeping eyes and to the troubled heart. Many a man, when in great trouble about other matters, has begun to be in deep distress on account of sin. And oh, dear Friend, if you are passing through any portion of the great tribulation and its effect upon you is to make your old sins come up before you, I pray you fly to the blood of Christ!

That is the only way by which your faith can keep her hold. You can only believe in a sin-pardoning God by going to the cleansing Fountain—

for when sin is vividly seen, pardon is known to be impossible except through the Divine Atonement. Tribulation has *a tendency to create, even in good men, new sins*—sins into which they have never fallen before. “Brother,” you say, “I shall never grieve against God.” How do you know that? You say, “I have never done so unto this hour.” I answer, why should you have done so? Has not the Lord set a hedge about you and all that you have—why should you murmur? Are not your wife and children about you? Are you not in health and strength? Why, then, should you grieve?

There is small credit in being satisfied when you have all that you need! But suppose the Lord were to strip you of all these things? O Man, I fear you might murmur as others have done before you, and the sin of rebellion to which you have been a stranger might yet triumph over you! Are you better than others? Let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall! You will need to wash your robes even as others have done. *In some men, tribulation works a very fierce temptation to distrust.* Ah, we think we have a deal of faith until we need it and then, when the time comes, we who have taught faith to others find that we have little enough ourselves! Ah, how unbelief will insinuate itself and defy us to drive it out!

Sharper and blacker doubts than we dare speak of will come, such as, “Is there a Providence. Is there a God?” Ah, we must fly to the blood or else this tribulation will drive us into atheistic questions and cover us with horrible sins which will dishonor God and wound ourselves.

Tribulation, too, has a wonderful tendency to stir up all our old sins. While things go well with us, that cage of unclean birds will hardly peep or chatter. But affliction comes and stirs them all up and how horribly they hoot and call to each other! Ah, my perfect Brother, you do not know what a host of devils nestle inside your bosom! Whenever I hear a Brother talk of ceasing from conflict, I think how quiet the devils in his soul are keeping—and how they are chuckling at his folly! Sins swarm most where pride swears that there are none! There is an ocean of sin within the heart of any one of us and it only needs a trouble to stir the polluted mass and we shall see what it is like. Just put you, who are so very good in your own esteem, into certain positions and your mighty fine holiness will crack and blister like so much varnish in the sun!

There lies lurking in the soul even of the most sanctified Believer, before he gets to Heaven, enough of sin to set the world on fire and it only needs a fierce breach of strong temptation to set the embers, which seemed as if they were all quenched, blazing away like Nebuchadnezzar’s furnace! The fire of sin would soon burn our souls to destruction if Christ did not interfere. See, then, my Brothers and Sisters, we must hasten away to the blood of Atonement. You see how the two things are mentioned together—the tribulation and the blood-washing—and they must go *together* or else there will be no white robe for us at last, no character which will stand the gaze of the thrice holy Lord. The product of tribulation, by itself, will not be a white robe—but washing in the blood will give us that honorable array. Let us continually seek to have the atoning blood

applied to cleanse our souls from the stains which tribulation is sure to make.

So, too, beloved Brethren, *great trials are wonderfully apt to reveal the weakness of our graces and the number of our infirmities*. It is sure to make the Believer see what an unbeliever he is! It will make the man who is full of love see how little he loves. It will show the child of patience how impatient he is and will make the strong learn his weakness and the wise man learn his folly. Ah, Captain, you are a wise mariner, so you think, and so you are in a moderate squall or in even an ordinary storm! But if the Lord were to let loose all His winds against you, I tell you what you would do—you would reel to and fro and stagger like a drunk man and be at your wits' end. Think of that!

Those who have never done business in deep waters do not understand this. Your pleasure yachts which run between the islands, up the rivers and in and out of the creeks know nothing about storms! Their crews are quite able to handle a vessel, so they say, but Atlantic storms would soon take the conceit out of them! Believe me, when a whirlwind takes the ship and twists her round—and plays with her as with a toy—seafaring becomes no amusement! When the boat mounts to Heaven and then goes down into the abyss, it melts the soul because of heaviness and forces a man to cry out for mercy! Spiritual storms make a man discover how utter weak he is and then he is wise to fly to the blood of the Lamb!

Oh, what a sweet restorative is found in the atoning Sacrifice! God in Christ Jesus reconciled to me by the blood once shed for many is my great joy! How the soul seems to get rid of all the mischief which tribulation otherwise would breed in her, when she bathes in that sacred Fountain! Then, indeed, she puts on her white robes and chants a victorious song!

III. Now, thirdly, WHAT LESSON COMES OUT OF THIS? What is the teaching of the passage? The teaching is this, Beloved, that when we are in tribulation, *then* is the time to have the most diligent dealings with the precious blood of the Lamb! I would say to you, first, *meditate on it*. A sight of Christ in His agony is a wondrous cure for our agonies. That crown of thorns about Your head, O my Master, this shall ease my throbbing brow! Those eyes so red with weeping shall look consolation into my soul! Your cheeks, stained with spit, shall make me forget the reproach I bear for Your sake. When I see You, Yourself, stripped naked and hung up on the Cross, the sight will make me think highly of being slandered and persecuted for Your sake!

What are our griefs compared to His? On the table of sorrow they place the little drinking cups for us little children. But for our great elder Brother, what a flagon did they set for Him! Yet He drank it, saying, "Not as I will, but as You will." When we see the elder Brother drinking of the same cup as ourselves, it makes us cheerfully put ours to our lips and pledge Him in fellowship. "O Lord Jesus, shall we refuse what You take! No, glorious Brother of our souls, we will be true brothers—we will prove our fellowship in this sad communion and drink with You of Your cup—and be baptized with Your baptism." So, you see, meditation on the

blood of Jesus helps us in our tribulation by letting us see how much greater His woe was than ours.

Another sweet consolation growing out of our subject is this—we see how great His love is to us. Perhaps He has seen fit to smite us and we think Him angry. But we know He loves us because we see Him bleed. If you will only follow Christ through Gethsemane and watch Him for a while, on Calvary, and watching with Him for one hour, begin to taste His sufferings, we will say, “My Master, oh, how You love me! I perceive that Yours is a love which many waters cannot quench, which death, itself, cannot drown! Then if You love me so, You love me even in this, my affliction, and I will rejoice in it! I cannot doubt Your love, for Your blood seals the truth of it and, therefore, I am confident under Your chastening hand.”

Meditation also comforts us when we follow another line of reflection and say within ourselves—Jesus triumphed—and how? By suffering! The victories of Christ were not obtained by crushing others, but by being crushed, Himself! His way to the Throne was downward through the grave! He shows us the power of weakness and the sublimity of suffering ridicule. Though here rejected, despised and made nothing of, He is now exalted above all principalities and powers! “Well, then,” the heart argues, “so shall I be honored and glorified by suffering! If I endure patiently and hold on my way, flying still to the precious blood, I shall, in my weakness, find my strength! In my sense of sinfulness I shall find purity in Christ and in death shall find my everlasting life!” So, you see, there is something, even, in meditating upon the blood of the Lamb!

But, Beloved, the chief thing is this—in all times of tribulation the great matter is to have the blood of Christ *actually applied to the soul*. If you lie soaking in the Atonement. If you put your broken heart to sleep on the breast of Christ, hard by His wounds, you will get peace by this method better than by any other. “How so?” one asks. Why, if the blood is applied to the conscience, it will breathe such peace through the soul, such sweet peace, that nothing else will be able to disturb you! I have known, in hospitals, where there have been foul gases and ill smells that have burned choice herbs and odoriferous plants—and sweet perfumes have been used to kill the noxious odors.

Oh for a little of Christ’s blood sprinkled in the chambers of the soul! It is better than frankincense or calamus! It will make death sweet and cause the chamber of affliction to smell deliciously with Christ’s precious name. If sin is pardoned, I am secure! If Christ stands in my place and His precious blood pleads for me, I am content to lie down at His feet and say, “Do what You will, now You have pardoned me! Do what You will, Lord, for I am forgiven!” Such is the peace-giving power of the blood! When the blood is applied to the soul, there is another gracious result—it takes the sting out of affliction by making us know that there is nothing penal in it. If Christ was punished in my place for my sin, then I can never be punished for my sin and, therefore, whatever I may have to endure daily by way of trial or suffering, there is no punishment in it!

There may be my Father's loving and wise chastisement and, doubtless, there is, but there is never a *punishment* such as a judge inflicts as a penalty for transgression. God brings no charge against His people—how can He? It is He that justifies them—and as He has no charge to bring, certainly He never punishes! Who is he that condemns since Christ has died? Are we not strengthened to bear the tribulation when we know that it does not come upon us as a punishment for sin? Our Father's Providence has no wrath in it, or, if it has wrath at all it is that "little wrath" we read of in Isaiah—"In a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on you."

And, oh, Brothers and Sisters, if the blood of Christ is applied to the soul (and let us ask that it may, whether we are in great tribulation or not), we are assured that the end will be glorious! We are all in the great tribulation in one way or other—we are fighting and contending and must do so to the end—but that end is guaranteed to us! The blood of Jesus Christ gives us a sweet assurance that it is all well with us and shall be well with us forever! It opens the gates of Heaven to us, and cries, "Courage! Courage! The battle is sharp, but it will soon be over and there awaits for you a victor's crown."

May not the soldier lift up his head and wipe his face from the sweat of battle and say, "Then I will fight it through! Yes, in God's name, and by His Grace, I will fight it through! What? Though this wound seems to have stunned me for a moment and almost split my skull, I will fight it through if such is the promise and the reward! I will stir my soul and the Holy Spirit shall awake it, to put on a noble daring, and on I will go to win for Christ! Well may I bear His Cross since He prepares my crown." That is the sweet effect of the blood and I ask that everyone here of us, tried or not, may feel it now to the praise and glory of His Grace! O Divine Spirit, grant us this Grace!

What do *you* do, I wonder, who have not the blood of Christ to flee to? Ah, what do you do in time of sorrow who have no Christ to help you? I will ask you that question and leave it to ring through your souls! Remember, when you feel you need Him, my Lord is ready, for the Fountain is still opened for sin and for uncleanness! You have but to wash and be clean. A simple faith will obtain complete purification from all sin. God grant you may believe in Jesus at once. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Revelation 7.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—872, 877, 818.**

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THE BLISS OF THE GLORIFIED

NO. 3499

A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 13, 1871.

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.”
Revelation 7:16.

WE cannot too often turn our thoughts heavenward, for *this is one of the great cures for worldliness*. The way to liberate our souls from the bonds that tie us to earth is to strengthen the cords that bind us to Heaven. You will think less of this poor little globe when you think more of the world to come! This contemplation will also serve *to console us for the loss*, as we call it, *of those who have gone before*. It is *their gain* and we will rejoice in it! We cannot have a richer source of consolation than this, that they who have fallen asleep in Christ have not perished—they have not lost life, but they have gained the fullness of it! They are rid of all that molests us here, and they enjoy more than we as yet can imagine! Cheer your hearts, you mourners, by looking up to the gate of pearl, by looking up—to those who day without night surround the Throne of their Redeemer! It will also *tend to quicken our diligence* if we think much of Heaven. Suppose I should miss it, after all? What if I should not so run that I may obtain? If Heaven is little, I shall be but a little loser by losing it—but if it is, indeed, such that the half could never be told us, then, may God grant us diligence to make our calling and election sure, that we may be certain of entering into this rest and may not be like the many who came out of Egypt, but who perished in the wilderness and never entered into the promised land! All things considered, I know of no meditation that is likely to be more profitable than a frequent consideration of the rest which remains for the people of God. I ask, then, for a very short time that your thoughts may go upward to the golden streets.

And, first, we shall think a little of *the blessedness of the saints* as described in the simple words of our text. Then we will say a few words as to *how they came by that great happiness*. And thirdly, *draw some practical lessons from it*. First, then, we have here—

I. A DESCRIPTION OF THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE GLORIFIED.

We have not the full description of it here, but we have here a description of certain *evils from which they are free*. You notice they are of two or

three kinds—first, *such as originate within*—“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more”—they are free from inward evils. Secondly, *such as originate outside*—“Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.” They are altogether delivered from the results of outward circumstances. Take the first—“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore.” We are never so to strain Scripture for a spiritual sense as to take away its natural sense—and we will begin by saying this is no doubt to be understood physically of the *body they will have in Glory*. Whether there will be a necessity for eating and drinking in Heaven, we will not say, for we are not told, but anyhow it is met by the text, “The Lamb that is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them”—if they need food—and lead them to living fountains of water” if they need to drink. Whatever may be the necessities of the future, those necessities shall never cause a pang. Here, the man who is hungry may have to ask the question, “What shall I eat?” The man who is thirsty may have to say, “What shall I drink?” And we have all to ask, “With what shall we be clothed?” But such questions shall never arise there! They are abundantly supplied. Children of God have been hungry here—the great Son of God, the Head of the household was hungry before them—and they need not wonder if they have fellowship with Him in His suffering. Children of God have had to thirst here—their great Lord and Master said, “I thirst.” They need not wonder, therefore, if in His affliction they have to take some share. Should not they who are to be like their Head in Heaven be conformed unto Him on earth? But up yonder there is no poverty and there shall be nothing that shall place them in circumstances of distress. “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore.”

While we take this physically, there is no doubt that *it is to be understood mentally*. Our minds are also constantly the victims of hunger and thirsting. There are on earth various kinds of this hunger and thirst—in a measure evil, in a measure also innocent. There are many men that in this world are *hungering after wealth*—and the mouth of avarice can never be filled. It is as insatiable as the horseleech, and forever cries, “Give, give!” But such hunger was never known in Heaven, and never can be, for they are satisfied there—they have all things and abound. All their enlarged capacities can desire they already possess in being near the Throne of God and beholding His Glory—there is no wealth which is denied them. Here, too, some of the sons of men hunger *after fame*, and oh, what have not men done to satisfy this? It is said that hunger breaks through stone walls—certainly ambition has done it, too! Death at the cannon’s mouth has been a trifle, if a man might win the bubble reputation! But in Heaven there is no such hunger as that. Those who once had it, and are saved, scorn ambition. And what room would there be for ambition in the skies? They take their crowns and cast them at their Savior’s feet! They have their palm branches, for they have won the victory,

but they ascribe the conquest to the Lamb, their triumph to His death! Their souls are satisfied with His fame! The renown of Christ has filled their spirit with everlasting contentment. They hunger no more, nor thirst anymore in that respect. And oh, what hunger and thirst there has been on earth by those of tender and large heart *for a fit object of love!* I mean not now the common thing called, “love,” but the friendship which is in man’s heart and sends out its tendrils needing something to which to cling! We must—we are born and created for that very purpose—we must live together. We cannot develop ourselves alone. And oftentimes a lonely spirit has yearned for a brother’s ear into which to pour its sorrows. And doubtless many a man has been brought to destruction and been confined to the lunatic asylum whose reason might have been saved had there been some sympathetic spirit, some kind, gentle heart that would have helped to bear his burden. Oh, the hunger and the thirst of many a soul after a worthy object of confidence! But they hunger and they thirst, up there, no more! Their love is all centered on their Savior. Their confidence, which they reposed in Him on earth, is still in Him. He is their bosom’s Lord, their heart’s Emperor, and they are satisfied and wrapped up in Him—they hunger and they thirst no more.

And how many young spirits there are on earth who are *hungering after knowledge* who would gladly get the hammer and break the rock and find out the history of the globe in the past! They would follow philosophy, if they could, to its source, and find out the root of the matter. Oh, to know, to know, to know! The human mind pants and thirsts for this. But there they know even as they are known! I do not know that in Heaven they know all things—that must be for the Omniscient only—but they know all they need or really need to know—they are satisfied there. There will be no longer searching with a spirit that is ill at ease. They may, perhaps, make progress even there, and the scholar may become daily more and more wise—but there shall never be such a hungering and thirsting as to cause their mental faculties the slightest pang. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore. Oh, blessed land where the seething ocean of man’s mind is hushed and sleeps in everlasting calm! Oh, blessed country where the hungry spirit that cries every hour for bread, and yet for more, and yet for more, and spends its labor for that which satisfies not, shall be fed with the bread of angels, and be satisfied with favor and full of the goodness of the Lord!

But, dear Friends, surely the text also means *our spiritual hungering and thirsting*. “Blessed is the man who hungers and thirsts today after righteousness, for he shall be filled.” This is a kind of hunger that we ought to desire to have! This is a sort of thirst that the more you have of it will be the indication of the possession of more Grace! On earth it is good for saints to hunger and to thirst spiritually, but up there they have done even with that blessed hunger and that blessed thirst! Today, Be-

loved, some of us are *hungering after holiness*. Oh, what would I not give to be holy, to be rid of sin, of every evil thing about me! My eyes—ah, adieu sweet light, if I might also say, “Adieu sin!” My mouth—ah, well would I be content to be dumb if I might preach by a perfect life on earth! There is no faculty I know of that might not be cheerfully surrendered if the surrender of it would deprive us of sin! But they never thirst for holiness in Heaven, for this excellent reason—that they are without fault before the Throne of God. Does it not make your mouth water? Why this is the luxury of Heaven—to be perfect! Is not this—the Heaven of Heaven, to be clean rid of the root and branch of sin, and not a rag or bone, or piece of a bone of our old depravity left—all gone—like our Lord, made perfect without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing! And here, too, Brothers and Sisters, we very rightly hunger and thirst after *full assurance and confidence*. Many are hungering after it. They hope they are saved, and they thirst to be assured that they are. But there is no such thirst as that in Heaven, for, having crossed the golden threshold of Paradise, no saint ever asks himself, “Am I saved?” They see His face without a cloud between! They bathe in the sea of His love! They cannot question that which they perpetually enjoy! So, too, on earth I hope we know what it is to hunger and thirst *for fellowship with Christ*. Oh, when He is gone from us—if He does but hide His face from us, how we cry, “My soul desires You in the night!” We cannot be satisfied unless we have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. But in Heaven they have no such thing! There the Shepherd is always with the sheep, the King is always near them and because of His perpetual Presence, their hungering and their thirsting will be banished forever! Thus much upon those evils, then, that would arise from within. As they are perfect, whatever comes from within is a source of pleasure to them, and never of pain.

And now, dear Friends, *the evils that come from outside*—let us think of them. We no doubt can appreciate in some measure, though not to the degree which we should if we were in Palestine in the middle of summer—we can appreciate the words, “Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.” This signifies that nothing external shall injure the blessed. Take it literally. There shall be nothing in the surroundings of heavenly saints that shall cause glorified spirits any inconvenience! I think we may take it mainly in relation to the entire glorified man, and so let us say that on earth the sun lights on us and much heat in the form of affliction. What *heats of affliction* some here have passed through! Why there are some here who are seldom free from physical pain. There are many of the best of God’s children that if they get an hour without pain, are joyful indeed. There are others that have had a great fight of affliction Through poverty they have fought hard. They have been industrious, but somehow or other God has marked them out for the scant tables and the thread-worn garments. They are the children of poverty—and the furnace

heat is very hot about them. With others it has been repeated deaths of those they have loved. Ah, how sad is the widow's case! How deep the grief of the fatherless! How great the sorrow of bereaved parents! Sometimes the arrows of God fly one after the other—first one falls and then another until we think we shall hardly have one left! These are the heats of the furnace of affliction. And at other times these take the form of ingratitude from children. I think we never ought to repine so much about the death of a child as about the ungodly life of a child. A dead cross is very heavy, but a living cross is far heavier. Many a mother has had a son of whom she might regret that he did not die even at the very hour of his birth, for he has lived to be the grief of his parents and a dishonor to their name. These are sharp trials—these heats—but you shall have done with them soon. “Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.” No poverty, no sickness, no bereavement, no ingratitude—nothing of the kind! They forever rest from affliction.

Heat sometimes comes in another form—in *the matter of temptation*. Oh, how some of God's people have been tried—tried by their flesh! Their constitution, perhaps, has been hot, impulsive, and they have been carried off their feet, or would have been but for the interposing Grace of God, many and many a time! They have been tempted, too, in their position, and they of their own household have been their enemies. They have been tempted by their peculiar circumstances—their feet have almost gone many a time. And they have been tempted by the devil—and it is hard work to stand against Satanic insinuations. It is hot, indeed, when his fiery darts fly! Oh, when we shall have once crossed the river, how some of us who have been much tempted will look back upon that old dog of Hell and laugh him to scorn because he will not be able to bark at us again! Then we shall be forever free from him! He worries us now because he would devour us, but there, as he cannot devour, so shall he not even worry us! “Neither shall the sun of temptation light on them, nor any heat.” Happy are the people that are in such a case. The *heats of persecution* have often, too, carried about the saints. It is the lot of God's people to be tried in this way. Through much tribulation of this sort they inherit the Kingdom—and there are no Smithfields in Heaven, and no Bonners to light up the firewood, no Inquisitions in Heaven, no slanderers there to spoil the good man's name! They shall never have the heat of persecution to suffer again.

And, once more, they shall not have the *heat of care*. I do not know that we need have it, even here, but there are a great many of God's people who allow care to get very hot about them. Even while sitting in this place tonight while the hymn was going up, “What must it be to be there?” the thoughts of some of you have been going away to your business, or your home. While we are trying to preach and draw your attention upwards, perhaps some housewife is thinking of something she has

left out which ought to have been looked up before she came away, or wondering where she left the keys. We make any excuses for care through the cares we continually invent, forgetting the words, "Cast all your care on Him, for He cares for you." But they have no cares in Heaven. "They hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." Ah, good Man, there shall be no ships at sea, by-and-by, no harvests—to trouble you as to whether the good weather will last! Ah, good Woman, you shall have no more children that are sickly to fret over, for there you will have all you desire, and be in a family circle that is unbroken, for all the Brothers and Sisters of God's family shall, by-and-by, be there, and so you shall be eternally blest!

We have thus opened up as well as we could the words of the text on the great happiness of the saints. Now, very briefly—

II. HOW DO THEY COME TO BE HAPPY?

Well, it is quite clear that they did not come to it because they were very fortunate people on earth, for if you read another passage of the Word of God you will find, "These are they that came out of great tribulation." Those that have had trial and suffering on earth are among those that have the bliss of Heaven. Encourage yourselves, you poor and suffering ones! It is quite certain they did not come there from their own merit, for we read, they have "washed their robes"—they needed washing. They did not keep them always undefiled. There had been spots upon them. They came there not because they deserved to be there, but because of the rich Grace of God. How did they come there, then? Well, first, they came there *through the Lamb that was slain*. He bore the sun and the heat and, therefore, the sun does not light on them, nor any heat. The hot sun of Jehovah's Justice shone fully upon the Savior—scorched, burned and consumed Him with grief and anguish! And because the Savior suffered, therefore we suffer no more. All our hopes of Heaven are found at the Cross!

But they came there next because *the Savior shed His blood*. They washed their robes in it. Faith linked them to the Savior. The fountain would not have cleansed their robes if they had not washed in it. Oh, there shall be none come to Heaven but such as have by faith embraced what God provides! Hear, Hearer, judge yourself whether you are right, therefore. Have you washed your robe and made it white in the Lamb's blood? Is Christ All-in-All to you? If not, can you hope to be there? And they are there in perfect bliss, we are told. No sun lights on them, nor any heat, because the Lamb in the midst of the Throne is with them. How could they be unhappy who see Christ? Is not this the secret of their bliss—that Jesus fully reveals Himself to them?

And besides, *they have the love of God to enjoy*, for the last word of the Chapter is, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." The blood of Jesus applied, the Presence of Jesus enjoyed, and the Love of God fully

revealed—these are the causes of the bliss of the saved in Heaven! But we must close our meditation with the last point, which is—

III. WHAT THIS TEACHES US. First, the bliss of the saved in Glory teaches us *to long for it*. It is legitimate to long for Heaven—but not to long to escape from doing our duty here! It is idleness to be always wanting to have done with this world—it is clear sloth—but to be longing to be where Jesus is, is only natural and gracious. Should not the child long to go home from school? Should not the captive pine for liberty? Should not the traveler in foreign lands long to see his native country? Should not the bride, the married wife, when she has been long away from her husband, long to see his face? If you did not long for Heaven, surely you might question whether Heaven belonged to you! If you have ever tasted of the joys of the saints, as Believers do on earth, you will sing with full soul—

***“My thirsty spirit faints
To reach the land I love—
The bright inheritance of saints—
Jerusalem above.”***

You may long for this.

And the next lesson is, *be patient until you get there*. As it will be such a blessed place when you arrive, don't trouble about the difficulties of the way. You know our hymn—

“The way may be rough, but it cannot be long.”

So—

“Let us fill it with hope, and cheer it with song.”

You know how well your horse goes when you turn its head homewards. Perhaps you had to flog him a bit before, but when he begins to know he is going down the long lane which leads home he will soon lift up his ears and away, away he will go! We ought to have as much sense as horses. Our heads are turned towards Heaven We are steering towards that port—homeward bound! It may be rough weather but we shall soon be in the fair haven where not a wave of trouble shall ever disturb us again. Be patient, be patient! The farmer has waited for the precious fruits of the earth—you can well wait for the precious things of Heaven. You sow in tears, but you shall reap in joy. He has promised you a harvest. He who cannot lie has said the seedtime and harvest shall never cease. They do not cease below—depend upon it—they won't cease above. There is a harvest for you who have been sowing here below.

Our first lesson, then, is, long for this and then be patient in waiting. But our next lesson is to be wait your appointed time. And now the next instruction is, *make much of faith*. They entered Heaven because they had washed their robes in blood. Make much of the blood and *much of the faith* by which you have washed! Dear Hearers, have you all got faith? It is, as it were, the key of blessedness. “But all men have not faith,” says the Apostle. Have you faith? Do you believe in Christ Jesus? In other

words, do you trust yourself with Him, alone? Can you sing with our poet—

***“Nothing in my hands I bring
Simply to Your Cross I cling.
Naked, come to You for dress,
Helpless, look to You for Grace!
Foul, I to the Fountain fly,
Wash me, Savior, or I die”?***

Make much of the faith that will admit you to Heaven!

Once more, our text teaches us this lesson—Do any of us want to know what Heaven is on earth? Most of us will say, “Yes” to that. Well then, the text tells you *how to find Heaven on earth*. You find it in the same way as they find it in Heaven. First, be you washed in the blood of Christ, and that will be a great help towards happiness on earth. It will give you peace now—“the peace of God that passes all understanding.” Some people think that Heaven on earth is to be found in the theater, or in the ballroom, or in the giddy haunts of fashion. Well, it may be Heaven to some, but if God has any love to you, it won’t be Heaven to you! Wash your robe, therefore, in the Savior’s blood, and there will be the beginning of Heaven on earth!

Then next, it appears, if you read the context of our text, that those who enjoy Heaven serve God day and night in His Temple. If you want Heaven on earth, serve God continually day and night! Having washed your robe, then put it on and go out to serve God! Idle Christians are often unhappy Christians. I have met with many a spiritual dyspeptic always full of doubts and fears. Is there a young man here full of doubts and fears who has lost the Light of God he once possessed, and the joy he once had? Dear Brother, get to work! In cold weather the best way to be warm is not to get before a fire, but to work. Exercise gives a healthy glow, even amidst the frost. “I am doing something,” says one. Yes, with one hand—use *both* hands! “Perhaps I will have too many irons in the fire,” says one. You cannot have too many! Put them all in and blow the fire with all the bellows you can get! I do not believe any Christian works too hard, and, as a rule, if those who kill themselves in Christ’s service were buried in a cemetery by themselves, it would be a long while before it would get filled. Work hard for Christ. It makes those who are in Heaven happy to serve God day and night, and it will make you happy on earth. Do all you can. Another way is to have fellowship with Christ here. Read again this Chapter. “He that sits on the Throne shall dwell among them—He shall feed them.” Oh, if you want to be happy, live near to Jesus! Poor men are not poor when Christ lives in their houses. Truly, sick men have their beds made easy when Christ is there. Has He not said, “I will make his bed in all his sickness”? Only get fellowship with Jesus and outward circumstances won’t distress you! The sun will not light on you, nor any heat. You will be like the shepherd on Salisbury Plain, who said

it was good weather, though it rained hard. “It is weather,” he said, “that pleases me.” “How so?” said a traveler to him. “Well, Sir,” he said, “it pleases God, and what pleases God pleases me.” “Good day!” said one to a Christian. “I never had a bad day since I was converted,” he said. “They are all good now since Christ is my Savior.” Do you not see, then, that if your wishes are subdued, if you do not hunger any more, or thirst any more as you used to do, and if you always live near to Christ, you will begin to enjoy Heaven on earth? Begin, then, the heavenly life here below. The Bible says, “For He has raised us up, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” The way to live on earth, according to many, is to live on earth, but to look upward to Heaven. That is a good way of living, but I will tell you a better—and that is to live in Heaven, and look down on earth! The Apostle had learned that when he said, “Our conversation is in Heaven.” It is good to be on earth, and look up to Heaven—but it is better for the mind to be in Heaven and to look down upon earth. May we learn that secret. The Lord lead us into it. Then when faith is strong, and love is ardent, and hope is bright, we shall sing, with Watts—

***“The men of Grace have found
Glory begun below!
Celestial fruits on earthly ground
From faith and hope may grow.”***

The Lord grant you a participation in this bliss, Beloved, and an abundant entrance into that bliss forever, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: JOHN 17.

Verse 1. *These words spoke Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to Heaven, and said, Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You.* The hour has come. The most important, the darkest, the most dreadful hour of Christ’s life was come. But He had only one thought in His mind—“Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You.” Beloved, when our hour comes—and we shall have hours of darkness—may we have nothing on our mind but that—that God would help us to glorify His name! We shall not dread suffering if that is our one desire, because we shall see that suffering often gives opportunities to God for manifesting His own Glory in the patience of His people.

2. *As You have given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.* I think this verse is a solution of the problem about General Redemption and Particular Redemption. Christ, by His death, has obtained power over all flesh. There is a universality about His Redemption, but the objective of it is still that He should give eternal life to “as many as You have given Me.” There is a

specialty and peculiarity about the grand ultimate result and design of the death of our Lord. Let us believe both Truths of God.

3. *And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.* Is the knowledge of God, life? Is the knowledge of Jesus Christ, life? It is even so! But what a blessed form of knowledge this is! It is taught to us by the Spirit of God in a special and remarkable way. This is life eternal!

4-6. *I have glorified You on the earth: I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself with the glory which I had with You before the world was. I have manifested Your name unto the men which You gave Me out of the world.* The best, the clearest manifestation of the name or Character of God is to be found in the Person, the life, the work, the love of Jesus Christ! Well did He say in another place, “He that has seen Me has seen the Father.” “I have manifested Your name unto the men which You gave Me out of the world.”

6. *Yours they were, and You gave them to Me; and they have kept Your word.* It has been their treasure. They have preserved it as a priceless blessing. They would never let it go.

7, 8. *Now they have known that all things whatever You have given Me are of You. For I have given unto them the words which You gave Me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from You, and they have believed that You did send Me.* Now that description of the people of God in Christ’s day is true of us today. We have received the words which the Father has given the Son, and we believe of a surety that the Father has sent Jesus Christ into the world.

9. *I pray for them.* Oh, how emphatically true this is! Christ always prays for them—for them, one by one—with most effectual prevalence. It is because He prays that any of us are preserved. “I pray for them.”

9. *I pray not for the world, but for them which You have given Me.* There is a specialty in intercession, as well as in redemption—“I pray not for the world, but for them which You have given Me.”

9-11. *For they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours and Yours are Mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You.* And now they are left. Their great Guardian and Protector has gone. They have no visible Head left. “I am no more in the world, but these are in the world.” You and I know that we are in the world. The world makes us know that. We are in an enemy’s country. We are in a land which is not our rest—and however happy our portion may be in Christ, the world takes care that we should understand that we are aliens and foreigners in it—hurrying through it towards our abiding home.

11. *Holy Father, keep through Your own name those whom You have given Me that they may be one as We are.* Do all that you can, Beloved, to

promote the unity of the people of God—not only on the larger scale, wherein all churches shall be brought together in loving accord—but also on the smaller scale among your own friends and those Christian Brothers and Sisters who are in your own Church. Let none of us break the concord. Oh, may we always be of a gentle, generous, Christ-like spirit, that we may be one, as the Father is One with the Son.

12. *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name; those that You gave Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled.* It is, perhaps, more amazing that there were not more like Judas than that there should have been one like he! I wonder whether we can hope that in our Churches there would be found as few as one in 12 who are not in heart with Christ. It is very amazing that the rest should have been kept, and that this son of perdition should have been left to perish!

13-15. *And now I come to You: and these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in them. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the Evil One.* Either by death, or by shutting them up in monasteries, or causing them to dwell alone in caverns. “I do not pray for that.” Do not take them out of the battle, but save them from the deadly arrow. Help them to play the man, win the victory and not desert the colors.

16-18. *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Your truth: Your word is truth. As You have sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.* Do you recognize your mission, dear Friends? Do we all understand it?—that, as truly as Christ was the Messenger of the Father, so every Believer is the messenger of Christ! You are sent into this world to do an errand, not for yourselves, but for Your Master! Are You doing it?

19. *And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.* Christ sets Himself apart for us, that we may set us apart for Him. Have you realized this, my Brother, my Sister—that you are dedicated to Christ—that every breath you breathe, thought you think, word you speak and act you do, should all be done as unto Him? He lived alone for You. Live alone for Him!

20. *Neither pray I for these alone.* These saved ones.

20-22. *But for them also which shall believe on Me through their word: That they all may be one; as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that You have sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are One.* Christ prays for us before we believe, and we believe in answer to His prayer! Oh, what glorious words! The very glory which

the Father gave to the Only-Begotten has that Only-Begotten handed over to His people, “that they may be one, even as We are One.”

23. *I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them, as You have loved Me.* Now drink that in—all the sweetness of it—that the Father has loved His people even as He loved His Only-Begotten!

24. *Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am: that they may behold My Glory which You have given Me: for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.* He will not be in Heaven and leave me behind Him. He is a Bridegroom that cannot be satisfied unless His bride is a partaker of all His joy. He is so one with us, that as the head can never be content to be crowned, and the rest of the body be disgraced, so neither could Christ. We must be, if He wills it, where He is! We must behold His Glory—we must share it!

25. *O righteous Father, the world has not know You: but I have known You, and these have known that You have sent Me.* It is delightful to hear Jesus praying in this way for us, side by side with Himself, though we are unworthy of so unspeakable an honor—praying for us as if His own Self, His own Glory, depended upon our safety! If Christ prayed thus for us, how ought we to pray for one another!

26. *And I have declared unto them Your name, and will declare it.* As long as the Christ lived, He showed forth His Father’s Glory, and so should we. If we have declared it, we should say, “And will declare it.” “That the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” Thus the glorious union stands. May we always rejoice in it.

26. *That the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them.*

—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.**

HEAVEN BELOW

NO. 1800

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 21, 1884,
 BY C. H. SPURGEON,
 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

***“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters.”
 Revelation 7:16, 17.***

LET us think of this happiness, that we may be comforted in the prospect of it. All this is already enjoyed by tens of millions of the redeemed! Some of those who were very dear to us on earth, whose faith we desire to follow, are now forever with the Lord and this is their joyful portion—“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.” Our comfort lies in the sweet reflection that we are journeying to this goodly land! This Divine inheritance is ours—we have the seal of the Holy Spirit upon our title deeds—we have tasted of the grapes of its Eshcol and we already rejoice in the light and warmth of its celestial city to which we draw near! In a little time we shall be actually within the gate of pearl and shall know, in an instant, infinitely more of its glory than an Apostle could teach us here below. We are like one who has, in his hands, the guidebook of a country to which he is journeying—he finds in it fair pictures of the scenery of the land and the architecture of the cities—and as he reads each page, he says to himself, “I am going there! This is what I shall soon behold!”

It would be a wretched thing to have such a book in one's hands and to be entering upon a lifelong *banishment* from home and the home country! Then would we have to say, “This was my country, once, but I shall never see it again. Fair are its skies and lovely are its vales, but my eyes shall ache in vain to gaze upon them. I am exiled forever from my own dear land!” It is not so with us who are believers in Christ—our faces are towards Immanuel's land, the land which flows with milk and honey, and we have a portion among the blessed—a mansion is being made ready for each one of us and we have this promise—“Go your way till the end: for you shall rest and stand in your lot at the end of the days.” Rejoice, then, Beloved, for if your portion on earth is slender, if your condition here is sorrowful, if your trials multiply, if your strength declines, yet it is but a little while and He that will come shall come and shall not tarry!

Well does our hymn tell us that—

“An hour with our Lord will make up for it all.”

We shall forget the pains of a long life in a half-hour of the vision of the Well-Beloved! Comfort one another with these words! Look before you. It is

brightness beyond though it is darkness here. Anticipate your sure reward, it comes with all speed. I speak but the sober truth—it seems but a day's journey from this spot to the heavenly highlands! It is so little a while since I was a boy and yet, in less space, I shall be with God! It seems but a few days to you who are aged people since you climbed your mother's knee and yet, in far less time you will behold the face of your soul's Bridegroom! Then all trouble will be ended and eternal joy will crown your head!

But I want you to do, this morning, and, by God's Grace I think we shall accomplish it, a little more than receive comfort. I long that we may "sit together in the heavenlies" even *now*. It seems to me that this world, if Christians lived as they should, would become a nether Heaven. The true Christian life, when we live near to God, is the rough draft of the life of full communion above! We have seen the artist draw with his pencil, or with his charcoal, a bare outline of his picture. It is nothing more, but still, one could guess what the finished picture will be from the sketch before you. One acquainted with the artist could see upon the canvas all the splendor of color peeping through the dark lines of the pencil.

Now, I want you, today, to see "the patterns of things in the heavens." We have much of Heaven here—at any rate, we have the Lamb who is the Glory of the Eternal City! We have the Presence of Him that sits upon the Throne of God among us, even now! We have, if not the perfect holiness of Heaven, yet a justification quite as complete as that of the glorified! We have the "white robes," for, "the blood of the Lamb" has washed them even now! And if we have not yet the palm branches of final victory, yet, thanks be to God, we are led in triumph in every place—and even now, "this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." Therefore—

***"I would begin the music here,
And so my soul should rise!
Oh, for some heavenly notes to bear
My passions to the skies."***

Our voices are not clear as yet—they are half-choked with the fogs and smoke of earth. They will be perfectly attuned before long! At any rate, let us go over the notes, and if we cannot reach to the full melody of the heavenly music, yet let us run up and down the scale and try some easy passages. Come, let us worship, adore and rejoice, as our departed ones are doing, and thus enjoy some of "the days of Heaven upon the earth." That shall be my drift this morning, as the Holy Spirit shall instruct me.

I. Keeping to the text, however, I want to speak, first, of THE PERFECTION OF THE PROVISION which is enjoyed in Heaven—"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." This is the perfection of the provision.

I must, by your permission, go a little further back to make my description of this provision more complete. Notice the last sentence of the 15th verse—"He that sits on the throne shall dwell among them." In the reading we interpreted, according to the Revised Version, which gives a more correct rendering—"He that sits on the throne shall spread His tabernacle over them." The glorified dwell under the shadow of God! It is for this reason that, "the sun shall not light on them, nor any heat," because they dwell in God. Oh, what a dwelling place that will be! You and I are often

like Noah's dove, sent out flying over a weary waste and finding no rest for the soles of our feet—but they dwell in the ark forever! We go in and out and find pasture, but in that going in and out we are sometimes troubled. Up yonder they “go no more out forever,” but eternally behold the face of the King and forever dwell at God's right hand where there are pleasures forevermore!

Oh what a joy this must be in Heaven, to be always within the circle of the eternal Presence, which is always seen, always unclouded, always enjoyed! Such a dwelling means transformation, for none can dwell with God but those who are like He—free from sin and perfect in holiness. We *cannot* abide in God forever unless we are like He and this, in itself, is boundless bliss. The abiding in the outspread pavilion of Jehovah will certify a similarity of sanctity and purity between the redeemed and the great Father who becomes their dwelling place. The Lord shall tabernacle over His glorified people—He shall be their eternal home!

Next we are assured that they shall have *no necessities*. “They shall hunger no more.” To be supplied when we hunger is the mercy of earth—never to hunger *at all* is the plenitude of Heaven! God shall so fill the souls of His redeemed that they shall have no longings—their longings shall be prevented by their constant satisfaction! That which they enjoy will be more than they ever desired to enjoy, or ever *imagined* that they could be capable of enjoying! Imagination's utmost height never reached to the exceeding bliss and glory of the world to come. The saints confess in Glory that it never entered into their hearts to guess what God had prepared for them that love Him! Heaven shall exceed all the desires of God's people—they shall not, even with their enlarged capacities, be able to wish for anything which they do not already possess—so that they shall hunger no more in the sense that they shall never pant for more than they have.

They shall have done with the desires which it is right for them to have *here*—desires which intimate their present imperfection. Here it is their duty and privilege to long after perfection, to be sighing and crying for a perfect deliverance from every shade of sin. But they shall not sigh and cry for this in *Heaven*, for they shall be without fault before the Throne of God! None of them shall cry, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” This, on earth, is one of the most deeply spiritual of cries—only heard from those whose sanctification is greatly advanced. None have ever uttered that bitter exclamation but men like Paul, to whom the slightest speck of sin has a horror about it akin to death, itself!

Fanatical persons talk about being perfect—it is the talk of blind men! But those whose eyes have seen the Lord, abhor themselves and sigh and cry over what other men call failures, mistakes and infirmities. To them their heart-sins and unseen faults are things to weep over! They have sharp hunger and piercing thirst after complete likeness to Christ. This likeness the saints possess only before the Throne of God—and they shall not thirst any more, even after this best and most desirable of attainments, since they shall enjoy it to the fullest!

Beloved, observe that as they have no kind of hunger, so they have also no measure of thirst. That is to say, they have no needs, no unsatisfied wishes of *any* sort. In whatever form a need might approach them, it is excluded, for both hunger and thirst are shut out. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, it has been blessed to hunger and thirst after righteousness—what must that higher blessedness be which rises above even these holy desires! We have wishes, here, which ought not to be gratified—these occasion us our sharpest pangs of hunger—but *there* we shall never know an unlawful wish, a wandering desire, or even an unwise longing. We shall have all things that a renewed heart can enjoy! All that our perfected nature can yearn after, we shall possess—there shall be no unsatisfied craving of our manhood, neither our risen body nor our sanctified spirit shall be moved to hunger or thirst after any evil, for there shall be nothing about us which has a tendency that way. The provision made for us shall be so absolutely complete that before we can desire any good thing, we shall find it! Before we know a need, we shall have enjoyed the supply! This is wonderful! Yes, but all I can tell you is not half of the truth!

Further, as we read, we discover a third blessing, namely, that *every overpowering influence is tempered*—“Neither shall the sun light on them.” What if by that, “sun,” is meant the full Glory of God! If you and I could be introduced into the Divine Presence at once and as we are, the first result upon us must be a swoon and the second must be death! We are not able to endure the blaze of Deity as yet—its Glory would cause a sunstroke to the soul! We might well cry with good Mr. Walsh, “Hold, Lord! Hold! Remember I am but an earthen vessel and I cannot as yet hold much of You.” We are not prepared to endure the Lord as our Sun in meridian splendor! In Heaven they are able to endure the immediate Presence of God, not only because of the Mediatorship of Christ, through whom the Glory of God shines with tempered splendor upon the saints, but also because they, themselves, are strengthened.

From all this earthly grossness, they are enabled to stand in that Light of God to which no mortal man can now approach. To us, even, “our God is a consuming fire” while we are here. But in the saints there remains nothing to consume. The Light of God is not too bright for eyes that Christ has touched with Heaven’s own eye salve! The vision of the Infinite is not too glorious for those whom the Lord has prepared to be with Him and to see His face! What John of Patmos could not bear, the weakest saint in Heaven can endure—not for an hour, but for the whole stretch of eternity! Blessed, indeed, are they who shall behold the King in the ivory palaces above!

When it is added, “Nor any heat,” we learn that *injurious influences shall cease to operate*. By our surroundings here, we are troubled with many heats. The very comforts of life, like warm weather, tend to dry us up. A man may have gold; a man may have health; a man may have prosperity and honor till he is withered like the heath in the desert in the day of drought. Unless a dew from the Lord shall rest upon the branch of the prosperous, he will be parched, indeed! We have need of Grace whenever God gives us blessings of a temporal kind. But no heat of that sort shall happen to saints in Heaven—they can be rich, honored, perfectly beautiful

and yet under no temptation to self-exaltation! Here the heats which are around us tend to fever us. Our fellow men grow hot about this and that—the pursuit of wealth, the triumph of party politics, the honor of a family and so forth—and we are all too apt to feel the common condition.

Within ourselves, heats arise—unhealthy and unholy heats. We cannot go through this plague-smitten world altogether unscathed. Every now and then we return to our quiet chamber and feel that we have sickened—sickened in the company wherein we have tarried for an hour—sickened, even, in contact with those whom we sought to bless. Up yonder no fever shall burn the hearts of the glorified! Traveling through the wilderness of this world, all of a sudden the hot sirocco of worldliness sweeps over us, laden with the burning dust of the desert, bearing death beneath its wings. Only God can keep us in that evil hour—only as we lie on our faces before Him can we hope to outlive the blast. Many are the temptations of this life. Some of them soft and deceptive, others fierce and terrible. But up yonder no sirocco shall ever blow and the inhabitant shall no more say, “I am sick.”

See, then, the perfect provision which is made by Christ for His saints above, and listen while we try to show that this same provision, in a modified way, lies at our hands even now. Come, Beloved, do we not dwell in God? Do we not sing, “Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations”? If any of you Believers have wandered away from your resting place, whose fault is that? Has not the Lord given you *Himself* to be your perpetual Pavilion? Has not Jesus said, “Abide in Me”? Have you not sung in that sweet 23rd Psalm, “I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever”? What more do you need? The Lord has spread His tabernacle over you—abide under the shadow of the almighty!

Whenever you dwell in God and the Lamb feeds you, do you not also realize that next expression, “they shall hunger no more”? Can you not sing when Christ is with you and you dwell in God—

***“I thirst, but not as once I did,
The vain delights of earth to share!
Your wounds, Immanuel, all forbid
That I should seek my pleasures there.
It was the sight of Your dear Cross
First weaned my soul from earthly things
And taught me to esteem as dross,
The mirth of fools and pomp of kings.”***

A child of God in communion with Christ would not lift his finger to possess a *world*, nor wink his eye to see all the pomp of kings, nor move a step to enjoy all the honors of rank nor rise from sitting at Jesus’ feet to learn all the wisdom of philosophy. He is already filled—what more can he have? The best of the best has fallen to his portion and shall he change it? No! Like the olive tree, he says, “Should I leave my fatness and go to be promoted over the trees?” And with the fig, he cries, “Should I forsake my sweetness and go to be promoted over the trees?” He that eats of the bread which Jesus gives him shall hunger no more! The husks of carnal joy have no attractions to the son who banquets at his father’s table.

“Neither shall they thirst any more.” They shall feel that the Lord Jesus is such an all-satisfying, all-sufficient portion that their desires can go no further. I have sped across the sea with flying sails, bidding each gale

send me according to its will, hoping that I might somewhere find a port. Restlessly have I hastened to and fro and been tossed up and down, the sport of every wave. My spirit has sped on and on through fair and foul, never abiding long in one place. Happily there came a day when I found a fair haven! Down went my anchor—it took fast hold and held my boat. Under the lee of Calvary I found rest! Now blow, you winds, or cease to blow as shall best please you! I stir not out to sea again. In the fair haven of the love of God in Christ Jesus shall my spirit abide forever!

If we could but reach this resolve, dear Brothers and Sisters, and hold to it, we should have no more anxieties and longings and we also would hunger no more, neither thirst any more. And then how blessedly true it is to those who dwell in God and live near to Jesus that now the sun does not light on them. God, in His infinite majesty and holiness, does not overwhelm us—

***“Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find.
The holy, just and sacred Three
Are terrors to my mind.
But if Immanuel’s face appears
All hope, my joy begins!
His love forbids my slavish fear,
His Grace removes my sins.”***

What a blessing it is to see God in Christ and to rejoice in Him! And, now, Beloved, if you are being daily fed by Jesus and are dwelling in God, the light of the sun, as to temporal prosperity, will do you no harm! You may be rich, but you will not trust in uncertain riches. You may be famous, but you will be as humble as if you were obscure. You may be learned, but you will sit at Jesus’ feet. You may be indulged with all kinds of worldly prosperity and yet these things will not prove a snare unto you. “Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.”

Those who dwell in God are no longer parched with inward heat. We notice people of God who *are* anxious and fretful—and cause a great deal of misery for people round them by always worrying, fidgeting and being in a state of nervous excitement. But holy souls, who abide in Christ, take everything calmly. You can remember such persons, both men and women—whatever happened, they remained unmoved, patient and cheerful. Great losses came in the course of business, but the Brother did not lose his balance. Sad bereavements came, but the Sister did not repine. If the Believer endured a sharp affliction, his chief concern was that the Lord would sanctify it to him—if people persecuted or slandered him, he was not surprised, for he *expected* to be hated by the world when he became a follower of Jesus.

If he prospered, he did not get into a heat of pride and begin to crow over everybody else like a cock on his dunghill. In patience he possessed his soul. God’s good gift of the Holy Spirit comforted and strengthened him. He could say, “My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.” “Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.” How much of mischief comes to the human body through its heats! The doctor looks hopeful when our blood grows cool, again, and the fever ceases. The best cure for the fever of the soul is to be made to dwell under the shadow of the Almighty and to be fed by the Lord Jesus Christ—for that sacred

shadow and that health-giving food prevent the burning sickness from coming near the chosen of the Lord. "He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. You shall not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrows that fly by day; nor for the pestilence that walks in darkness; nor for the destruction that wastes at noonday. A thousand shall fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you." Safe, calm, happy, restful shall you be—your soul shall dwell at ease and with the meek you shall inherit the earth.

"Ah," somebody says, "you are setting us up an exceedingly high standard." I am setting up a standard to which multitudes of God's people have attained and to which I would have you all attain! If this blessed bribe of Heaven below does not make you ambitious to rise to this level, what more shall I say? It is for your own profit and for God's Glory that you should not rest content short of this. Rise from the dust, my Brothers and Sisters! Ascend to the hill of the Lord and stand in His holy place! Abide in Christ! Feed upon Christ and then all this shall be yours, today and throughout life! So much for the perfection of the provision.

II. Now give me your heart's attention while I touch a noble string, and that is—THE DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER. "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters." You see, this is the reason for all the provision and enjoyment—the verse begins with the word, "For," signifying that this is the cause of all the happiness of the blessed—that the Lamb feeds and leads them!

Who is this that feeds them? It is *the Lamb*. I wish it were possible for me to communicate to you the enjoyment my own soul has had in meditating upon this blessed word, "The Lamb," as it stands in this connection. Does it not teach us, first, that our comfort and life must come from *our Incarnate Savior*—the Lamb? The expression is very peculiar—it is a figure and no figure—a mixed metaphor, and yet most plain and clear! It is written, "The Lamb shall shepherd them." This is an accurate interpretation. How is that? A shepherd—and that Shepherd a Lamb! Here is the Truth of God which the words contain—He that saves, is a Man like ourselves. He that provides for His people is, Himself, one of them—"For which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren."

A lamb is a member of the flock, but in this case the Lamb is the Shepherd of the flock—a Shepherd who is also a Lamb must be the most tender shepherd conceivable, the most sympathetic and brotherly guardian that can be! When a man is shepherd to sheep, he should be compassionate, but he cannot be so tender as if he actually partook of their nature. In our case, our Shepherd is, to the fullest, a partaker of our *nature*—we are men and our shepherd is a Man. Beloved, our soul's support, our spiritual meat lies in this—that the Son of God is a partaker of flesh and blood and is one of ourselves! He that sits upon the Throne of God is our kinsman, a sharer in our nature, a brother born of adversity—why, surely this heavenly Truth is manna from Heaven, the food of saintly souls! The Lamb is our hope, our comfort, our honor, our delight, our glory!

Does it not mean more than that? “The Lamb” surely refers to *sacrifice*. Only run your eyes back a verse or two and you have the key of the expression, “they that washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” He, then, that feeds His people in Heaven is the Sacrifice, the Atonement, the Expiation. In Heaven they glory in the Cross. Each one sings, “He loved me and gave Himself for me.” The glorified drink the deepest draughts of delight from the fact that God was made flesh and that, in human flesh, He offered perfect expiation for human guilt. Brothers and Sisters, these two fountains are *here* as well as there! Come, let us drink of them! Let us prevent our thirst by the water of the well of Bethlehem and by streams from the smitten rock!

Still, there is a third meaning which must not be overlooked. “The Lamb” must refer to *the meekness of character*, the lowliness and condescension of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus Christ on earth was “led as a lamb to the slaughter.” He was “meek and lowly in heart.” He walked up and down among men, the Friend of sinners, the Lover of little children, the Companion of the poor and, today, He is not otherwise than He was on the earth! Though Heaven adores Him, He is still as compassionate and condescending as He was in the days of His flesh—and this is why He can feed His people so well both *here* and in Heaven.

I beg you to dwell upon that word, “Lamb,” till you feed upon it with your whole souls. Jesus has joined Himself to His flock—“As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He, also, Himself, likewise took part of the same.” As surely as He is God, He is also Man, indeed and of a truth—not in semblance, but in reality—

**“It is my sweetest comfort, Lord,
And will forever be,
To muse upon the gracious truth
Of Your humanity.
Oh, joy! There sits in our flesh,
Upon a throne of light,
One of a human mother born,
In perfect Godhead bright!
Forever God, forever Man,
My Jesus shall endure
And fixed on Him, my hope remains
Eternally secure.”**

He is also our *Sacrifice*—“The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” What rest came unto our hearts when we first understood the meaning of that word—“Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world!” Continue to behold Him and all your feverish heats will be abated—and your hunger and thirst of spirit will be done.

Jesus is so meek and lowly, as I have said, that you may approach Him at all times, and He will manifest Himself to you. He is tender and gentle, and never makes Himself strange unto His own flesh. Sitting at His feet you shall find rest unto your soul. “Neither shall the sun light on you, nor any heat.”

The Character of our Lord, then, brings our spirit all that it needs. But this is not all—the text speaks of “*the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne*” as *feeding* them. Think of that, the Lamb in the midst of the Throne of God! Can you put these two things together—a Sacrifice and a

Throne? That same Savior who opened His veins that He might cleanse us from sin now wears the imperial purple of the universe! He that stooped to be made sin for us is now Supreme Sovereign, King of kings and Lord of lords! Think of that and be comforted. Our Representative is glorified! Our Covenant Head, our second Adam, is in the midst of the Throne of God! God the Father has exalted the Mediator to the place of power and honor and rule. Our Savior has all power in Heaven and in earth!

Sometimes when I think of my great King and Captain exalted to so glorious an estate, I feel that it matters nothing what becomes of me, His poor follower. The sun of persecution smites not when He is seen as God over all, blessed forever! Hunger is not hunger and pain is not pain for such a loved One! In blissful sympathy with the unutterable delights of Jesus, we are happy at our worst, feeling that if Christ is rich, we are not poor. And if Christ is happy, we are not disappointed. His victory is our victory! His Glory is our glory! Feel this union with your enthroned Lord and you will begin to be in Heaven!

Yet further, remember that when we read of “the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne,” it must mean that our Redeemer is the most conspicuous of persons. In the forefront of the Throne of God is Jesus! He is seen of angels. He is continually beheld with wonder by all the servants of our God. The sovereignty of God, His royal power, His eternal majesty are at the back of Christ to sustain His cause and make His name illustrious. He must reign! Every eye must see Him, every knee must bow to Him and every tongue must call Him Lord to the glory of God the Father! He shall have all enemies under His feet and shall be extolled, exalted and be very high. My heart rejoices to remember this fact in this cloudy and dark day! Though our modern thinkers sneer at the Gospel and skeptics scoff at the doctrine of the Nazarene. Though all manner of scorn is poured upon our holy faith, yet the Lord has set His Son upon His holy hill and He is there with Him to secure His everlasting dominion, despite the assaults of men and devils!

In all this I see the choicest food for the flock of God. To them Jesus speaks from the Throne and uses, today, words like those which He spoke on earth. “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” Out of Glory He says, “To Him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me on My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father on His throne.”

The, “midst of the throne,” seems to signify, also, that Jesus has become the very center of all things. “Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.” He is lifted up and all men are drawn to Him. He is the great central sun and all other lights revolve about Him. He is the heart of the eternal purpose, the hinge of history and the climax of Revelation! He reigns in the midst of Heaven, even as at this day upon earth He is in the midst of two or three who are met together in His name. Our joy is like that of the just made perfect. In this delight we unite with the general assembly and Church of the firstborn. Jesus, on the Throne of God, is to our hearts and songs the central Person—and the Center shall never be removed, neither shall the gathering of His people be scattered!

Thus you see who it is that feeds the saints in Heaven and I desire you to feel that if you are to be fed and comforted here below, it must be by the same great Shepherd of the sheep, in the same Character. There are no stores for you other than those which are in the hands of Jesus, in whom all fullness dwells! There are no comforts for you except as they are given from the Throne of God where the Lamb is reigning! Turn away, my Brothers and Sisters, turn away from *all* the frothy novelties of modern thought and the vain inventions of man—and behold the crown of your adorable Lord, the Lamb of God's Passover—the Lamb who shall overcome all the powers of evil and stand in the midst of the Throne of God!

Dwell on the literal, historical Incarnation of the Son of God! Believe in His literal death, in His actual Substitution, His complete and perfect Atonement! Dwell on His rising from the dead and His ascent to the right hand of God—and never doubt that He is now the supreme object of Heaven's adoration, the Lord of all things that are or shall be, sure and certain to be in the latter days exalted above all principalities and powers and every name that is named! If we can but live on these Truths of God and delight ourselves in them, we shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on us, nor any heat—and even *here* we shall find living fountains of water and tears shall be wiped from our eyes.

III. I finish by giving only a hint or two upon the third point. That is to say—THE MANNER OF THIS PROVIDING. We have considered the provision in its perfection and the Provider in His glorious Character. Now let us see how this provision is given to the saints in Heaven, for in the same manner is it brought to us. In two ways the saints in Heaven enjoy it—the Lamb that is in the midst of the Throne feeds them and leads them. Go over this, and think, first, of *the feeding* of them. The Greek word is, “shall shepherdize them.” In Heaven, Jesus is a Shepherd ruling over all His flock with a happy, genial, sympathetic sovereignty to which they yield prompt and glad obedience. There the Lord Jesus cares for His people immediately and personally. He Himself bestows upon them all that they require.

Here He has under-shepherds and He hands out the food by our poor instrumentality and, alas, sometimes we are found incapable, or forgetful and the flock is not fed—but it is never so in Heaven—for the Lamb Himself maintains the pastorate and acts the Shepherd in a manner which none of us can emulate. What says the Prophet Micah? “And He shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord, His God; and they shall abide: for now shall He be great unto the ends of the earth” (5:4).

All else of care and feeding that saints can require in Glory is in Christ. I know not what it may be, but this I do know, that while they worship Him, He cares for them. He is among them as the Chief Shepherd, at whose appearing the under-shepherds shall appear with Him in Glory. Up yonder Jesus still communes with them very closely, else were it not written, “The Lamb shall feed them.” I remind you, again, of what we have said—He feeds them, therefore He is their Shepherd. Yet it is the *Lamb* that feeds them, therefore He is *one with them*—as if He fed with them—as if their food was His food and His food their food and they were one with

Him in all respects! What must fellowship with Christ be in Heaven! I confess I have sometimes had, and many of you have had, such communion with Jesus *here* that if I could but have continued to enjoy it, it would not have concerned me the turning of a penny whether I were here or among the angels, for it was bliss enough for me to be with Jesus!

But, oh! When we shall have enlarged our capacities. When our understanding shall have been cleared, our affections purified and all our manhood shall be made innocent and Christ-like, what must it be, then, to behold His Glory, to commune with Him, to lean our head upon His bosom, to bask in His love and to feel our hearts on fire with love in return! Oh to be with Him *forever*—to see no intervening cloud! To feel no wandering wish, no thought of future declension, no possibility of grieving Him by sin! What must it be, to be forever one with Him in Glory! That is bliss above conception! He shepherdizes them—He Himself does it and, therefore, they are supremely blessed!

Now do you not think we can enjoy some of this today? Do you question it? What does the 10th of John mean, if Jesus is not the Good Shepherd of His sheep at this day? Read it through when you get home. What does the 23rd Psalm mean? Is that a Psalm for another world, or for this? Does it not say, “The Lord is *my* shepherd; I shall not want. He *makes* me to lie down in green pastures: He *leads* me beside the still waters”? Why, one would think, from the look of your doubtful faces, that it ran thus—“The Lord has forgotten to be my shepherd. He has given me over to the wolf. He has driven me into a wilderness and left me among the dark mountains. I perish in a dry and thirsty land, where there is no water”! It is not so! We must not *think* it so, for even *here* our great Lord is our Shepherd and He cares for each one of the flock.

Then it is added, “*He shall lead.*” That is another work of the Shepherd, to lead His flock—“He leads them to living fountains of waters.” You may read it, “He shall guide them to fountains of waters of life”—it is but a variation of the same thought. Now, even in Heaven, the holy ones need guiding—and Jesus leads the way. While He is guiding, He points out to His people the secret founts and fresh springs which, as yet, they have not tasted. As eternity goes on, I have no doubt that the Savior will be indicating fresh delights to His redeemed. “Come here,” He says to His flock, “here are yet more flowing streams.” He will lead them on and on, by the century, yes, by the *millennium*, from glory unto glory, onward and upward in growing knowledge and enjoyment! Continually will He conduct His flock to deeper mysteries and higher glories!

Never will the inexhaustible God who has given Himself to be the portion of His people ever be fully known, so that there will *eternally* be sources of freshness and new delight, and the Shepherd will continue to lead His flock to these living fountains of water. He will guide them—

**“From glory unto glory,’ that ever lies before
Still widening, adoring, rejoicing more and more,
Still following where He leads, from shining field to field,
Himself our goal of glory, Revealer and Revealed!”**

He will also cause them to drink of the river of His pleasures so that they shall be full of bliss. Can we not grasp a little of this today? If we will but follow Christ, we may drink of the water which He freely gives to all who

believe in Him, even as He gave to the woman of Samaria. “I cannot see any joy,” cries one. No, but Jesus will lead you to it! “Oh, but I read my Bible this morning and I did not get anything from it.” That may be, but if Jesus had been there and led you to the fountain, you would have been refreshed!

How the texts open up when Jesus touches them! You are like Hagar—you have laid your child down among the shrubs to die. You are perishing of thirst and yet if you would but listen, you might hear the splash of the falling waters just behind you! You only need the Lord to speak and open your eyes and you will see rich supplies, for the living fountain is near at hand. Go to the Savior today, and say, “Lord, lead me to living fountains of water. I drank years ago and I have been drinking all along, but Lord I need deeper draughts! I desire to know more and love more.” Jesus will lead you! He will do it *now* and when He does, you will realize to the fullest how similar this earth may be to Heaven above!

Let us commit ourselves like sheep to our great Shepherd! Come, you wanderers, return to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls! You that have been in Him these many years and fed in His pastures, come near to Him and follow Him yet more closely and your eyes shall be opened to see new rivers of delight where all seemed dry! You shall find in the valley of Baca a well—and drinking of it you shall go from strength to strength, till every one of you in Zion appears before God! How long will it be, O Ever-Blessed One, till we behold You? Even now the day breaks!

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Revelation 7.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—912, 877, 775.***

N.B.—Will the reader please note that this is number 1,800 of our consecutive sermons in this form. We bless the God of all Grace that for all these years every Thursday has seen its sermon. The sale is well sustained, but we should be very grateful if friends would endeavor to increase it.—C.H.S.

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

HEAVEN ABOVE AND HEAVEN BELOW

NO. 2128

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 2, 1890.

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

“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters.”
Revelation 7:16, 17.

“They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for He that has mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them.”
Isaiah 49:10.

JORDAN is a very narrow stream. It made a sort of boundary for Canaan but it hardly sufficed to divide it from the rest of the world since a part of the possessions of Israel was on the eastern side of it. Those who saw the Red Sea divided and all Israel marching through its depths must have thought it no small thing for the Jordan to be dried up and for the people to pass through it to Canaan. The greatest barrier between Believers and Heaven has been safely passed. In the day when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ we passed through our Red Sea and the Egyptians of our sins were drowned. Great was the marvel of mercy! To enter fully into our eternal inheritance we have only to cross the narrow stream of Death—and scarcely that—for the kingdom of Heaven is on this side of the river as well as on the other.

I begin by reminding you of this because we are very apt to imagine that we must endure a kind of purgatory while we are on earth and then, if we are Believers, we may break loose into Heaven after we have shuffled off this mortal coil. But it is not so. Heaven must be *in* us before we can be in Heaven—and while we are yet in the wilderness we may spy out the land—and may eat of the clusters of Eshcol.

There is no such gulf between earth and Heaven as gloomy thoughts suggest. Our dreams should not be of an abyss, but of a *ladder* whose foot is on the earth and whose top is in Glory. There would not be one hundredth part so much difference between earth and Heaven if we did not live so far below our privileges. We live on the ground, when we might rise as on the wings of eagles! We are all too conscious of this body. Oh, that we were more often where Paul was when he said, “Whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knows”! If not caught up into Paradise, yet may our daily life be as the garden of the Lord.

Listen a while, you children of God, for I speak to you and not to others. To unbelievers, what can I say? They know nothing of *spiritual* things and will not believe them though a man should show them to them! They are spiritually blind and dead—may the Lord quicken and enlighten them!

But to you that are begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead I speak with joy! Think of what you are by Divine Grace and remember that what you will be in Glory is already outlined and foreshadowed in your life in Christ! Being born from above, you are the same men that will be in Heaven! You have *within* you the Divine life—the same life which is to enjoy eternal immortality!

“He that believes on the Son has everlasting life”—it is your possession *now*. As the quickened ones of the Holy Spirit, the life which is to last on forever has begun in you. At this moment you are already, in many respects, the same as you always will be. I might almost repeat this passage in Revelation concerning some of you at this very hour—“What are these? And from where did they come? These are they that came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

I might even go on to say, “Therefore are they before the Throne of God”—for you abide in close communion with the King—“and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sits on the Throne shall dwell among them.” I am straining no point when I thus speak of the sanctified. Beloved, you are *now*, “elect according to the foreknowledge of God,” and you are, “the called according to His purpose.” Already you are as much forgiven as you will be when you stand without fault before the Throne of God. The Lord Jesus has washed you whiter than snow and none can lay anything to your charge. You are as completely justified by the righteousness of Christ as you ever can be—you are covered with His righteousness—and Heaven itself cannot provide a robe more spotless!

“Beloved, *now* are we the sons of God.” “He has made us accepted in the Beloved.” Today we have the spirit of adoption and enjoy access to the Throne of the heavenly Grace. Yes, and today by faith we are raised up in Christ and made to sit in the heavenlies in Him. We are now united to Christ, now indwelt by the Holy Spirit—are not these great things and heavenly things? The Lord has brought us out of darkness into His marvelous light! Although we may, from one point of view, lament the dimness of the day, yet, as compared with our former darkness, the light is marvelous and, best of all, it is the same light which is to brighten from dawn into midday!

What is Divine Grace but the morning twilight of Glory? Look, Beloved—the inheritance that is to be yours tomorrow, is, in very truth, yours *today*—for in Christ Jesus you have received the inheritance and you have the earnest of it in the present possession of the Holy Spirit who dwells in you! It has been well said that all the streets of the New Jerusalem begin here. See, here is the High Street of Peace which leads to the central palace of God—and now we set our foot on it! “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” The heavenly street of Victory, where the palms and the harps are—surely we are at the lower end of it here—for “this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.”

Everything that is to be ours in the Home Country is, in measure, ours at this moment. As sleeps the oak within the acorn, so slumbers Heaven within the first cry of, “Abba, Father!” Yes, and the hallelujahs of eternity

lie hidden within the groans of penitence! “God be merciful to me, a sinner,” has in its heart the endless, “We praise You, O Lord.” O saints, little do you know how much you have in what you have! If I could bring Believers consciously nearer to the state of Glory by their more complete enjoyment of the privileges of the state of Grace, I would be exceedingly glad. Beloved, you will never have a better God—and “this God is our God forever and ever.” Delight yourselves in Him this day! The richest saint in Glory has no greater possession than his God—and even I can say, in the words of the Psalm—

“Yes, my own God is He.”

Despite your tribulation take full delight in God, your exceeding joy this morning, and be happy in Him. They in Heaven are shepherded by the Lamb of God and so are you—He still carries the lambs in His bosom and does gently lead those that are with young. Even here He makes us to lie down in green pastures—what more could we have? With such a God and such a Savior, all you can want is that indwelling Spirit who shall help you to realize your God and to rejoice in your Savior—and you have this also—for the Spirit of God dwells with you and is *in* you—“Know you not that you are the temple of God?”!

God the Holy Spirit is not far away, neither have we to entreat His influence as though it were rays from a far-off star—Brothers and Sisters, He abides in His people evermore! I will not say that heavenly perfection is not far superior to the highest state that we will ever reach on earth—but the difference lies more in our own failure than in the nature of things. Grace, if realized to its fullest, would brighten off into Glory. When the Holy Spirit fully possesses our being and we yield ourselves to His power, our weakness is strength and our infirmity is to be gloried in! Then is it true that on earth God is with us—and there is but a step between us and Heaven—where *we* are with God!

Thus I have conducted you to my two texts which I have put together as an illustration of what I would teach. In the New Testament text we have the heavenly state above and in the Old Testament text we have the state of the Lord’s flock while on the way to their eternal rest. Very singular, to my mind, is the sameness of the description of the flock in the fold and the flock feeding in the ways. The verses are almost, word for word, the same. When John would describe the white-robed host, he can say no more of them than Isaiah said of the band of pilgrims led by the God of mercy.

I. First, LET US CONSIDER THE HEAVENLY STATE ABOVE. The Beloved John tells us what he heard and saw. The first part of the description assures us of *the supply of every need*. “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more.” In Heaven no need is unsatisfied and no desire ungratified. They can have no need as to their bodies, for they are as the angels of God. Children of poverty, your lack of bread will soon be ended and your care shall end in plenty! The worst hunger is that of the *heart* and this will be unknown above.

There is a ravenous hunger, fierce as a wolf, which possesses some men—all the world cannot satisfy their greed. A thousand worlds would be

scarcely a mouthful for their lust. Now, in Heaven there are no sinful and selfish desires. The ravaging of covetousness or of ambition enters not the sacred gate. In Glory there are no desires which should not be and those desires which should be are all so tempered or so fulfilled that they can never become the cause of sorrow or pain, for, “they shall hunger no more.”

Even the saints need love, fellowship, rest—they have all these in union to God, in the communion of saints and in the rest of Jesus. The unrenewed man is always thirsting but Christ satisfies this even now, for He says, “He that drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.” Be assured, then, that from the golden cup of Glory we shall drink that which will quench all thirst forever! There is not, in all the golden streets of Heaven, a single person who is desiring what he may not have or needing what he cannot obtain, or even *wishing* for that which he has not in his hands. O happy state! Their mouth is satisfied with good things! They are filled with all the fullness of God!

And as there is in Heaven a supply for every need, so is there *the removal of every ill*. Thus says the Spirit, “Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.” We are such poor creatures that excesses of good soon become evils to us. I love the sun—if you have ever seen it shining in the clear blue heavens, you would not wonder that I speak with emphasis. Life, joy and health stream from it in lands where it is enough of pleasure to bask in its beams. But too much of the sun overpowers us—his warmth makes men faint—his stroke destroys them. Too great a blessing may prove too heavy a cargo for the ship of life.

Therefore we need guarding from dangers which, at the first sight, look as if they were not perilous. In the beatific state, if these bodies of flesh and blood were still our dwelling place, we could not live under the celestial conditions. Even here, too much of spiritual joy may prostrate a man and cast him into a swoon. I would like to die of the disease, but still, a sickness comes upon one to whom heavenly things are revealed in great measure and enjoyed with special vividness. One of the saints cried out in an agony of delight, “Hold, Lord, hold! Remember I am but an earthen vessel and can contain no more!”

The Lord has to limit His revelations because we cannot bear them now. I have heard of one who looked upon the sun imprudently and was blinded by the light. The very sunlight of Divine revelation, favor and fellowship could readily prove too much for our feeble vision, heart and brain. Therefore, in the glorious state flesh and blood shall be removed and the raised body shall be strengthened to endure that fierce light which beats about the throne of Deity. As for us, as we now are, we might well cry, “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?” But when the redemption of the body has come about and the soul has been strengthened with all might, we shall be able to be at home with our God, who is a consuming fire.

“Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.” May God grant us to enjoy the anticipation of that happy period when we shall behold His face; when His secret shall be with us and we shall know even as we are

known! Oh, for that day when we shall enter into the Holiest and shall stand before the Presence of His Glory! And yet, we will be so far from being afraid we shall be filled with exceeding joy!

But, further, the description of the heavenly life has this conspicuous feature—the *leading of the Lamb*. “The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them.” It is Heaven to be personally shepherded by Him who is the Great Sacrifice. In this present state we have earthly shepherds and when God graciously feeds us by men after His own heart, whom He Himself instructs, we prize them much. Those whom the Lord ordains to feed His flock we love and we follow their faith for the Lord makes them of great service to us. But still, they are only underlings and we do not forget their imperfections and their dependence upon their Lord.

But in Heaven “that Great Shepherd of the sheep” will Himself personally minister to us. Those dear lips that are as lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh shall speak directly to each one of our hearts. We shall hear His voice! We shall behold His face! We shall be fed by His hands! We shall follow at His heels! How gloriously will He “stand and feed”! How restfully shall we lie down in green pastures! He shall feed us in His dearest Character. As the Lamb He revealed His greatest love and as the Lamb will He lead and feed us forever!

The Revised Version wisely renders the passage, “The Lamb in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd.” We are never fed so sweetly by our Lord Himself as when He reveals to us most clearly His Character as the Sacrifice for sin. The atoning Sacrifice is the center of the sun of infinite love, the light of light. There is no Truth like it for the Revelation of God. Christ in His wounds and bloody sweat is Christ, indeed. “He His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” With this Truth of God before us, His flesh is meat, indeed, and His blood is drink, indeed.

In Heaven we shall know Him far better than we do now as the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world—the Lamb of God’s Passover—the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.” That deep peace, that eternally unbroken rest which we shall derive from a sight of the Great Sacrifice will be a chief ingredient in the bliss of Heaven. “The Lamb shall feed them.” But though we shall see our Lord as a Lamb, it will not be in a state of humiliation but in a condition of power and honor. “The Lamb which is in the *midst of the throne* shall feed them.”

Heaven will largely consist of expanded views of King Jesus and closer views of the Glory which follows upon His sacrificial grief. Ah, Brothers and Sisters, how little do we know His Glory! We scarcely know who He is that has befriended us! We hold the doctrine of His Deity tenaciously—but in Heaven we shall perceive His Godhead in its Truth so far as the finite can apprehend the infinite! We have known His friendship to us, but when we shall behold the King in His beauty in His own halls and our eyes shall look into His royal countenance and His face, which outshines the sun, shall beam ineffable affection upon each one of us, *then* shall we find our Heaven in His Glory! We ask no thrones—His Throne is ours! The enthroned Lamb Himself is all the Heaven we desire!

Then the last point of the description is full of meaning. *The drinking at the fountain* is the secret of the ineffable bliss. “The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and lead them unto living fountains of waters.” We are compelled to thirst, at times, like the poor flock of slaughter which we see driven through our London streets. And alas, we stop at the very puddles by the way and would refresh ourselves at them if we could. This will never happen to us when we reach the land where flows the river of the Water of Life! There the sheep drink of no stagnant waters or bitter wells—they are satisfied from living fountains of waters! Comfort is measurably to be found in the streams of Providential mercies and therefore they are to be received with gratitude—but common blessings are unfilling things to souls quickened by Divine Grace.

Corn can fill the barn, but not the heart. Of the wells of earth we may say, “Whoever drinks of this water shall thirst again.” But when we go beyond temporal supplies and live upon God Himself, then the soul receives a draught of far truer and more enduring refreshment—even as our Lord Jesus said to the woman at the well—“He that drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” In Heaven the happy ones live not on bread, which is the staff of life, but on *God*, who is Life itself!

The second cause is passed over and the first cause, alone, is seen. In the Home Country souls have no need of the means of Grace, for they have reached the God of Grace. The means of Grace are like pipes which bring down the living water to us—but we have found them fail us—and at times we have used them in so faulty a way that the water has lost its freshness, or has even been made to taste of the pipe through which it flowed. Fruit is best when gathered fresh from the garden—the handling of the market destroys the bloom. We have too much of this in our ministries. Brethren, we shall soon drink living water at the wellhead and gather the golden fruit from Him who is “as the apple tree among the trees of the wood.”

We shall have no need of Baptisms and breakings of bread, nor of churches and pastors. We shall not need the golden chalices or the earthen vessels which now serve us so well, but we shall come to the river’s Source and drink our full. “He shall lead them unto living fountains of water.” At times, alas, we know what it is to come to the pits and find no water—and then we try to live on happy memories. We sing, and sigh—or sigh, and sing—

***“What peaceful hours I once enjoyed,
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill.”***

A cake made of memories will do for a bite now and then, but it makes poor daily bread. We need the present enjoyment of God. We need, still, to go to the fountain for new supplies—for water which stands long in the pitcher loses its cool and refreshing excellence.

Happy is the man that is not living upon the memories of what he used to enjoy but is even now in the banqueting house! The present and per-

petual renewal of first love and first delight in God is Heaven. Heaven is to know the substance and the secret of the Divine life—not to hold a cup, but to drink of the living water. The doctrine is precious, but it is far better to know the thing about which the doctrine speaks. The doctrine is the tray of silver, but the blessing itself is the apple of gold. Blessed are they that are always fed on the substance of the Truth of God, the verity of verities, the essence of essential things. “He shall lead them unto fountains.”

There the eternal source is unveiled—they not only receive the mercy, but they see how it comes and from where it flows—they not only drink, but they drink with their eyes upon the glorious Wellhead. Did you ever see a boy on a hot day lie down, when he has been thirsty, and put his mouth down to the top of the water at the brim of the well? How he draws up the cool refreshment! Drink away, poor child! He has no fear that he will drink the well dry, nor have we. How pleasant it is to take from the inexhaustible! That which we drink is all the sweeter because of the measureless remainder. Enough is not enough—but when we have God for our All in All, then are we content.

When I am near to God and dwell in the overflowing of His love, I feel like the cattle on a burning summer’s day when they take to the brook which ripples around them up to their knees—and there they stand, filled, cooled and sweetly refreshed. O my God, in You I feel that I have not only all that I can contain, but all that contains me! In You I live and move with perfect content! Such is Heaven! We shall have bliss within and bliss around us—we ourselves drinking at the Source and dwelling by the well forever!

The fact is that Heaven is God, fully enjoyed. The evil that God hates will be wholly cast out—the capacity which God gives will be enlarged and prepared for full fruition and our whole being will be taken up with God, the Ever-Blessed, from whom we came and to whom it will be Heaven to return! Whoever knows God knows Heaven! The Source of all things is our fountain of living waters!

Thus I could occupy all the morning with my first head but I must not tarry, or I shall miss my aim which is to show you that, even here, we may outline Glory and in the wilderness we may have the pattern of things in the heavens. This you will see by carefully referring to the second text.

II. LET US CONSIDER THE HEAVENLY STATE BELOW. I think I have heard you saying, “Ah, this is all about Heaven but we have not yet come to it. We are still wrestling here below.” Well, well—if we cannot go to Heaven at once, Heaven can come to us! The words which I will now read refer to the days of *earth*, the times when the sheep feed in the ways and come from the north and from the south at the call of the shepherd. “*They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for He that has mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them.*”

Look at the former passage and at this one. The whole description is the same! When I noticed this parallel, I stood amazed. John, you are a great artist! I entreat you, paint me a picture of Heaven! Isaiah, you also

have a great soul—draw me a picture of the life of the saintly ones on earth when their Lord is with them! I have both pictures. They are masterpieces! I look at them and they are so much alike that I wonder if there is not some mistake. Surely they are depicting the same thing! The forms, the lights and shades, the touches and the tones are not only alike, but identical!

Amazed, I cry, “Which is Heaven, and which is the heavenly life on earth?” The artists know their own work and by their instruction I will be led. Isaiah painted our Lord’s sheep in His Presence on the way to Heaven. John drew the same flock in Glory with the Lamb. And the fact that the pictures are so much alike is full of suggestive teaching. Here are the same ideas in the same words. Brothers and Sisters, may you and I as fully believe and enjoy the second passage as we hope to realize and enjoy the first Scripture when we get home to Heaven!

First, here is a promise that *every need shall he supplied*. “They shall not hunger nor thirst.” If we are the Lord’s people and are trusting in Him, this shall be true in every possible sense. Literally, “your bread shall be given you, your water shall be sure.” You shall have no anxious thought concerning what you shall eat and what you shall drink. But, mark you, if you should know the trials of poverty and should be greatly tried and brought very low in temporal things, yet the Lord’s Presence and sensible consolations shall so sustain you that *spiritually* and inwardly you shall know neither hunger nor thirst.

Many saints have found riches in poverty, ease in labor, rest in pain and delight in affliction! Our Lord can so adapt our minds to our circumstances that the bitter is sweet and the burden is light. Paul speaks of the saints “as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.” Note well that the sorrow has an “as” connected with it—but the rejoicing is a fact! “They shall not hunger nor thirst.” If you live in God, you shall have no ungratified desire. “Delight yourself also in the Lord and He shall give you the desires of your heart.” There may be many things that you would like to have and you may never have them—but then you will prefer to be without them, saying, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”

If Christ is with you, you will be so happy in Him that wanton, wandering wishes will be like the birds which may fly over your head but dare not make their nests in your hair. You will be without a peevish craving, or a pining ambition, or a carking care. “Oh,” says a Believer, “I wish I could reach that state.” You will reach it—you are on the way to it. Only love Christ more and be more like He and you shall be satisfied with favor, and sing, “All my springs are in You.” “My Soul, wait only upon God; for my expectation is from Him.”

I do not mean that the saints find a full content in this world’s goods, but that they find such content in God that with them or without them they live in wealth. A man’s life consists not in the abundance of that which he possesses—many a man who has had next to nothing that could be *seen* with eyes or *handled* with hands—has been a very millionaire for true wealth in possessing the kingdom of the Most High! The Lord has

brought some of us into that state in which we have all things in Him—and it is true of us—“They shall not hunger nor thirst.”

Then, next, there is such a thing as having *every evil removed* from you while yet in this wilderness. “Neither shall the heat nor sun smite them.” Suppose God favors you with prosperity? If you live near to God you will not be rendered proud or worldly-minded by your prosperity. Suppose you should become popular because of your usefulness? You will not be puffed up if Christ Jesus is your continual Leader and Shepherd. If you live near to Him you will be lowly. If your days are spent in sunlight and you go from joy to joy, yet shall no sunstroke smite you. If still you dwell in God and your heart is full of Christ and you are led as a sheep by Him—no measure of heat shall overpower you.

It is a mistake to think that our safety or our danger is according to our circumstances—our safety or our danger is according to our nearness to God or our distance from Him. A man who is near to God can stand on the pinnacle of the temple and the devil may tempt him to throw himself down and yet he will be firm as the temple itself. A man that is without God may be in the safest part of the road and traverse a level way and yet he will stumble! It is not the *road*, but the *Lord* that keeps the pilgrim’s feet. O heir of Heaven, commit your way unto God and make Him your All in All and rise above the creature into the Creator! And then shall you hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the heat nor the sun smite you.

Further, it is said that on earth we may enjoy *the leading of the Lord*. See how it is put—“For He that has mercy on them shall lead them.” Here we have not quite the same words as in Revelation, for there we read, “The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall lead them.” Yet the sense is but another shade of the same meaning. Oh, but that is a sweet, sweet name, is it not? “He that has mercy on them.” He has saved them and so has had mercy on them. Yes, that is very precious, but the word is sweeter, still—“He that has mercy on them”—He that is *always* having mercy on them—He that follows them with mercy all the days of their lives! He that continually pardons, upholds, supplies, strengthens and thus daily loads them with benefits—“He that has mercy on them shall lead them.”

Do you know, beloved Friends, what it is to be led of the Lord? Many are led by their own tastes and fancies. They will go wrong. Others are led by their own judgments. But these are not infallible and they may go wrong. More are led by other people—these may go right, but it is far from likely that they will. He that is led of *God*—he is the happy man—he shall not err. He shall be conducted Providentially in a right way to the city of habitations. Commit your way unto the Lord! Trust, also, in Him and He will bring it to pass. It may be a rough way, but it must be a right way if we follow the track of the Lord’s feet!

The true Believer shall be led by the Spirit of God in sacred matters—“He will guide you into all truth.” He that has mercy on us in other things will have mercy on us by teaching us to profit. We shall each one sing, “He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.” We shall be

led into duty and through struggles. We shall be led to happy attainments and gracious enjoyments. We shall go from strength to strength. In the case of the gracious soul, earth becomes like Heaven because he walks with God. He that has mercy on him, visits him, communes with him and manifests Himself to him! A shepherd goes before his flock and the true sheep follow him.

Blessed are they who follow the Lamb where ever He goes. They have a love to their Lord and therefore they only want to know which way He would have them go and they feel drawn along it by the cords of love and the bands of a man. If they can get a glance from their Lord's eyes it suffices them. As it is written, "I will guide you with My eyes." Every day they stand anxiously attentive to do the King's commandment, be it what it may. They yield themselves and their members to Him to be instruments of righteousness, vessels fit for the Master's use.

Beloved, this is Heaven below! If you have ever tried it, you know it is so. If you have never fully tried it, try it now and you will find a new joy in it. Jesus says to you, "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, and you shall find rest unto your souls." I do not know anything more delightful than to be such a fool, as the world will call you, as to yield your intellect to the teaching of the Lord—and to be so weak that you cannot judge but accept His will—and so incapable that even to will and to do must be worked in you of the Lord! Oh, to be so unselfish as to take anything from Christ far more gladly than you would choose of your own accord!

If your Lord puts His hand into the bitter box, you will think the potion sweet. And if He scourges you, you will thank Him for being so kind as to think of you at all! When you get to that point—that you are as a sheep to whom God Himself is the Shepherd—it is well with you. Then you will realize, even in the pastures of the wilderness, how the rain from Heaven drops upon the inheritance of the Lord and refreshes it when it is weary. "The peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." God give you to know it, dear Friends! I can speak experimentally of it—it is not only the foretaste of Heaven, but a part of the banquet itself!

But now the last touch is *the drinking at the springhead*. We were not surprised to find, in our description of Heaven, that the Lamb led them to the fountains of waters. But we are delighted to find that, here below, "even by the springs of water shall He guide them." Beloved, covet earnestly this drinking at the springs! It is not all who profess to be Christians who will know what I am talking about this morning—they will think I have got into the way of the mystics and am dreaming of things unpractical.

I will not argue with them, but let me speak to those who understand me. Beloved in the Lord, you can even *now* live upon God Himself and there is no living comparable to it. You can get beyond all the cisterns and come to the river of the Water of Life even as they do in Heaven. To live by second causes is a very secondary life—to live on the First Cause is the first of living! I exhort you to do this with regard to the inspired Word. This is a day of man's opinions, views, judgments, criticisms. Leave them

all—good, bad and indifferent—and come to this Book which is the pure fount of Inspiration undefiled!

When you study the Word of God, live upon it as His Word. I am not going to defend it—it needs no defense. I am not going to argue about its Inspiration—if you know the Lord aright, His Word is Inspired to you—if to no one else. You know not only that it was Inspired when it was written, but that it is still Inspired and, moreover, its Inspiration affects you in a way in which no other writings can ever touch you. It breathes upon you—it breathes *life* into you and makes you to speak words *for* God which prove to be words *from* God to other souls. Oh, it is wonderful if you read the Word of God in a little company, morning by morning—simply read it and pray over it—what an effect it may have upon all who listen!

I speak what I know. If you read the Inspired Words themselves and look up to Him who spoke them, their spiritual effect will be the witness of their Inspiration. This is a miracle-working Book! It may be opposed, but never conquered! It may be buried under unbelief, but it must rise again! Blessed are they to whom the Word is meat and drink! They quit the cistern of man for the fountain of God and they do well. “By the springs of water shall He guide them.” Yet I would exhort you not to tarry at the *letter* of God’s Word, but believingly and humbly advance to drink from the Holy Spirit Himself! He will not teach you anything which is not in the Bible, but He will take of the things of Christ and will show them unto you.

A Truth of God may be like a jewel in the Word of God and yet we may not see its brilliance until the Holy Spirit holds it up in the light and bids us mark its luster. The Spirit of God brings up the pearl from the deeps of Revelation and sets it where its radiance is perceived by the believing eye. We are such poor scholars that we learn little from the Book till “the Interpreter, one of a thousand,” opens our heart to the Word and opens the Word to our heart! The Holy Spirit, who revealed Truth in the Book, must also personally reveal it to the individual. If ever you get hold of a Truth in that way, you will never give it up.

A man who has learned a Truth of God from one minister, may unlearn it from another minister. But he that has been taught it of the Holy Spirit has a treasure which no man takes from him! Beloved, we would exhort you to drink of the springs of living water while you are here. Be often going back to fundamental doctrines. Especially get back to the consideration of Covenant engagements. From where do all the deeds of mercy from God our Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ come? Come they not from eternal purposes and from that Covenant, “ordered in all things, and sure,” made before the earth was, between the Father and the ever-blessed Son? Get often to the well of the Covenant.

I know of nothing that can make you so happy as to know in your very soul how the Father pledged Himself by oath to the Son and the Son pledged Himself to the eternal Father concerning the great mystery of our redemption. Eternal love and Covenant faithfulness—these are ancient wells! Do not hesitate to drink deep at the fountain of electing love. The Lord Himself chose you, having loved you with an everlasting love. Every-

thing comes to the saints “according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world.”

The Philistines have stopped this well full many a time, but they cannot prevent its waters bubbling up from among the stones which they have cast into it. There it stands. “I have loved you with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you.” Get back to the love that had no cause but the First Cause—to the love that knows no change—to the love that knows no limit, no hesitancy, no diminution! Get back to the love that stands, like the Godhead itself, eternal and immovable! Drink from eternal springs—and if you do so, your life will be more and more “as the days of Heaven upon the earth.”

God grant us to get away from the deceitful brooks to “the deep which lies under” and with joy may we draw water! Christ’s Presence and fountain drinking—give me these two things and I ask no more! The Lamb to feed me and the Fountain to supply me—these are enough. Lord, whom have I in Heaven but You? Come poverty, come sickness, come shame, come casting out by Brethren—yes, come death itself—nothing can I need and nothing can harm me if the Lamb is my Shepherd and the Lord my Fountain!

Before another Sunday some of us may be in Heaven. Before this month has finished, some of us may know infinitely more about the eternal world than the whole assembly of divines could tell us! Others of us may have to linger here a while. Yet are we not in banishment. Here we dwell with the King for His work. We will endeavor to keep close to our Master and if we may serve Him and see His face, we will not grudge the glorified their fuller joys.

You that know nothing about these things, God grant you spiritual sense to know that you do not know—and then give you further Grace to pray to Him, “Lord, lead me to the living Fountain.” There is an inner life, there is a heavenly secret, there is a surpassing joy—some of us know it—we wish that you, also, had it! Cry for it! Jesus can give it to you at once! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall live forever! The new birth goes with faith in Christ. May He give it to you this morning and may you begin to be heavenly here, that you may be fit for Heaven hereafter!

The Lord bless you, dear Friends, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—
Revelation 7:9-17; Isaiah 49:1-10.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—416, 720, 859.**

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NO TEARS IN HEAVEN

NO. 643

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, AUGUST 6, 1865,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”
Revelation 7:17.*

IT is an ill thing to be always mourning, sighing and complaining concerning the present. However dark it may be, we may surely recall some fond remembrances of the past. There were days of brightness, there were seasons of refreshing from the Presence of the Lord. Be not slow to confess, O believing Soul, that the Lord has been your help! And though now your burden is very heavy, you will find an addition to your strength in the thought of seasons long since past when the Lord lightened your load and made your heart leap for joy.

Yet more delightful will it be to expect the future. The night is dark, but the morning comes. Over the hills of darkness the day breaks. It may be that the road is rough but its end is almost in view. You have been clambering up the steep heights of Pisgah and from its brow you may view your glorious heritage. True, the tomb is before you, but your Lord has snatched the sting from death, and the victory from the grave. Do not, O burdened Spirit, confine yourself to the narrow miseries of the present hour, but let your eyes gaze with fondness upon the enjoyment of the past and view with equal ardor the infinite blessings of old eternity when you were not, but when God set you apart for Himself and wrote your name in His Book of Life!

Let your glance flash forward to the future eternity, the mercies which shall be yours even here on earth and the glories which are stored up for you beyond the skies. I shall be well rewarded this morning if I shall minister comfort to one heavy spirit by leading it to remember the Glory which is yet to be revealed.

Coming to our text, we shall observe, in the first place, that as God is to wipe away tears from the faces of the glorified, we may well infer that their eyes will be filled with tears till then. And in the second place, it is worthy of reflection that as God never changes, even now He is engaged in drying tears from His children's eyes. And then, coming right into the heart of the text we shall dwell upon the great Truth of God, that in Heaven Divine Love removes all tears from the glorified. And so we shall close by making some inquiry as to whether or not we belong to that happy company.

I. Our first subject of meditation is the inference that TEARS ARE TO FILL THE EYES OF BELIEVERS UNTIL THEY ENTER THE PROMISED REST. There would be no need to wipe them away if there were none. They come to the very gates of Heaven weeping and accompanied by their two comrades, Sorrow and Sighing. The tears are dried and Sorrow and Sighing flee away. The weeping willow grows not by the river of the Water of Life, but it is plentiful enough below. Nor shall we lose it till we change it

for the palm branch of victory. Sorrow's dewdrop will never cease to fall until it is transformed into the pearl of everlasting bliss—

***“The path of sorrow and that path alone,
Leads to the place where sorrow is unknown.”***

Religion brings deliverance from the curse, but not exemption from trial. The ancients were accustomed to use bottles in which to catch the tears of mourners. I think I see three bottles filled with the tears of Believers. The first is a common bottle, the ordinary lachrymatory containing griefs incidental to all men, for Believers suffer even as the rest of the race. Physical pain by no means spares the servants of God. Their nerves, blood vessels, limbs and inward organs are as susceptible to disease as those of unregenerate men. Some of the choicest saints have lain longest on beds of sickness and those who are dearest to the heart of God have felt the heaviest blows of the chastening rod.

There are pains which, despite the efforts of patience, compel the tears to wet the cheeks. The human frame is capable of a fearful degree of agony and few there are who have not at some time or other watered their couch with tears because of the acuteness of their pains. Coupled with this are the losses and crosses of daily life. What Christian among you trades without occasional difficulties and serious losses? Have any of you a lot so easy that you have nothing to deplore? Are there no crosses at home? Are there no troubles abroad?

Can you travel from the first of January to the last of December without feeling the weariness of the way? Have you no blighted field, no bad debt, no slandered name, no harsh word, no sick child, no suffering wife to bring before the Lord in weeping prayer? You must be an inhabitant of another planet if you have had no griefs, for man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards! No ship can navigate the Atlantic of earth without meeting with storms—it is only upon the Pacific of Heaven that all is calm forevermore.

Believers must, through much tribulation, inherit the kingdom of Heaven. “Trials must and will befall.” Death contributes to our woes. The heirs of immortality are often summoned to gather around the tomb. Who has not lost a friend? If Jesus wept, expect not that we shall be without the tears of bereavement. The well-beloved Lazarus died and so will our choicest friends. Parents will go before us. Infants will be snatched from us. Brothers and sisters will fall before the scythe of Death. Impartial foe of all, you spare neither virtue nor vice, holiness nor sin—with equal foot you tread on the cherished loves of all!

The Christian also knows disappointments as bitter and as keen as other men. Judas betrays Christ. Ahithophel is a traitor to David. We have had our Ahithophels and we may yet meet with our Judas. We have trusted in friends and we have found their friendships fail. We have leaned upon what seemed a staff and it has pierced us like a spear. You cannot, dear Friends, traverse the wilderness of this world without discovering that thorns and thistles grow plenteously in it and that, step as you may, your feet must sometimes feel their power to wound. The sea of life is salt to all men. Clouds hover over every landscape. We may forget to laugh but we shall always know how to weep. As the saturated fleece

must drip, so must the human race, cursed by the Fall, weep out its frequent griefs.

I see before me a second bottle, it is black and foul for it contains tears distilled by the force of the fires of *sin*. This bottle holds more than the first and is far more regularly filled. Sin is more frequently the mother of sorrow than all the other ills of life put together. Dear Brothers and Sisters, I am convinced that we endure more sorrow from our sins than from God's darkest Providences. Mark our rebellions want of resignation! When a trouble comes it is not the *trial* which makes us groan so much as our rebellion against it. It is true the ox goad is thrust into us, but we kick against it and then it hurts us far more. Like men with naked feet, we kick against the pricks. We head our vessel against the stream of God's will and then murmur because the waves beat violently upon us!

An unsubdued will is like a maniac's hand which tears himself. The chastisements which come directly from our heavenly Father are never so hard to bear as the fretting and fuming of our unhumbled self-will. As the bird dashes against the wires of its cage and breaks its own wing, even so do we! If we would take the cross as our gracious Father gives it, it would not gall our shoulders—but since we revolt from it and loathe the burden—our shoulders grow raw and sore and the load becomes intolerable. More submission, and we should have fewer tears.

There are the tears, too, of wounded, injured *pride*—and how hot and scalding they are! When a man has been ambitious and has failed, how he will weep instead of standing corrected, or gathering up his courage for a wiser venture! When a friend has spoken slightly of us, or an enemy has accused us, how we have had to put our fingers to our hot eyelids to keep the tears from streaming out—and have felt all the while as full of wretchedness as we well could be. Ah, these are cruel and wicked tears! God wipe them away from our eyes now! Certainly He must do it before we shall be able to enter Heaven!

How numerous, too, are the tears of unbelief! We manufacture troubles for ourselves by anticipating future ills which may never come, or which, if they do come, may be like the clouds—all “big with mercy,” and “breaking with blessings on our head.” We get to supposing what we should do if such-and-such a thing occurred, which thing God has determined never shall occur. We imagine ourselves in positions where Providence never intends to place us, and so we feel a thousand trials in fearing one.

That bottle, I say, ought never to carry within it a tear from a Believer's eyes and yet it has had whole floods poured into it! Oh, the wickedness of mistrust of God and the bitterness with which that distrust is made to curse itself! Unbelief makes a rod for its own back. Distrust of God is its own punishment. It brings such want of rest, such care, such tribulation of spirit into the mind that he who loves himself and loves pleasure had better seek to walk by faith and not by sight. Nor must I forget the scalding drops of anger against our fellow men, and of petulance and irritation because we cannot have our way with them. These are black and horrid tears—as noisome as the vaults of Tophet. May we be saved from such unholy tears.

Sometimes, too, there are streams which arise from depressed spirits—spirits desponding because we have neglected the means of Divine Grace and the God of Grace. The consolations of God are small with us because we have been seldom in secret prayer—we have lived at a distance from the Most High and we have fallen into a melancholy state of mind. I thank God that there shall never come another tear from our eyes into that bottle when eternal love shall take us up to dwell with Jesus in His kingdom!

We would never overlook the third bottle which is the true crystal lachrymatory into which holy tears may drop, tears like the “lachrymae Christi,” the tears of Jesus so precious in the sight of God. Even these shall cease to flow in Heaven! Tears of repentance, like glistening dew-drops fresh from the skies, are stored in this bottle. They are not of the earth—they come from Heaven—and yet we cannot carry them there with us. Good Rowland Hill used to say repentance was such a sweet companion that the only regret he could have in going to Heaven was in leaving repentance behind him. He could not shed the tears of repentance there.

Oh, to weep for sin! It is so sweet a sorrow that I would wish to be a constant weeper! Like a dripping well, my soul would always drop with grief that I have offended my loving, tender, gracious God! Tears for Christ’s injured honor and slightedness glisten in the crystal of our third bottle. When we hear Jesus’ name blasphemed among men, or see His cause driven back in the day of battle, who will not weep? Who can restrain his lamentations? Such tears are diamonds in Christ’s esteem! Blessed are the eyes which are mines of such royal treasure! If I cannot win crowns I will at least give tears. If I cannot make men love my Master, yet will I weep in secret places for the dishonor which they do Him.

These are holy drops, but they are all unknown in Heaven. Tears of sympathy are much esteemed by our Lord—when we “weep with those that weep” we do well. These are never to be restrained this side the Jordan. Let them flow! The more of them the better for our spiritual health. Truly, when I think of the griefs of men, and above all, when I have communion with my Savior in His suffering, I want to cry with George Herbert—

***“Come all you floods, you clouds, you rains,
Dwell in my eyes!
My grief has need
Of all the watery things that nature can produce!
Let every vein suck up a river to supply my eyes,
My weary, weeping eyes, too dry for me,
Unless they get new conduits, fresh supplies,
And with my state agree.”***

It were well to go to the very uttermost of weeping if it were always of such a noble kind as fellowship with Jesus brings. Let us never cease from weeping over sinners as Jesus did over Jerusalem. Let us endeavor to snatch the firebrand from the flame and weep when we cannot accomplish our purpose. These three receptacles of tears will always be more or less filled by us as long as we are here.

But in Heaven the first bottle will not be needed, for the wells of earth’s grief will all be dried up and we shall drink from living fountains of water unsalted by a tear. As for the second, we shall have no depravity in our hearts and so the black fountain will no longer yield its nauseous stream.

And as for the third, there shall be no place among celestial occupations for weeping even of the most holy kind. Till then we must expect to share in human griefs and instead of praying against them, let us ask that they may be sanctified to us.

I mean, of course, those of the former sort. Let us pray that tribulation may work patience and patience experience and experience the hope which makes us not ashamed. Let us pray that as the sharp edge of the engraving tool is used upon us it may only remove our filth and fashion us into images of our Lord and Master. Let us pray that the fire may consume nothing but the dross and that the floods may wash away nothing but defilement. May we have to thank God that though before we were afflicted we went astray, yet now, by His Grace, we have kept His Word. And so shall we see it to be a blessed thing, a divinely wise thing, that we should tread the path of sorrow and reach the gates of Heaven with the tear drops glistening in our eyes.

II. Secondly, EVEN HERE IF WE WOULD HAVE OUR TEARS WIPED AWAY WE CANNOT DO BETTER THAN RETURN TO OUR GOD. He is the great tear wiper. Observe, Brethren, that God can remove every vestige of grief from the hearts of His people by granting them complete resignation to His will. Our selfhood is the root of our sorrow. If self were perfectly conquered it would be insignificant to us whether love ordained our pain or ease appointed us wealth or poverty. If our will were completely God's will, then pain itself would be attended with pleasure and sorrow would yield us joy for Christ's sake.

As one fire puts out another, so the master passion of love to God and complete absorption in His sacred will quenches the fire of human grief and sorrow. Hearty resignation puts so much honey in the cup of gall that the wormwood is forgotten. As Death is swallowed up in victory, so is Tribulation swallowed up in complacency and delight in God. He can also take away our tears by constraining our minds to dwell with delight upon the end which all our trials are working to produce. He can show us that they are working together for good and as men of understanding, when we see that we shall be essentially enriched by our losses, we shall be content with them!

When we see that the medicine is curing us of mortal sickness and that our sharpest pains are only saving us from pains far more terrible, then shall we kiss the rod and sing in the midst of tribulation, "Sweet affliction! Sweet affliction!" And rightly so, since it yields such peaceable fruits of righteousness. Moreover, He can take every tear from our eyes in the time of trial by shedding abroad the love of Jesus Christ in our hearts more plentifully. He can make it clear to us that *Christ* is afflicted in *our* affliction. He can indulge us with a delightful sense of the Divine virtue which dwells in His sympathy and make us rejoice to be co-sufferers with the Angel of the Covenant.

The Savior can make our hearts leap for joy by reassuring us that we are written on the palms of His hands and that we shall be with Him where He is. Sick beds become thrones and hovels ripen into palaces when Jesus is made sure to our souls. My Brethren, the love of Christ, like a great flood, rolls over the most rugged rocks of afflictions—so high

above them that we may float in perfect peace where others are a total wreck! The rage of the storm is all hushed when Christ is in the vessel. The waters saw You, O Christ! The waters saw You and were silent at the Presence of their King!

The Lord can also take away all present sorrow and grief from us by providentially removing its cause. Providence is full of sweet surprises and unexpected turns. When the sea has ebbed its uttermost, it turns again and covers all the sand. When we think the dungeon is fast and that the bolt is rusted in, He can make the door fly open in a moment! When the river rolls deep and black before us He can divide it with a word, or bridge it with His hands. How often have you found it so in the past? As a pilgrim to Canaan you have passed through the Red Sea in which you once feared you would be drowned.

The bitter wells of Marah were made sweet by God's Presence! You fought the Amalekite. You went through the terrible wilderness. You passed by the place of the fiery serpents and you have yet been kept alive and so shall you be! As the clear shining comes after rain, so shall peace succeed your trials. As fly the black clouds before the compelling power of the wind, so will the eternal God make your griefs to fly before the energy of His Grace. The smoking furnace of trouble shall be followed by the bright lamp of consolation.

Still, the surest method of getting rid of present tears is communion and fellowship with God. When I can creep under the wing of my dear God and nestle close to His bosom, let the world say what it will and let the devil roar as he pleases and let my sins accuse and threaten as they may—I am safe, content, happy, peaceful, rejoicing—

***“Let earth against my soul engage,
And hellish darts be hurled.
Now I can smile at Satan's rage,
And face a frowning world.”***

To say, “My Father, God.” To put myself right into His hands and feel that I am safe there. To look up to Him though it is with tears in my eyes and feel that He loves me—and then to put my head right into His bosom as the prodigal did and sob my griefs out there into my Father's heart—oh, this is the death of grief and the life of all consolation!

Is not Jehovah called the God of All Comfort? You will find Him so, Beloved. He has been “our help in ages past.” He is “our hope for years to come.” If He had not been my help, then my soul would have perished utterly in the day of its weariness and its heaviness, Oh, I bear testimony for Him this day that you cannot go to Him and pour out your heart before Him without finding a delightful solace!

When your friends cannot wipe away the tears—when you yourself with your strongest reasoning and your boldest efforts cannot constrain yourself to resignation—when your heart beats high and seems as if it would burst with grief—then pour out your hearts before Him! God is a refuge for us! He is our castle and high tower, our refuge and defense. Only go to Him and you shall find that even here on earth God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes!

III. Now we shall have to turn our thoughts to what is the real teaching of the text, namely THE REMOVAL OF ALL TEARS FROM THE BLESSED

ONES ABOVE. There are many reasons why glorified spirits cannot weep. These are well known to you, but let us just hint at them. All outward causes of grief are gone. They will never hear the toll of the death knell in Heaven. The mattock and the shroud are unknown things there. The horrid thought of death never flits across an immortal spirit. They are never parted. The great meeting has taken place to part no more.

Up yonder they have no losses and crosses in business. "They serve God day and night in His Temple." They know no broken friendships there. They have no ruined hearts, no blighted prospects. They know even as they are known, and they love even as they are loved. No pain can ever fall on them—as yet they have no bodies! But when their bodies shall be raised from the grave they shall be spiritualized so that they shall not be capable of grief. The tear glands shall be plucked away. Although much may be there that is human, at least the tear glands shall be gone—they shall have no need of that organ.

Their bodies shall be unsusceptible to grief. They shall rejoice forever! Poverty, famine, distress, nakedness, peril, persecution, slander—all these shall have ceased. "The sun shall not light on them, nor any heat." "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more," and therefore well may their tears cease to flow. Again, all inward evils will have been removed by the perfect sanctification worked in them by the Holy Spirit. No evil heart. No unbelief in departing from the living God shall vex them in Paradise! No suggestions of the arch enemy shall be met and assisted by the uprisings of iniquity within. They shall never be led to think harshly of God, for their hearts shall be all love—sin shall have no sweetness to them for they shall be perfectly purified from all depraved desires.

There shall be no lusts of the eyes, no lusts of the flesh, no pride of life to be snares to their feet. Sin is shut out and they are shut in. They are forever blessed because they are without fault before the Throne of God! What a Heaven must it be to be without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing! Well may they cease to mourn who have ceased to sin! All fear of change also has been forever shut out. They know that they are eternally secure. Saints on earth are fearful of falling. Some Believers even dream of falling away. They think God will forsake them and that men will persecute and take them.

No such fears can vex the blessed ones who view their Father's face. Countless cycles may revolve, but eternity shall not be exhausted. And while eternity endures, their immortality and blessedness shall co-exist with it. They dwell within a city which shall never be stormed! They bask in a sun which shall never set! They swim in a flood-tide which shall never ebb! They drink of a river which shall never dry up! They pluck fruit from a tree which shall never be withered! Their blessedness knows not the thought, which would act like a canker at its heart, that it might, perhaps, pass away and cease to be!

They cannot, therefore, weep because they are infallibly secure and certainly assured of their eternal blessedness. Why should they weep when every desire is gratified? They cannot wish for anything which they shall not have. Eyes and ears, heart and hands, judgment, imagination, hope, desire, will—every faculty shall be satisfied! All that their vast powers can

wish, they shall continually enjoy! Though, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard the things which God has prepared for them that love Him,” yet we know enough, by the Revelation of the Spirit, to understand that they are supremely blessed! The joy of Christ, which is an infinite fullness of delight, is in them. They bathe themselves in the bottomless, shoreless sea of infinite beatitude!

Still, dear Friends, this does not quite account for the fact that all tears are wiped from their eyes. I like better the text which tells us that God shall do it and I want you to think with me of fountains of tears which exist even in Heaven, so that the celestial ones must inevitably weep if God did not by a perpetual miracle take away their tears. It strikes me, that if God Himself did not interfere by a perpetual outflow of abundant consolations, the glorified have very deep cause for weeping. You will say, “How is this?” Why, in the first place, if it were not for this, what regrets they must have for their past sins. The more holy a man is, the more he hates sin. It is a token of growth in sanctification, not that repentance becomes less acute but that it becomes more and more deep.

Surely, dear Friends, when we shall be made perfectly holy, we shall have a greater hatred of sin! If on earth we could be perfectly holy, why, I think we should do little else than mourn to think that so foul and black and venomous a thing as sin had ever stained us! We should weep bitterly that we had ever offended such a good, gracious, tender, abundantly loving God. Why, the sight of Christ, “the Lamb in the midst of the Throne,” would make us remember the sins from which He purged us. The sight of our heavenly Father’s perfection would be blinding to us if it were not that by some sacred means, which we know not, God wipes away all these tears from our eyes.

And though we cannot but regret that we have sinned, yet perhaps we will know that sin has been made to glorify God by the overcoming power of almighty Grace—that sin has been made to be a black foil—a sort of setting for the sparkling jewel of eternal, Sovereign Grace! And it may be that for this reason we shed no tears over our past lives. They sing, “Unto Him that has loved us, and washed us from our sins in His blood.” But they sing that heavenly song without a tear in their eyes. I cannot understand how this may be, for I know I could not do so as I now am—let this be the best reason that God has wiped away the tears from their eyes.

Again, do you not think, Beloved, that the thought of the vast expense of shame and woe which the Savior lavished for our redemption must, in the natural order of things, be a constant source of grief? We sing sometimes that hymn which reminds us of the angelic song before the Throne and in one of its verses the poet says—

**“But when to Calvary they turn,
Silent their harps abide.
Suspended songs a moment mourn
The God that loved and died.”**

Now that is natural and poetical, but it is not true! You know very well that there are no suspended songs in Heaven and that there is no mourning even over Christ “that loved and died.”

It seems to me that if I were thoroughly spiritualized and in such a holy state as those are in Heaven, I could not look at the Lamb without tears in

my eyes. How could I think of those five Wounds—that bloody sweat in Gethsemane? That cruel crowning with thorns in Gabbatha—that mockery and shame at Golgotha—how could I think of it without tears? How could I feel that He loved me and gave Himself for me without bursting into a passion of holy affection and sorrow? Tears seem to be the natural expression of such hallowed joy and grief—

***“Love and grief my heart dividing,
With my tears His feet I’ll bathe.”***

I must think it would be so in Heaven if it were not that by a glorious method, I know not how, God shall wipe away even those tears from our eyes! Does it not need the interference of God to accomplish this wonder? Is there not another cause for grief, namely, wasted opportunities? Beloved, when we once ascend to Heaven there will be no more feeding of Christ’s hungry people. There will be no giving of drink to the thirsty. No visiting His sick ones, or His imprisoned ones. No clothing of the naked. There will be no instructing the ignorant. No holding forth the Word of God among “a crooked and perverse generation.”

It has been often and truly said if there could be regrets in Heaven, those regrets would be that we have wasted so many opportunities of honoring Christ on earth—opportunities which will then be gone forever. Now in Heaven their hearts are not steeled and hardened so that they can look back upon sins of omission without sorrow. I believe there will be the most tender form of conscience there—for perfect purity would not be consistent with any degree of hardness of heart. If they are sensitive and tender in heart, it is inevitable that they should look back with regret upon the failures of the life below—unless some more mighty emotion should overwhelm that of contrition.

I can say, Beloved, if God would take me to Heaven this morning, if He did not come in and by a special act of His Omnipotence dry up that fountain of tears, I should almost forget the glories of Paradise in the midst of my own shame! Shame that I have not preached more earnestly and have not prayed more fervently and labored more abundantly for Christ. That text, to which we heard a reference from a dear Brother during the week, where Paul says, “I call God to witness that for the space of three years I ceased not night and day with tears, to warn every one of you,” is a text that we cannot, any of us, read without blushes and tears.

And in Heaven, I think if I saw the Apostle Paul, I must burst out in weeping if it were not for this text, which says that, “God shall wipe away all tears”—and these among them. Who but the Almighty God could do this! Perhaps, again, another source of tears may suggest itself to you—namely, regrets in Heaven for our mistakes and misrepresentations and unkindnesses towards other Christian Brethren. How surprised we shall be to meet in Heaven some whom we did not love on earth! We would not commune with them at the Lord’s Table. We would not own that they were Christians at all!

We looked at them suspiciously if we saw them in the street. We were jealous of all their operations. We suspected their zeal as being nothing better than rant and we looked upon their best exertions as having sinister motives at the bottom. We said many hard things and felt a great many more than we said. When we shall see these unknown and unrec-

ognized Brethren in Heaven, will not their presence naturally remind us of our offenses against Christian love and spiritual unity? I cannot suppose a perfect man looking at another perfect man, without regretting that he ever ill-treated him—it seems to me to be the trait of a gentleman, a Christian and of a perfectly sanctified man above all others, that he should regret having misunderstood and misconstrued and misrepresented one who was as dear to Christ as himself.

I am sure, as I go round among the saints in Heaven, I cannot (in the natural order of things) help feeling, “I did not assist you as I ought to have done. I did not sympathize with you as I ought to have done. I spoke a hard word to you. I was estranged from you.” And I think you would all have to feel the same—inevitably you must if it were not that by some heavenly means, I know not how—the eternal God shall so overshadow Believers with the abundant bliss of His own self that even that *cause* of tears shall be wiped away!

Has it never struck you, dear Friends, that if you go to Heaven and see your dear children left behind unconverted, it would naturally be a cause of sorrow? When my mother told me that if I perished she would have to say, “Amen,” to my condemnation, I knew it was true. And it sounded very terrible and had a good effect on my mind. But at the same time I could not help thinking, “Well, you will be very different from what you are now,” and I did not think she would be improved. I thought, “Well, I love to think of your weeping over me far better than to think of you as a perfect being, with a tearless eye, looking on the damnation of your own child.”

It really is a very terrible spectacle, the thought of a perfect being looking down upon Hell, for instance, as Abraham did and yet feeling no sorrow. For you will recollect that in the tones in which Abraham addressed the rich man, there is nothing of pity. There is not a single syllable which betokens any sympathy with him in his dreadful woes. And one does not quite comprehend that perfect beings, God-like beings, beings full of love and everything that constitutes the Glory of God’s complete Nature, should yet be unable to weep, even over Hell itself! They cannot weep over their own children lost and ruined! Now, how is this? If you can tell me, I shall be glad—for I cannot tell you.

I do not believe that there will be one atom less tenderness, that there will be one fraction less of amiability and love and sympathy—I believe there will be more—but that they will be in some way so refined and purified that while compassion for suffering is there, detestation of sin shall be there to balance it and a state of complete equilibrium shall be attained. Perfect acquiescence in the Divine will is probably the secret of it. But it is not my business to guess—I do not know what handkerchief the Lord will use. But I know that He will wipe all tears away from their faces and these tears among them.

Yet, once again, it seems to me that spirits before the Throne, taking, as they must do, a deep interest in everything which concerns the honor of the Lord Jesus Christ, must feel deeply grieved when they see the cause of Truth imperiled and the kingdom of Christ, for a time, put back. Think of Luther, or Wickliffe, or John Knox as they see the advances of Popery just now. Take John Knox first, if you will. Think of him looking down and

seeing cathedrals rising in Scotland, dedicated to the service of the Pope and Satan. Oh, how the stern old man, even in Glory, I think, would begin to shake himself! And the old lion would lash his sides once more and half wish that he could come down and pull the nests to pieces that the rooks might fly away.

Think of Wickliffe looking down on this country where the Gospel has been preached so many years and seeing monks in the Church of England and seeing spring up in our national establishment everywhere, not *disguised* Popery as it was ten years ago, but stark naked Popery, downright Popery that unblushingly talks about the "Catholic Church," and is not even Anglican any longer! What would Wickliffe say? Why, I think as he leans over the battlements of Heaven, unless Wickliffe is mightily altered and I cannot suppose he is (except for the better and that would make him more tender-hearted and more zealous for God still), he must weep to think that England has gone back so far and that on the dial of Ahaz the sun has beat a retreat.

I do not know how it is they do not weep in Heaven, but they do not. The souls under the altar cry, "How long? How long? How long?" There comes up a mighty intercession from those who were slaughtered in the days gone by for Christ—their prayer rises, "How long? How long? How long?" And God, as yet, does not avenge His own elect though they cry day and night unto Him. Yet that delay does not cost them a single tear. They feel so sure that the victory will come! They anticipate so much the more splendid triumph because of its delay and therefore they do both patiently hope and quietly wait to see the salvation of God! They know that without us they cannot be made perfect and so they wait till we are taken up, that the whole company may be completed and that *then* the soul may be dressed in its body and they may be perfected in their bliss—they wait but they do not weep. They wait and they cry, but in their cry no sorrow has a place.

Now I do not understand this. It seems to me that the more I long for the coming of Christ, the more I long to see His kingdom extended—the more I shall weep when things go wrong—when I see Christ blasphemed, His Cross trampled in the mire and the devil's kingdom established! But the reason is all in this, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." I thought I would just indicate to you why it says that *God* does it. It strikes me that these causes of tears could not be removed by an angel—could not be taken away by any form of spiritual enjoyment apart from the direct interposition of Almighty God.

Think of all these things and wonder over them and you will recall many other springs of grief which must have flowed freely if Omnipotence had not dried them up completely. Then ask how it is that the saints do not weep and do not cry, and you cannot get any other answer than this—God has done it in a way unknown to us—forever taking away from them the power to weep.

IV. And now, Beloved, SHALL WE BE AMONG THIS HAPPY COMPANY? Here is the question and the context enables us to answer it. "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." There is their character. "Therefore are they before the Throne of God." The

blood is a sacred argument for their being there, the precious blood. Observe, “they washed their robes.” It was not merely their *feet*, their worst parts—but they washed their *robes*, their best parts. A man’s robes are his most honored attire. He puts them on and he does not mind our seeing his robes. There may be filthiness beneath, but the robes are generally the cleanest of all. But you see they washed even them.

Now it is the mark of a Christian that he not only goes to Christ to wash away his black sins, but to wash his duties, too. I would not pray a prayer unwashed with Jesus’ blood. I would not like a hymn I have sung to go up to Heaven except it had first been bathed in blood. If I would desire to be clothed with zeal as with a cloak, yet I must wash the cloak in blood. Though I would be sanctified by the Holy Spirit and wear imparted righteousness as a raiment of needlework, yet I must wash even that in blood.

What do you say, dear Friends? Have you washed in blood? The meaning of it is, have you trusted in the atoning sacrifice? “Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.” Have you taken Christ to be your All in All? Are you now depending on Him? If so, out of deep distress you shall yet ascend, leaning on your Beloved, to the Throne of God and to the bliss which awaits His chosen. But if not, “there is none other name,” there is no other way. Your damnation will be as just as it will be sure.

Christ is “the Way.” But if you will not tread it you shall not reach the end. Christ is “the Truth,” but if you will not believe Him, you shall not rejoice. Christ is “the Life,” but if you will not receive Him you shall abide among the dead and be cast out among the corrupt. From such a doom may the Lord deliver us and give us a simple confidence in the Divine work of the Redeemer and to Him shall be the praise eternally. Amen.

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“And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and then was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand.”
Revelation 8:3, 4.

I SUPPOSE that there will be very little doubt among you that the “Angel” mentioned here was either our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, or a special angelic messenger sent to represent Him. You remember that under the Mosaic dispensation, there was to be an altar of shittim wood, overlaid with pure gold, and that Aaron was to burn sweet incense thereon every morning and every evening. In like manner, our Great High Priest is here represented as standing at the golden altar which is before the Throne of God, having in His hand a golden censer full of incense, the fragrance of which would give acceptance to the prayers of the saints for His sake—

***“Great Advocate, almighty Friend,
On Him our humble hopes depend—
Our cause can never, never fail,
For Jesus pleads and must prevail.”***

I am going to talk to you, first, concerning *the prayers of the saints*. Secondly, *concerning the intercession of Christ*. And then we shall notice *the result of the sending of Christ’s intercession with the saints’ prayers*.

I. So first, I am to speak about THE PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS. What a very interesting and delightful spectacle the Christian Church will present during the coming week of united prayer! It is an everyday sight to see Christians at prayer, for Believers are to “pray without ceasing.” But doubtless, as long as the Church exists and men and women are what they are, there always will be special seasons when the fervor of the suppliants becomes more ardent than at ordinary times, when their desires grow more intense and their prayers, therefore, ascend in a greater volume before the eternal Throne of God. We sing that—

***“Satan trembles when he sees,
The weakest saint upon his knees—***

then how much more must he tremble when he sees thousands upon thousands of the people of God drawing near with one heart to the

Throne of the heavenly Grace! Next to the angels in Heaven praising God, I think the fairest sight that ever was seen is that of the *saints of earth*, of almost all names and denominations, gathered in concert around the Mercy Seat! Notwithstanding all the divisions among Christians, there are certain Truths upon which they are all agreed, and this will be plainly manifested during the coming week. We shall see, met together in the same House of Prayer, Brothers and Sisters holding various sentiments. We shall see some who love the Lord Jesus Christ in the Established Church and others who are outside the establishment uniting heartily in prayer. We shall see those who worship God in a liturgical sense and those who worship Him without a liturgy, joining with one heart and mind in imploring a blessing upon the one common cause of Jesus Christ and upon the world at large.

Moreover, these united prayers will be going up all over the world—at least it will be so to a very large extent. You may journey round the globe with the sun, and wherever you go you shall see Brothers and Sisters assembled in prayer. It is said of the Queen's dominions that the sun never sets upon them—and it may be said this week of the earnest united cries of the Lord's people that they will arise from practically every land on which the sun shall shine! God shall be worshiped day and night, not merely by a few stragglers here and there, but by the great bulk of the—

“One army of the living God.”

This is true every day, to a greater or lesser degree, but it will be made more apparent during the days of this week, and I, for one, rejoice that the prayers of the saints shall thus together ascend before the Throne of God!

It is interesting, too, to notice the subjects that have been selected as themes for special prayer. I think the Lord has guided the committee of the Evangelical Alliance in the selection. We are requested on Monday to present “penitential confession of sin and the acknowledgment of personal, social, and national blessings, with supplication for Divine Mercy through the Atonement of our Savior, Jesus Christ.” This is a good beginning for the week of prayer—it should rightly commence with repentance. The salty tears of penitence will be an acceptable offering, just as, under the Levitical Law it was commanded, “with all your offering you shall offer salt.” Then on Tuesday we are asked to pray for the conversion of the ungodly, for the success of missions among Jews and Gentiles, and for a Divine Blessing to accompany the efforts made to evangelize the unconverted of all ranks and all around us.” What a comprehensive subject, taking in both Jews and Gentiles, both bond and free, and including those who are abroad with those who are around us at home! Then on Wednesday our supplications are asked “for the Christian Church and ministry; for Sunday schools and all other Christian agencies; and for the increase of spiritual life, activity and holiness in all Believers.” Here again is a comprehensive subject. How much we who are in the ministry need your prayers! “Brethren pray for us.” The whole Church needs

prayer, but especially the captains in the Lord's ranks who have to be in the thick of the fight with the shots of the enemy flying all around them! Then on Thursday the subjects for intercession are "for the afflicted and oppressed; that slavery may be abolished; that persecution may cease; and that Christian love may expand to the comfort and relief of the destitute in all lands." I do not know how some professing Christians will be able to join in the supplication that slavery may be abolished, but we can fervently unite in it with a pure heart! May the Lord graciously hear that prayer. And if He shall hear it from the battlefields of America, we shall bless his name even for the scourge of war if that accursed slavery can be ended! Then on Friday we are urged to pray "for nations, for kings, and all who are in authority; for the cessation of war—for the prevalence of peace; and for the holy observance of the Sabbath." And then to conclude, on Saturday, "generally for the large outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the revival and extension of pure Christianity throughout the world."

Now when the Church comes before God with such large requests as these, I do earnestly trust that the united supplication will be the means of bringing down one of the greatest and richest blessings that the world has ever received! God grant that it may be so!—

***"Who but You, Almighty Spirit,
Can the heathen world reclaim?
Men may preach, but till You favor,
Heathens will be still the same.
Mighty Spirit,
Witness to the Savior's name!
All our hopes, and prayers, and labors,
Must be vain without Your aid,
But You will not disappoint us.
All is true that you have said—
Gracious Spirit,
O'er the world Your influence spread."***

But turning away from that aspect of the Church's prayers which will be presented during the coming week, I want you to notice some points suggested by the text concerning the prayer of the saints. The first is the communion of all prayer. What does the angel do with the prayers of all saints? Does he put one of them here and another there? Does he put one on the altar and another under the alter? No, no—he puts them all into the golden censer! Here comes a prayer full of faith from a warm and loving heart filled with ardent desires for God's Glory! And behind it comes another, a poor starveling prayer. It is sincere, but it comes from the lips of Mr. Little Faith. There is not much fervor about it, but it is as much as that feeble Brother could pray. Both these prayers are put into the some golden censer. Some of you Christian people have believing friends in Australia—they pray, and their prayers get into the censer. You pray, and your prayers get there, too. Our fathers prayed, and their prayers were put into the golden censer. We pray, and our children will pray after us, but our prayers and theirs and our fathers' shall all go into

the same censor! What communion there is here, then, among all Believers in Jesus! When you really draw near to God and other saints draw near to Him, you also draw near to *them*. No, more, since Jesus Christ, Himself, prays when you pray, you have fellowship with Him! And as the Holy Spirit inspires your prayers if they were according to the mind of God, you also have fellowship with the Spirit and through Him with the Father! Thus prayer becomes a glorious bond which binds God and all His people together in one sacred bundle of life! And to be without prayer is to be outside that blessed bundle.

The next thing I ask you to observe is the universality of prayer. The incense was given to the angel “that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.” I have already pointed out to you that Jesus Christ takes the prayers that come from all sorts of saints. Now I want you to notice that he takes all the true prayers that come to Him. There are some prayers that are so little and so feeble that you would think that they never could get to God at all—but it is with them as it was with some of the creatures in Noah’s Ark. I never can comprehend how the snails managed to get into the ark, yet they did. They must have started very early. There are some people’s prayers which seem to travel almost as slowly as those snails did, yet they do get to Heaven and they are presented by Christ with all the rest of the saints’ prayers before His Father’s Throne. If you take a single drop of water from the sea and analyze it, you will find that the same elements are in it that are in the whole ocean. So if I can breathe but one sincere desire towards Heaven, if my prayer is merely—

**“The upward glancing of an eye
When none but God is near”—**

all the elements of prevailing prayer are in that one desire or that one childlike glance! A diamond is a diamond be it ever so small. It may be so tiny that the Queen would not put it into the most prominent place in her crown, still it might be permitted to glitter somewhere. Being a diamond, it must not be thrown away, for it has its value. So, my Brother, your prayer may never edify your Brothers and Sisters. It may not be suitable to be presented in public, but if your soul is in it, if your heart goes out towards God through your poor feeble prayer, it will be so precious in His sight that He will not have it thrown away! In the day when Christ makes up His jewels, that tiny gem shall be presented to His Father as well as the greatest and costliest jewels under His charge! I say this because I am aware that there are many Christians who think their prayers are not heard because they are such poor things. But we are not impartial or wise judges of the value of our own prayers. I am persuaded that often, when we think we have prayed as we ought, we have only been feeding our own vanity—and that at other times, when we have found that we could not pray, that we could hardly express a single desire, but could only sigh and groan before the Lord—then we have really prayed and God has heard our prayer! Whatever our own feelings may be

about the matter, it is certain that every true prayer gets into the golden censer that our Great High Priest swings before the eternal Throne of God. There is not one of those birds that we send up towards Heaven which does not really reach its destination. If its own wings are not strong enough to bear it up so high, Christ reaches His almighty hand down and lifts it all the rest of the way! Somehow all the true prayers of all the saints must get into the golden censer in Christ's hand.

Note also *the acceptability of prayer*. God has made provision for ensuring the acceptance of His people's prayers. "There was given unto the angel much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne." It is that incense which makes our poor prayers acceptable to God—it is not the merit of our prayers that secures the gracious answers to them, but the power of Christ's prevailing intercession! Our pleas would be useless if they were presented by themselves—it is His plea that always avails with His Father. Jesus Christ has been appointed to this high office so that He may take our supplications and present them before the Throne of the Most High. When our government appoints certain officers to look after the affairs of the poor people of this land, there ought not to be any needy ones applying in vain to them for help. And, Christian, as Jesus Christ has been entrusted with the task of presenting your prayers acceptably before His Father, you may rest assured that He will accomplish it—so be of good courage and know assuredly that He will add the "much incense" of His intercession to your supplications—and so shall they ascend acceptably before God in a cloud of sweetly smelling smoke! No true prayer from the heart of a true child of God shall miss its mark—all shall reach the heavenly target. Your petition, my Brother or Sister, shall meet with acceptance as well as mine. Do not think, Believer, that God will ignore your heartfelt supplications even though you are almost unknown among your fellow Christians and you feel yourself to be the least of all saints. If you dare to think that you are numbered among the saints at all, do not imagine because you could not put two sentences together at the Prayer Meeting that, therefore, your prayers do not reach the ear and heart of God. I can assure you that your petitions are put into the golden censer just as surely as were those of John, the beloved Apostle to whom this wondrous Revelation was given! And when the sacred fire is applied to them, they yield as sweet a fragrance to the Most High as do the supplications of the greatest and noblest of the Lord's children. According to the text, the smoke of the incense ascended up before God with the prayers of all the saints—none of them would have been acceptable without the incense—but with the incense all ascended up before God.

II. Now, secondly, I must speak briefly concerning JESUS CHRIST'S INTERCESSION.

And first I beg you to notice *what a fit Person Jesus Christ is to intercede for us*. He is Man. He knows the imperfection of our prayers, He un-

derstands our needs and frailties and can sympathize with us in presenting our petitions before His Father's Throne. He is Man who has finished His own work and can, therefore, take our work into His hands and bring it to perfection. He is always acceptable to His Father, so that when He presents our case before His Father's Throne, He has such a claim to be heard because of all that He has done and suffered—that His advocacy of our case must prevail! Moreover, He is also God, "the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth." If I can have the well-beloved Son of God to plead for me, what other intercessor can I need? Is He not the best Advocate of whom your heart can conceive? No, more—if He had not told you that it is so, could you have ever dreamed that He, who is the brightness of His Father's Glory and the express image of His Person, would have condescended to become intercessor for such worthless worms as we are? O You glorious Christ, in Your wondrous Person as both Man and God we worship You with all our hearts! And we bless the Lord that You are our Great High Priest with the golden censer, into which our poor prayers shall be put and then, when perfumed with the much incense of Your wondrous intercession, shall be presented acceptably before Your Father in Heaven!—

***"Immense compassion reigns
In our Immanuel's heart!
He condescends to act
A Mediator's part.
He is our Friend and Brother, too,
Divinely kind, Divinely true!"***

Having noticed the fitness of our Intercessor's Person, consider next, *the fitness of the place where He pleads*. He is represented as standing at the altar when He pleads for us with His Father. It is on the ground of His own atoning Sacrifice. When He stands at the altar He does, as it were, say to His Father, "I am He that lives, and was dead. My hands and feet were pierced by the nails and My side by the soldier's spear. Hear Me on behalf of those for whom I laid down My life." Thus our great Intercessor speaks with authority when He pleads for us before His Father's Throne. Believer, you are never so prevalent in prayer as when you stand at the altar of Atonement! Your supplications are sure to succeed when you plead the precious blood of Jesus! So you may be certain that Jesus will not stand at the altar in vain. Shall the Father see His Son's blood shed for many for the remission of their sins, and yet not yield to His intercession? O God, can You remember Your Son's agonies and groans in Gethsemane and yet refuse His requests? Can You think of all that He endured at Golgotha and yet not hear Him when He intercedes for those for whom He there laid down His life? Oh, no, that is impossible! Jesus must succeed when He stands at the altar and presents the prayers of His people before His Father's Throne—

***"Jesus, my Great High Priest,
Offered His blood, and died!
My guilty conscience seeks***

***No sacrifice beside.
His powerful blood did once atone;
And now it pleads before the Throne.”***

Note next how *Christ presents the prayers of the saints to His Father*. He does not offer them just as they are, but He adds to them that “much incense” which makes them acceptable to God. One thing that Jesus does with our prayers is to make them correct where they are in error. Sometimes, dear friends come to me and ask me to send petitions for them to certain people who may be able to help them. But I often find that the words are not spelled correctly, the grammar is faulty, and the petition, itself, is not very plain. So I say to the petitioners, “I know what it is that you need, so I will write out your petition and add my own name to it, and then it may succeed.” So, dear Friends, we bring to Christ our poor petitions, all blotted and misspelled, but He does not present them as they are—He knows what we mean and what we need—so He writes them out for us, puts His own signature at the bottom and thus they become prayers upon which God can look with approval!

The text says that there was given to the angel “much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.” There is little enough of our prayers in the golden censer that is in Christ’s hand, but He adds much of His merit to them and so makes them acceptable to His Father. As the smoke of the incense ascends up before God, perhaps you say, “I never thought that my prayer would smell as sweetly as that.” No, it would not have done so by itself, but Jesus Christ added the “much incense” to it and *that* make it so fragrant. When you say, “My prayer is so poor that it will never prevail with God,” you do not know what it will be when Christ has added His intercession to it! If you could pray a prayer that seemed to you a thousand times better than those you now present, I am not sure that it would not really be any better. If you said to yourself, “There, that prayer will do, it will find its way to God all by itself,” I am certain that it would never reach the Throne of God! But if, when we have prayed, we feel that we must have Christ’s intercession to make our prayers acceptable, He will add the “much incense” to our poor petitions and so they shall prevail with God!

III. Now, lastly, and very briefly, notice THE RESULT OF THE BLENDING OF CHRIST’S INTERCESSION WITH HIS PEOPLE’S PRAYERS.

When the “much incense” was offered with the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar which was before the Throne of God, we are told that “the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God.” And, Christian, you may have what you will of God if you know how to get the “much incense” of Christ’s intercession put with your prayers! Church of God, you may utterly rout your foes if you can pray after this fashion! If our prayers have prevailed with God, they will certainly prevail against all our adversaries! The Spartans called their spears their walls, and Christians may well call their prayers

their walls. There is a secret of prevailing in prayer which you may know to your heart's comfort if you will learn the lesson of our text, and then, as your prayer is presented by Christ to His Father, the answer will come down in blessings which many others will be glad to share with you.

I want, in closing, to remind you of the remarkable verses that follow my text. The saints have been praying and Christ has presented their petitions to His Father—what will be the result of their praying and His intercession? If you did not know the context, you would probably answer, “We expect the whole world to be converted.” But you know that this was not the case. The first of the seven angels blew the trumpet “and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood.” Then the second angel sounded, “and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea.” And so it goes on with woe, upon woe, woe upon woe. Is this the answer to the saints’ prayer? Yes, it is even so. Whenever the saints are especially earnest in prayer, and whenever their prayers rise up acceptably to God, you may depend upon it that their great adversary, the devil, will not remain quietly at home. What then? Shall we therefore go in fear of the adversary? By no means! He will have all the greater wrath as his time becomes shorter and shorter, but our trust is in Him who is mightier than all the powers of darkness and who will overthrow them all at the appointed time. So be not troubled as you read of all the woes following the blowing of the six trumpets, but go on reading until you come to the seventh! There you will get the true answer to the saints’ prayers—all those woes must come first to prepare for the Glory that is to follow! At the 11th Chapter, and the 15th verse, you will read, “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in Heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever.” So you see that there shall be a glorious end to the prayers of the saints and the intercession of their Great High Priest! He shall be proclaimed “King of kings, and Lord of lords,” “and He shall reign forever and ever.” If, during this coming year, we should see more sin, more superstition, more Popery and more infidelity than we have ever seen before, shall we say that God did not hear His people’s prayers? Oh no! All these evils must reach their climax and then shall come their downfall! It is not altogether an evil thing to have the devil thoroughly awakened. If we should again have a time of persecution, with more blasphemy and more wickedness than we have ever yet known, the Lord’s people would be stirred up to pray more earnestly than ever, to work with greater zeal for His cause and to fight the good fight of faith as they have never yet done! Sound the trumpet, wake up the warriors of the Cross, let every good soldier of Jesus Christ gird his sword upon his thigh, for the first result of prayer is battle, storm, terror, earthquake and woe upon woe! But the end is that to which the eye of faith looks forward when the reeling, and the shaking, and the tempest, and the whirlwind are all over! Then shall come the everlasting calm and the triumphant reign of Jesus. “The Glory of the Lord shall be revealed,

and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.” “Therefore, my beloved Brothers and Sisters, be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” And also, “continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving.”

There may be some here, and doubtless there are some who have never truly prayed in their lives. What a blessed beginning it would be to the week of united prayer if they would begin to pray tonight! But, my Brother, or my Sister, it is no use for you to attempt to pray without faith, “for he that comes to God must believe that He is” and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” And what is faith? Why, faith is trust, confidence, reliance upon Christ! If anyone among you will trust the Lord Jesus Christ tonight. If you will put your whole confidence in Him. If you will rely upon Him for time and eternity—especially if you trust to the merit of His great atoning Sacrifice, He will prove Himself to be worthy of your trust and He will save you with His everlasting salvation! No, more than that, for if you trust Christ, you are saved, for, “he that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” Then when you are saved, you can join your believing prayers to the prayers of all the rest of the saints—and your prayers shall be put with theirs in the golden censer in the hand of our Great High Priest—and He will add to them the, “much incense,” of His intercession and so they shall ascend acceptably before the Throne of God! May the Lord graciously teach you the holy arts of faith and prayer for His dear name’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
REVELATION 21:22-27; 22**

Verse 22. *And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.* It has a temple, that better state, that land of the Well-Beloved, but not a material temple that John could see, yet he knew that it had a temple “for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.” Where They are is the holy place where all the tribes of the spiritual Israel shall be gathered at the last, to go no more out forever. “The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb” have a Glory far greater than Solomon’s Temple ever had and far greater even than that later Temple which excelled even his in Glory!

23. *And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the Glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.* We have need of both the sun and the moon while we are in this world. If it were not for the great central luminary, the solar system would cease to be and this earth and the moon and all their sister planets would die out in darkness. But when the sun has been turned into darkness and the moon into blood, it shall still be said of this holy city, the New Jerusalem, that the Glory of God does lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

See how blessedly God and the Lamb are linked together, for Father and Son are truly One. It is also pleasant to reflect that He who is “the light of the world” is also the light of the world that is yet to be revealed—“the Lamb is the light thereof.”

24. *And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it.* This is the Church of the latter days—the beginning of the heavenly state, a true type of what the eternal Glory of the saints will be. The Church will no longer, like her Lord, be despised and rejected of men, but the highest and greatest among men shall count it an honor and glory to be permitted to share its blessings and triumphs.

25. *And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.* Well did Dr. Doddridge sing—

**“No rude alarms of raging foes
No cares to break the long repose!
No midnight shade, no clouded sun
But sacred, high, eternal noon.”**

The saints will then be able to bear that eternal noontide, for the sun shall not smite them by day. And they will have no need of the night which is now so necessary for resting our wearied bodies and minds, so “there shall be no night there.” There will also be no night of sorrow, no night of sin, no night of death in that blessed land of light!

26, 27. *And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defiles, neither whatever works abomination, or makes a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.* [See Sermon #1590, Volume 27—THE BARRIER—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] That holy city would itself be defiled if anything that defiles could enter into it. Only they who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life shall be found in the glorious city of which He is the light—

**“Those holy gates forever bar
Pollution, sin, and shame.
None can obtain admittance there
But followers of the Lamb.”**

Revelation 22—Verse 1. *And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb.* Here again we have God and the Lamb uniting in giving that “water of life” which flows down to us by God’s Grace through the atoning Sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God.

2. *In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the Tree of Life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.* [See Sermon #1233, Volume 21—HEALING LEAVES—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] The fruit of this “Tree of Life” is for all those who have partaken of the water of life—and the tree provides medicine as well as food—“the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

3-5. *And there shall be no more curse: but the Throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God gives them light and they shall reign forever and ever.* This is the climax of the saints' blessedness—"they shall reign forever and ever." Thus are they to be like their Lord, for "He shall reign forever and ever." As they shared His reproach, they shall also share His Glory.

6-9. *And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy Prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keeps the saying of the prophecy of this book. And I John saw these thing, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then said he unto me, See you do it not: for I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the Prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this Book: worship God.* It was a pardonable mistake that John made, but it was a mistake, for even the highest angel in Heaven must not be accorded the worship that is due to God alone!

10, 11. *And he said unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.* If your character is not what it ought to be, you must not delay your appeal to Him who alone can change it, "for the time is at hand" when your character and state will be fixed forever. As when there is a sharp frost, the water in the brooks are soon congealed, so are there influences at work which are consolidating character. Beware lest Christ's coming or the summons through death should find you unprepared and so cause you to remain forever just as you now are.

12. *And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.* There will be no change possible when Christ comes as the Judge of all mankind! If you are then filthy, you will be filthy forever! If you are then holy, you will be holy forever! The delusion of universal salvation must be banished from the minds of all who believe the Word of God!

13-17. *I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have a right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For outside are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whoever loves and make a lie. I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*

[See Sermons #279, Volume 5—COME AND WELCOME; #1331, Volume 22—THE TWO "COMES"; Volume 57

#1608, Volume 27—THE DOUBLE “COME” and #2685, Volume 46—THE OFT-REPEATED INVITATION—Read/download all these sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] This “Come” seems to sound both ways—from Heaven to earth, and from earth to Heaven. Christ says to us, “Come,” and we cry to Him, “Come.” Oh, that sinners would be obedient to the Divine “Come,” and “take the water of life freely,” for then would the Second Coming of Christ be full of joy to them and not a matter of dread!

18, 19. *For I testify unto every man that hears the word of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.* God’s Revelation is perfect—to add to it or to take from it would equally mar it—and the terrible threats here given concerning those who do either the one or the other ought to prevent so great a crime against high Heaven! Yet, alas, many have dared and still dare to commit it.

20. *He which testifies these things says, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.* All those centuries ago, Jesus said, “I am coming quickly.” How much nearer His coming must be, and how earnestly we, too, should cry, “Even so come, Lord Jesus.”

21. *The Grace of our lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.* The Old Testament ended with a curse, the New Testament ends with benediction. Oh, that we might all have a share of it!

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

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

END OF VOLUME 57

THE VOICE FROM HEAVEN

NO. 488

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 23, 1862,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“And they heard a great voice from Heaven, saying
unto them, Come up here.”
Revelation 11:12.*

WHAT may be the particular meaning of the prophecy concerning the witnesses clothed in sackcloth, their death, their resurrection, and their subsequent entrance into Heaven, I am unable to guess. Nor am I clear that anybody else has hit upon it. Although I do not despise prophesying, I entertain a very intense disgust of those who know nothing about them, and yet pretend to be their interpreters. I am free to confess that I have not the key to the Book of Revelation and dare not set up to be its expositor.

This, however is no great matter—for without my venturing upon that line of things—there are quite enough who are always studying the apocalyptic mysteries, and a sufficient number who believe that they can comprehend them. No branch of literature has more devoted students, and in none are men more successful in refuting one another, or more sure that *they* have established their own theories by demolishing those of others. It may be that there are some whose office it is to open sealed books—I know that it is mine to enforce the teachings of the *unsealed* volume.

They may have a call to expound Daniel and Ezekiel—mine is of a much humbler, but, I think I may add, of a much more useful character—not so much to foretell the fall of dynasties and the deaths of monarchs as to deal with matters of vital godliness—and with eternal realities. With things that are plainly revealed, which certainly belong unto us, and unto our children, I had rather be a sweet savor unto God in souls converted, than explain all the last vials. And I would prefer rather to comprehend the heights and depths of my Great Master’s love, than to count the number of the beast, or calculate the duration of the little horn.

I. Waiving, then, all attempts at explaining the text from its connection, I intend to use it as the voice of God to His people. We shall regard it, first of all as A SUMMONS SENT AT THE APPOINTED HOUR TO EVERY SAINT. When the time shall come, fixed by irreversible decree, there shall be heard “a great voice from Heaven” to every Believer in Christ, saying, “Come up here.”

This should be to us—each one of us if we are in Christ—the *subject of very joyful anticipation*. Instead of decoding the time when we shall leave this world to go to the Father, we should be thirsting and panting for the hour that shall set our soul at liberty, and give our spirit, once and for all,

its full discharge from an imprisonment of clay and from the bondage of “the body of this death.” To some Christians it will not only be joyful in anticipation, but it will be intensely delightful when it arrives. It is not true, as some suppose, that death when it really appears, is necessarily a dreadful and hideous apparition—

***“Death no terrific foe appears.
An angel’s lovely form he wears,
A friendly messenger he proves
To every soul whom Jesus loves.”***

I doubt not that many Believers welcome the kind approach of death as the arrival of their best friend, and salute their last hour with intense delight. Witness the saint who has been for years bedridden. She is tossed to and fro as on a sea of pain, never resting at the anchorage of ease. She cries at night, “Would God it were morning,” and when the light of day affects her eyes, she longs for the returning darkness that she may slumber for a little season and forget her pains. Her bones have worn through her skin by long lying upon a bed made as soft as kindness can render it, but, alas, still too hard for so weak and tormented a body.

Pangs have shot through her frame as arrows piercing the foe. Every vein has been a river flushed with agony, and every nerve a telegraph conveying messages of pain to the spirit. Oh, how welcome shall it be when the Voice shall cry from Heaven, “Come up here!” No more weakness now! The joyful spirit shall leave all bodily pain behind. The last tear shall be wiped away by the Divine Father’s hand. And she that was a mass of disease and decay, shall now become an embodiment of intense delight, full to the brim with satisfaction, and infinite pleasure in that land where Jehovah-Rophi reigns. The inhabitant shall no more say, “I am sick.”

With what joy will the Voice from Heaven sound in the ear of the man wearied with labor! The world shall know of some of us, when we die, that we have not been idle—that we have served our God beyond our strength. He who finds the ministry an easy profession shall find the flames of Hell no pleasant resting place. Oh, there may be some of you in whose name I can speak now who have served God with throbbing brow, with palpitating heart—wearing in your Master’s service, but never weary of it—springing to the collar when the load was far too heavy for your single strength. Ready to labor, or ready to fight, never putting off your armor—you stand harnessed both by night and day, crying in your Master’s name—

***“Is there a foe before whose face
I fear His cause to plead?
Is there a lamb among His flock
I would refuse to feed?”***

The time must come when age shall take away the juvenile vigor which for a while carried off weariness, and you shall be constrained to lament, saying, “When shall the shadows be drawn out? When shall I fulfill, as a hireling, my day?” Happy for the minister if in his pulpit he shall hear the voice, “Come up here,” and shall—

***“His body and his charge lay down,
And cease at once to work and live.”***

Happy for you, fellow laborers in the kingdom of Christ and in the tribulation of our common Savior! When you think you can do no more, your doing shall be ended and your reward shall come and your Savior shall say, "Come up here"—and you shall see the glory which you have believed in, upon the earth.

Beloved, with what intense delight will death be hailed by the sons of abject poverty, I mean, "such as are of the household of faith." From shivering in the winter's cold to the brightness of Heaven. From the solitude and desolation of friendless penury to the communion and fellowship of saints made perfect. From the table scantily furnished with hard-earned bread—from famishing and want. From the poor emaciated bones. From the form ready to be bowed down with hunger—from the tongue that cleaves to the mouth with thirst. From crying children and a wailing wife—wailing for bread, crying that they may be fed! Oh, to be snatched away to Heaven!

Happy man, to have known so much of ill that he may know better the sweetness of perfect bliss! Mansions of the blessed, how bright you are in contrast with the cotter's hut! Streets of gold, how you shall make the beggar forget the cold doorstep and dry arch! Paupers become princes—pensioners are peers. And peasants are kings and priests. O land of Goshen, how long before the sons of Israel receive you for an heritage?

And, dear Friends, I think I ought to add this—with what seraphic joy must this voice have been heard in the martyrs' ears in caves and dens of the earth where the holy wander in their sheepskins and goatskins—what holy triumph must this message create! Blandina, tossed in the Roman amphitheatre on the horns of bulls—then seated in her red-hot iron chair, and mocked while she is there consumed before the leering multitude—oh, that voice, "Come up here!" How it must have cheered her in those horrid agonies which she bore with more than masculine heroism.

The many who have perished on the rack—surely they have seen visions like those of Stephen, who, when the stones were rattling about his ears saw Heaven open and heard the Heaven-sent voice, "Come up here." The multitude of our ancestors—our venerated predecessors who carried the banner of the Cross before our day, who stood on flaming wood and bore the flames with patience. Their bodies were consumed by fire till their lower limbs were burnt away and life just remained within a mass of ashes—oh the joy with which they would leap into their fiery chariots drawn by horses of fire straight to Heaven—at this omnipotent bidding of the Master—"Come up here!"

Though yours and mine may never be the lot of protracted sickness, or abject penury, or excessive labor, or the death of martyrdom—let us still believe that if we are true followers of Christ, whenever death shall come, or rather whenever life and immortality shall come—it shall be a joyous and blessed time for us! Seek not of the Most High to delay the time when He shall summon you to the upper chamber, but listen every morning, listen with your heart desiring to hear it—listen for the royal message which says, "Come up here." An ancient singer sweetly words it—

**“I said sometimes with tears,
 Ah me! I’m afraid to die!
 Lord silence You these fears;
 My life’s with You on high.
 Sweet truth to me!
 I shall arise,
 And with these eyes
 My Savior see!
 What means my trembling heart,
 To be thus shy of death?
 My life and I shall not part,
 Though I resign my breath.
 Sweet truth to me!
 I shall arise,
 And with these eyes
 My Savior see!
 Then welcome harmless grave!
 By you to Heaven I’ll go—
 My Lord, Your death shall save
 Me from the flames below.
 Sweet truth to me!
 I shall arise,
 And with these eyes
 My Savior see!”**

To change the note a moment—while this should be the subject of joyous anticipation, it should also be *the object of patient waiting*. God knows best when it is time for us to be bid to, “Come up here.” We must not wish to antedate the period of our departure. I know that strong love will make us cry—

**“O Lord of Hosts the waves divide,
 And land us all in Heaven,”**

but patience must have her perfect work. I would not wish to die while there is more work to do or more souls to win, more jewels to place in the Redeemer’s crown, more glory to be given to His name, and more service to be rendered to His Church.

When George Whitfield lay sick and wanted to die, his Negro nurse had prayed for him and at last said, “No Massa Whitfield there is no dying for you! There’s many a poor Negro yet to be brought to Christ and you must live.” And live he did. You know when Melancthon lay very sick, Martin Luther said he should not die. And when his prayers began to work a cure, Melancthon said, “Let me die Luther, let me die, leave off your prayers.” Luther replied, “No, man, I want you. God’s cause wants you, and you shall not die yet.” And when Melancthon refused to eat or to take the necessary medicine because he hoped to be soon with Christ, Luther threatened him with excommunication if he did not then and there do as he was bid.

It is not for us by neglect of means, or wanton waste of strength, or profligate zeal, to cut short a life which may be useful. “Do yourself no harm”—the advice of Paul to the jailor—is not at all amiss here. God knows the pace at which time should travel, and how long the road of life

should be. Why, if it were possible for there to be regrets in Heaven, it might be that we did not live longer here to do more good. More sheaves! More jewels! But how, unless there is more work? True, there is the other side of it—that living so briefly we sin the less, and our temptations are the fewer—but oh, when we are fully serving God, and He is using us to scatter precious seed and reap a hundred-fold, we would say it is well for us to abide where we are.

An aged Christian, asked whether she would rather die or live, said she would rather it should be as God willed it. “But if you might have your choice, which would you have?” “If I might have my choice,” said she, “I would ask God to choose for me, for I should be afraid to choose for myself.” So be you ready to stay on this side of Jordan, or to cross the flood—just as your Master wills it.

And then another thought. As this, “Come up here,” should excite joyous anticipation, tempered by patient waiting, so, Beloved, it should always be to us *a matter of absolute certainty as to its ultimate reception*. I would not give sleep to my eyes, nor slumber to my eyelids if this were a subject of doubt, personally, as to whether at the last I should stand among the justified. I can understand a man being in doubt about his interest in Christ, but I cannot understand, and I hope I never may, a man’s resting content if there *are* doubts. This is a matter about which we want absolute certainty. Young man yonder! Are you sure that the King will say to you, “Come up here”?

If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with all your heart, that call from the Divine Throne is as certain to meet your ear as that other cry, “Dust you are, and unto dust you shall return.” He that believes on the Son of God has everlasting life. No “ifs” or “buts” ought to be tolerated in our hearts. I know they will come up like ill weeds, but it is ours to pull them up, heap them together, and set them on fire, as farmers do with the twitch in their furrows. The devil loves us to cast lots at the foot of the Cross—but Christ would have us look unto Him and find a sure salvation.

No, no, we are not to be put off with guesswork here. My Friend, can you be easy without infallible certainty? What? You may die tonight and be lost forever, and can you be happy? No, Man, I charge you by the living God, shut not those eyes until you are sure that you shall open them either in earth or Heaven! But if there is this fear that you may lift up those eyes in Hell, how dare you sleep? How dare you sleep, lest your bed become your tomb, and your chamber become the door of Tophet to you? Oh, Brothers and Sisters, let us seek to have the seal of God upon us—the infallible witness of the Holy Spirit bearing witness with our spirits—that we are born of God. Then, and only then, we may joyfully hope and quietly wait to see the salvation of God when the Master says, “Come up here.”

I will add this fourth thought and then proceed. I think very often, besides joyfully anticipating, patiently waiting, and being confidently assured of it, the Christian should *delightfully contemplate it*. Ah, let every Christian now say, “I shall soon be dying—time swiftly speeds away. There is my chamber. I can paint the picture now. They have told me that I am

very sick, but they have kept back from me, till I asked them plainly, the news that I must very speedily die. But now I know it and feel the sentence of death in myself.

Now for the joyous secret—in a few minutes I shall know more of Heaven than an assembly of Divines could teach me. But how solemn is the scene around me—they are moving quietly about the room—very silently they are catching each word that is uttered—treasuring it up. Now Saint, you must play the man! Say a good word for your Master! Stir the deeps of Jordan with your bold march of victory, O soldier of Jesus! Make its shelving shores resound with your melodies! Show them how a Christian can die—now let your full heart overflow with flood tides of Heaven. Drink up the bitter cup and say, “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

But, how is this that my mind seems fluttering as though about to take wing?—

***“What is this absorbs me quite—
Steals my senses—shuts my sight—
Drowns my spirit—draws my breath?
Tell me, my Soul, can this be death?”***

I cannot see. The film is forming on my eyes—it is the death glaze. A clammy sweat is on my brow—it is the dew from the damps of death. The kind hand of affection has just wiped my forehead, and I wish to speak, but there is a throttle in my throat which keeps down the word this is the monitor to me of the silence of the tomb. I will strive against it—

***“Joyful, with all the strength I have,
My quivering lips shall sing,
Where is your victory, boasting grave?
And where’s the monster’s sting?”***

The effort has exhausted the dying one. He must fall back again. They stay him up with pillows. Ah, you may prop him up with pillows, but he has a better arm beneath him than that of the fondest friend!

Now does his Beloved say, “Stay him with apples, and comfort him with flagons,” for while sick to death, he is also “sick of love.” His Master makes his bed in his sickness. His left hand is under his head, and His right hand does embrace him. The Husband of that chosen soul is now answering the prayer for His Presence which it delighted to offer, saying, “Abide with Me.” Now is the poet’s prayer granted to the letter—

***“Hold then, Your Cross before my closing eyes!
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies!
Heaven’s morning breaks, and earth’s vain shadows flee—
In life and death, O Lord, abide with me!”***

We cannot paint the last moment. The rapture, the dawning Glory, the first young flash of the beatific Glory—we must leave all that. On earth, the scene is far more somber and yet not sad—see yonder friends? They gather round. They say, “Yes, he is gone—how placidly he slept! I could not tell the moment when he passed from sleep to death. He is gone.” They weep, but not with hopeless sorrow, for they mourn the body, not the soul. The setting is broken, but the gem is safe. The fold is removed, but the sheep is feeding on the hilltops of Glory. Worms devour the clay,

but angels welcome the soul. There is general mourning wherever the good man was known—but mark you, it is only in the dark that this sorrow reigns.

Up there in the light, what are they doing? That spirit, as it left the body, found itself not alone. Angels had come to meet it. Angelic spirits clasped the disembodied spirit in their arms and bore it upward beyond the stars—beyond where the angel in the sun keeps his everlasting watch—beyond, beyond this lower sky immeasurable leagues. Lo! The pearly gates appear, and the azure light of the city of bejeweled walls! The spirit asks, “Is yonder city the fair Jerusalem where they need no candle, neither light of the sun?” He shall see for himself before long, for they are nearing the Holy City, and it is time for the cherub-bearers to begin their choral.

The music breaks from the lips of those that convey the saint to Heaven—“Lift up your heads, O you gates, and be you lifted up you everlasting doors, that the blood-bought of the King of Glory may come in!” The gates of pearl give way! The joyous crowds of Heaven welcome their Brother to the seats of immortality. But what next, I cannot tell. In vain the fancy strives to paint it. Jesus is there, and the spirit is in His arms in Heaven, where should it be but in the arms of Jesus? O joy! Joy! Joy! Boundless oceans of joy! I shall see Him! I shall see Him! These eyes shall see Him and not another—

***“Shall see Him wear that very flesh
On which my guilt was laid.
His love intense, His merit fresh,
As though but newly slain.
These eyes shall see Him in that day
The Man that died for me!
And all my rising bones shall say,
Lord, who is like to You.”***

I could lose myself while talking upon this subject, for my heart is all on fire! I wander, but I cannot help it. My heart is far away upon the hills with my Beloved Lord. What will the bliss of Glory be? A surprise, I think, even to those who shall obtain it. We shall scarcely know ourselves when we get to Heaven! We shall be so surprised at the difference. That poor man yonder is to be robed in all the splendors of a king! Come with me and see those bright ones—that son of toil, who rests forever—that child of sin, washed by Jesus, and now a companion of the God of Heaven!

And I, the chief of sinners singing out His praise! Saul of Tarsus, hymning the music of Calvary! The penitent thief, with his deep bass note, exalting dying love. And Magdalene, mounting to the alto notes, for there must be some voices even in Heaven which must sing alone, and mount to higher notes where the rest of us cannot reach—the whole together singing, “Unto Him that loved us, and has washed us from our sins in His blood, unto Him be glory forever and ever.” Oh that we were there! Oh that we were there! But we must patiently wait the Master’s will. It shall not be long before He shall say, “Come up here.”

II. And now we shall turn to a second part of the subject. We will take the text, this time, not as a summons to depart, but as a WHISPER FROM THE SKIES TO THE BELIEVER'S HEART. There is a Voice that sounds from Heaven tonight, not as a peremptory summons, but as a gently-whispered invitation—"Come up here."

The Father seems to say this to every adopted child tonight. We say, "Our Father which are in Heaven." The Father's heart desires to have His children round His knees, and His love each day beckons us with a tender, "Come up here." Nor will your Father, and my Father ever be content till everyone of His children shall be in the many mansions above. And *Jesus* whispers this in your ear tonight, too. Listen! Do you not hear Him say, "I will that they also whom You have given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory—the glory which You have given Me—the glory which I had with You before the world was." Jesus beckons you to the skies, Believer.

Lay not hold upon the things of earth. He who is but a lodger in an inn must not live as though he were at home. Keep your tent ready for striking. Be always prepared to draw up your anchor, and to sail across the sea and find the better port—for while Jesus beckons, here we have no continuing city. No true wife has rest save in the house of her husband. Where her consort is, there is her home—a home which draws her soul towards it every day. Jesus, I say, invites us to the skies. He cannot be completely content until He brings His body, the Church, into the Glory of its Head, and conducts His elect spouse to the marriage feast of her Lord.

Besides the desires of the Father and the Son, all those who have gone before seem to be leaning over the battlements of Heaven tonight, and calling, "Courage, Brothers! Courage, Brothers and Sisters! Eternal Glory awaits you. Fight your way, stem the current, breast the wave, and come up here. We, without you, cannot be made perfect—there is no perfect Church in Heaven till all the chosen saints are there. Therefore come up here."

They stretch out their hands of fellowship. They look with glistening eyes of strong affection upon us, and again, they say, "Come up here." Warriors who wear your laurels, you call us to the brow of the hill where the like triumphs await us. The angels do the same tonight. How they must wonder to see us so careless, so worldly, so hardened! They also beckon us away, and cry from their starry seats, "Beloved, you over whom we rejoiced when you were brought as prodigals to your Father's house, 'Come up here,' for we long to see you. Your story of Divine Grace will be a strange and wondrous one—one which angels love to hear—

***"Stretch your wings, you saints and fly,
Straight to yonder worlds of joy."***

I have kept my pledge to be short on that point. You can walk in this meditation as in a garden when you are quiet and alone. All nature rings the bell which calls you to the temple above. You may see the stars at night, looking down like the eyes of God upon you, and saying, "Come up here." The whispers of the wind, as they come in the stillness of the night

talk to you, and say, "There is another and a better land. Come away with us—'Come up here.'" Yes, every cloud that sails across the sky may say to you, "Mount up beyond me, into the clear ether which no cloud can dim. Behold the sun which I can never hide—the noon which I can never mar. "Come up here."

III. I shall want your attention to my third point for a few minutes, for I think these words may be used as A LOVING INVITATION TO UNCONVERTED PERSONS. There are many spirit voices which cry to them, "Come up here. Come up to Heaven."

I like to see so many crowding here on these dark, cold, wintry days. This huge place is just as crowded as though it were some little vestry. You press upon one another as did the throngs in the days of the Master. God gives a spirit of hearing nowadays in a most wonderful manner. And oh, I would that while you are hearing, some living spark of Divine fire may fall into your hearts and become the parent of a glowing fire! If we ask any man whether he desires to go to Heaven, he will say, "Yes," but alas, his desires for Heaven are not strong enough to be of practical use! They are such sorry winds, that there is no sailing to Heaven with them.

Perhaps if we can quicken those desires tonight, God the Spirit may bless our words to the bringing of men into the way of life. Sinner, Wanderer, far from God, many voices salute you tonight. Albeit you have chosen the paths of the Destroyer, there are many who would turn you to the way of peace. First, *God our Father calls you.* You say, "How?" Sinner, you have had many troubles of late. Business goes amiss. You have been out of work, unfortunate, troubled, disappointed. You have tried to get on, but you cannot do it in your house. Everything is out of order—somehow or other, whatever you put your hand to—nothing prospers.

You are always floundering from one slough into another. And you are growing weary of your life. Do you not know, Sinner, this is your Father saying, "Come up here"? Your portion is not here. Seek another and a better land. You have built your nest on a tree that is marked for the axe, and He is pulling your nest down for you, that you may build on the Rock. I tell you, these troubles are but love strokes to deliver you from yourself. If you had been left untouched, I had had little hope for you. Surely then, God would have said, "Let him alone. He will have no portion in the next life, let him have his portion here."

We have heard of a wife, a godly woman, who for twenty years had been persecuted by a brutal husband—a husband so excessively bad that her faith at last failed her, and she ceased to be able to believe that he would ever be converted. But all this while she was more kind to him than ever. One night, at twelve o'clock, in a drunken state, he told his friends he had such a wife as no other man had. And if they would go home with him, he would get her up, to try her temper, and she should get a supper for them all.

They came and the supper was very soon ready, consisting of such things as she had prepared, as well and as rapidly as the occasion would allow. And she waited at the table with as much cheerfulness as if the

feast had been held at the proper time. She did not utter a word of complaint. At last, one of the company, more sober than the rest, asked how it was she could always be so kind to such a husband. Seeing that her conduct had made some little impression, she ventured to say to him, "I have done all I can to bring my husband to God, and I fear he will never be saved. Since, therefore, his portion must be in Hell forever, I will make him as happy as I can while he is *here*, for he has nothing to expect hereafter."

Now, such is your case tonight. You may get some pleasure here, but you have nothing to expect hereafter. God has been pleased, I said just now, to take your pleasures away. Here, then, I have good hopes that, since He shakes you from the present, you may be driven to the future. God your Father is thus making you uncomfortable in order that you may seek Him. It is the beckoning of the finger of His love, "Come up here." And you know, those deaths you have had lately, all say, "Come up here."

You remember when your mother died—that was a Saint, indeed! Do you remember, John, what she said to you? She said, "I could die happy, if it were not for you, and your brother. But O that I might have a hope that you may yet come to God." Do you remember, Man, how that little daughter of yours, that had been to the Sunday School and died so young, kissed you and said to you, "Father, dear Father, do give up the drunkard's cup and follow me to Heaven. Do not be angry, Father, I am dying. Do not be angry because I said that, Father. Follow me to Heaven." You have not yielded to that loving entreaty. You are descending into Hell.

Yet remember, all this was God beckoning to you and saying, "Come up here." He has called, and you have refused. Take care, lest when *you* call, He should refuse you. Besides, you have had a sickness yourself. If I am not mistaken, I am speaking to the right man now. It is not so long ago since you had a fever, or what was it? It was an accident, and everybody said you had a near escape for life. You had time for reflection when you lay in that hospital, or in your own little room. Do you remember what conscience said to you? How it rent away the curtain and made you look at your destiny, until you read in fiery letters these words, "You shall make your bed in Hell"?

Oh, how you trembled then! You had no objection to see the minister. You could not laugh, then, at the Gospel of Christ! You made a great many vows and resolutions, and you have broken them all. You have lied unto the Most High. You have perjured yourself to the God of Israel, and mocked at the God of mercy, and of justice. Beware, lest He take you away with a stroke, for then a great ransom shall not deliver you. These things, then, have been the beckoning of your Father's hand to you, saying, "Come up here."

But more, *the Lord Jesus Christ* has also beckoned to you to come. You have heard that He made a way to Heaven. What does a way mean? Is not a road an invitation to a traveler to walk therein? I have crossed the Alps, and have seen the mighty roads which Napoleon made that he might take his cannon into Austria. But how shall we compare the works which men

have made through the solid granite and over pathless mountains—mountains that before were pathless—how shall we compare these with the road which Christ has made to Heaven through the rocks of Justice, over the gulfs of Sin, throwing Himself into the gaps, leaping into the chasm to complete the way?

Now, the way itself speaks to you. The blood of Christ, which made the way, speaks better things than that of Abel. And it says, “Sinner, believe on Christ and you are saved.” By every drop of blood which streamed in sweat from Him in the garden. By every drop which poured from His hands and feet. By all the agony which He endured, I do beseech you—hear the Voice which cries, “Go and sin no more.” Trust your soul with Him and you are saved.

But, my dear Hearer, have patience with me—give me your ear. *The Spirit of God* strives with you, and cries, “Come up here.” The Spirit of God wrote this Book. And why was this Book written? Hear the words of Scripture, “These are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you might have life through His name.” Here is the Book full of promises, perfumed with affection, brimming with love. Oh, why, why will you spurn it, and put the voice of mercy from you? Every time you see the Bible, imagine you see written on its cover, “Go up to Heaven, seek eternal life.”

Then there is *the ministry* through which the Spirit of God speaks. I have often prayed my Master to give me a Baxter’s heart to weep for sinners, and a Whitfield’s tongue to plead. I have neither. But if I had them, oh, how would I plead with you! But such as I have, I give you. As God’s ambassador, I do beseech you, Sinner, turn from the error of your ways. “As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but would rather that he turn unto Me and live.” “Why will you die?” Is Hell so pleasant? Is an angry God a trifle? Is sin a thing to be laughed at? Is the right hand of God, when bared in thunder, a thing to be despised? Oh, turn! Flee to the Refuge! The Spirit bids you fly!

Moreover, does not *your conscience* say the same? Is not there something in your heart tonight which says—“Begin to think about your soul. Trust your soul with Christ”? May Divine Grace constrain you to listen to the still small voice, that you may be saved!

And, last of all, *the spirits of your departed friends* cry from Heaven to you tonight—that voice which I would you could hear, “Come up here.” Mother—unconverted woman—you have a babe in Heaven. Perhaps not one or two, but a *family* of babes in Heaven. You are a mother of angels, and those young cherubs cry to you, “Mother, come up here!” But this can never be unless you repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ! I know there are some of you who have carried to the tomb the most sainted of relatives. Your hoary-headed father at last went the way of all flesh, and from his celestial seat before the eternal throne he cries, “Come up here.”

A sister, sickened by consumption, who has long since left your house for you to mourn her absence, cries “Come up here.” I entreat you, you sons of saints in glory! I entreat you, daughter of immortal mothers—

despise not now the voice of those who speak from Heaven to you! Oh, were they here—could it be possible for them to come here to speak to you tonight, I know the notes of fond affection which would spring from your lips—“There’s my mother.” “There’s my father.”

They cannot come—but I am the spokesman for them. If I cannot speak as *they* might, yet remember, if you are not converted when you hear the Gospel preached, “neither would you be converted if one rose from the dead.” They could but tell you the Gospel. I do no less. That Gospel is, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved,” says the Evangelist. To believe is to trust Christ. To be baptized is not baby sprinkling—for *that* there is no warrant but in the inventions of man. To be baptized is to be buried with Christ in Baptism *after* faith—for that which is done without faith, and not done of faith, is contrary to the Lord’s command.

Baptism is for Believers, not for sinners—like the Lord’s Supper, it is *in* the Church, not *out* of it. Believing, you are saved. *Baptism does not save you.* You are baptized *because* you are saved. Baptism is the outward recognition of the great inward change which the Spirit of God has worked. Believe, then, in Jesus. Flat on your face before His Cross, cast yourself. Then rise and say, “Now will I confess His name,” and be united with His Church, and believe that at last, having confessed Him before men, He may confess you before His Father which is in Heaven.

And now you are going home tonight—I am clear of your blood, remember. I know not how many may be here, but I suppose there are seven thousand people here tonight who will be without excuse in the Day of Judgment. I have warned you as best I can. I have pleaded with you. Sinner! Sinner! Your blood is on your own head if you refuse this great Salvation! O God the Holy Spirit, make them willing in the day of Your Power, and save them this night and forever, for Your name’s sake. Amen.

Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

“THE ARK OF HIS COVENANT”

NO. 2427

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY MORNING, AUGUST 25, 1895.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 18, 1887.**

*“And the Temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was seen in His Temple the ark of His testament [covenant—R.V.] and there were lightning, and voices, and thundering, and an earthquake, and great hail.”
Revelation 11:19.*

I shall take the passage quite by itself. I do not fully understand its context, whether it relates to that which goes before or to that which comes afterwards, and happily, it is not necessary for us to know this, for the passage stands complete in itself and is full of valuable instruction.

Dear Friends, even we who believe have as yet failed to see much of the Truth of God. We know enough to save us, to comfort us and to help us on our way to Heaven, but oh, how much of the glory of Divine Truth has never yet been revealed to our eyes! Some of God’s children do not fully know even the common Truths of God as yet, and those who do not know them realize but little of their depth and height. From our text it appears that there are certain things of God which as yet we have not seen—there is need that they should be opened up to us—“The Temple of God was opened in Heaven.” When our Lord Jesus died, He split the veil of the Temple and so He laid open the Holy of Holies. But such is our dimness of sight that we need to have the Temple opened, and we need to have the Holy of Holies opened, so that we may see what is not really concealed, but what we are not ready to perceive by reason of the slowness of our understandings.

The two words for, “Temple,” here, may relate not only to the Temple, itself, but also to the Holy of Holies, the innermost shrine. Both of these, it seems, need to be opened, or else we shall not see what is in them. Blessed be the Holy Spirit that He opens up one Truth after another to us! Our Savior’s promise to His disciples was, “When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all Truth.” If we were more teachable. If we were more anxious to be taught and waited upon Him more, He would, doubtless, lead us into many a Truth of God which, at the present moment, we have not fully enjoyed. It is a happy thing for you and for me when at any time we can say, “The Temple of God was opened in Heaven so that we saw even that which was in the innermost shrine of the holy Temple.”

The saints in Heaven doubtless behold all the Glory of God so far as it can be perceived by created beings, but we who are on the right way there behold as in a glass darkly, the Glory of the Lord. We know only in part, but the part we know is not as great as it might be—we might know far more than we do even here. Some suppose that they can know but little because, they say, it is written, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him.” Yes, but why do you stop there? Half a text is often not true—go on to the end of the passage—“But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.” And that which your eyes cannot see, and your ears cannot hear, and the heart of man cannot imagine, *can be revealed* to you by the Spirit of the Lord! Oh, that we were more conscious of the power of the Spirit and that we waited upon Him for yet fuller instruction! Then I am persuaded that in our measure and degree, it would be true to us, even as to the perfected ones above, “The Temple of God was opened in Heaven,” and they saw that which was in the holiest place.

What did they see when the Temple was opened? When the secret place was laid bare to them, what did they see? That is to be my subject. “There was seen in His Temple the ark of His covenant.” If we could look into Heaven at this moment, this is what we would see, “the ark of His covenant.” O Sinner, you think that you would see an angry God, but you would see the ark of His covenant! O child of God, perhaps you dream of many things that might distress you in the glory of that sight, but rest content, this would be the main sight that you would see—Jesus, the Incarnate God, the great Covenant Surety! You would see there, where the Godhead shines resplendent, the ark of His covenant!

I. I shall begin by noticing, first, that the ark of His covenant is always near to God—“There was seen in His Temple the ark of His covenant.”

Of course, the outward symbol is gone—we are not now speaking of a Temple made with hands, that is to say, of this *building*. We speak of the *spiritual* Temple above. We speak of the spiritual Holy of Holies. If we could look in there, we would see the ark of the covenant and we would see the covenant, itself, always near to God. The covenant is always there. God never forgets it—it is always before Him—“There was seen in His Temple the ark of His covenant.”

Why is this? Is it not because the covenant is always standing? The Lord said concerning His people of old, “I will make with them an Everlasting Covenant,” of which David said, “Yet has He made with me an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure.” If God has made a covenant with you, it is not simply for today and tomorrow, nor merely for this life, but for the ages of ages, even forever and ever! If He has struck hands with you through the great Surety, and He has pledged Himself to you, remember, “If we believe not, yet He abides faithful: He cannot deny Himself.” Jehovah has said, “The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed.” What He has said He will stand to forever. He will keep His Word. He said to His Son, “I will

preserve You, and give You for a covenant of the people.” And He will never revoke the gift. This covenant stands secure! Though earth’s old columns bow, and though my spirits sink, and flesh and heart fail me, yet this covenant shall bear me up even to the end.

The Covenant of Grace is forever the same, because, first, *the God who made it changes not*. There can be no change in God. The supposition is inconsistent with a belief in His Deity. Hear what He says—“I am the Lord, I change not; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed.” The sun has his changes, but the Father of Lights is without variableness, or shadow of turning. “God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: has He said, and shall He not do it? Or has He spoken, and shall He not make it good?” God has never to alter His purposes—why should He? Those purposes are always infinitely wise. He knows the end from the beginning, so His Covenant, which He made with such deliberation in the councils of eternity, that Covenant which is sealed with the most precious things He ever had, even with the blood of His only-begotten Son, that Covenant upon which He stakes His eternal honor, for His Glory and honor are wrapped up with the Covenant of Grace—that Covenant cannot be changed because God, Himself, changes not.

Then, next, *the Christ who is its Surety and Substance changes not*. Christ, the great Sacrifice by whose death the Covenant was ratified. Christ, the Surety, who has sworn to carry out our part of the Covenant. Christ, who is the very Sum and Substance of the Covenant, never alters. “All the promises of God in Him are yes, and in Him, Amen, unto the glory of God by us.” If we had a variable Savior, Brothers and Sisters, we would have a changeable covenant! Look at Adam—he could change and, therefore, he was a poor representative of the human race. Our first federal head soon fell because he was a mere man! But the Surety of the New Covenant is the Son of God, who, like His Father, fails not, and changes not! Though He is of the substance of His mother, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh and, therefore, can stand as man’s Representative, yet is He Light of Light, very God of very God, and so He stands fast and firm, like the unchanging God, Himself! In this great Truth of God we do and we will rejoice! The Covenant is always before God, for Christ is always there. He, the Lamb in the midst of the Throne of God, makes the Covenant to always be close to the heart of God!

And, Beloved, note this. The Covenant must always be near to God because *the love which suggested it changes not*. The Lord loves His people with a love which has no beginning, no end, no boundary, no change. He says, “I have loved you with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you.” When the love of God’s heart goes forth toward the Believer, it is not changeable like the love of man—sometimes high and sometimes low, sometimes strong and sometimes weak. But, as it is said of our Savior, “having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end,” so can it be said of the great Father, that His love is always the same! And if the love which dictated the Covenant

is always in the heart of God, depend upon it that the Covenant which comes of that love is always there in the secret place of the Most High!

Reflect also, beloved Brothers and Sisters, that *the promises contained in the Covenant change not*. I quoted to you, just now, one passage about the promises, and that is enough—“All the promises of God in Him are yes, and in Him, Amen.” Not one single promise of God shall ever fall to the ground unfulfilled! His Word, in the form of promises, as well as in the form of the Gospel, shall not return unto Him void! O Souls, you may hang your whole weight upon any promise of God! You need not fear that it will break. Though all the vessels of the King’s house were hung on one nail made by Him, that nail would bear them all up, as well as the flagons as the vessels of smaller measure. Heaven and earth may hang upon a single promise of God! The Voice that rolls the stars along and keeps them all in their orbits is that Voice which spoke even the least of the promises and, therefore, every promise of God stands secure forever!

And once more, not only the promises, but *the force and binding power of the Covenant change not*. All God’s acts are done with a reference to His Covenant and all His Covenant has a reference to His covenanted ones. Remember what Moses said of old, “When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.” Everything that He does follows the line and rule of His Covenant. If He chastens and afflicts, it is not in anger, but in His dear Covenant love. When first that Covenant came into full action with the redeemed, it was all powerful—and it is still just as powerful. All that God does is still guided and directed by His eternal purpose and His Covenant pledges to His people. Stand still, then, and when you look up, if you cannot see that Temple because your eyes of faith are dim—if you scarcely dare to look within the secret place which is the holiest of all—yet know for sure that the Covenant is still there, and always there, whether you see it or see it not!

I will tell you when, perhaps, you will best know that the Covenant is there—when the storm clouds gather the most thickly. When you see the black masses come rolling up, then remember that the Lord said to Noah, “I do set My bow in the clouds and it shall be for a token of a Covenant between Me and the earth.” Then shall you know that Jehovah remembers His Covenant! You may even be half glad of a black cloud, that the sun of the Divine Love may paint upon it the many-colored rainbow, that God may look on it and remember His Covenant! It is good for you to look on it, but what must it be for Him to look on it and to remember His Covenant? Be glad that the Covenant is always near to God, as our text declares, “And the Temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was seen in His Temple the ark of His covenant.”

II. Now, secondly, the Covenant is seen of saints—“There was seen in His Temple the ark of His covenant.”

First, we see it when, by faith, *we believe in Jesus as our Covenant Head*. By faith we know that God has entered into covenant with us. He that believes in Christ Jesus is in covenant with God. “He that believes

on the Son has everlasting life.” “He that believes on Him is not condemned.” He that believes in Him is at peace with God—he has passed from death unto life, and shall never come into condemnation. You are in covenant with God, Believer! Wipe your weeping eyes, ask God to take the dust out of them that you may see that there is an unchanging Covenant made with you tonight and forever!

Next, we see this Covenant when, by faith, *we perceive it in God’s actions toward us*. Faith may see the Covenant of God in all His actions. Do you not remember how the old Scotch woman blessed God for her porridge, but she blessed Him most of all because the porridge was in the Covenant? God had promised bread and water and, therefore, it was sure to come to her! God sent her bread to her in the form of porridge and she blessed the Lord that it was in the Covenant. Now, I thank God that food is in the Covenant, and that raiment is in the Covenant. It is written, “Your shoes shall be iron and brass,” so they are in the Covenant. Life is in the Covenant and death is in the Covenant—“To die is gain.” Everything that is to happen to us is in the Covenant! And when faith sees it so, it makes life a happy one. Am I chastened? I say to myself, “Well, the rod was in the Covenant, for the Lord said that if His children disobeyed Him, He would chasten them with the rod of men. If I never had the rod, I would be afraid I was not in the Covenant.” Is it not written, “In the world you shall have tribulation?” That is a part of the Covenant, you see, so that when you get it, say to yourself, “The God who is evidently keeping this part of His Covenant will keep the rest of it for me, His child.”

Brothers and Sisters, we get, perhaps, the best sight of the Covenant when, *by prayer we plead it*. In that hour of our wrestling, in the time of our inward craving of mercies from the hand of God, we come, at last, to this, “Lord, You have promised. Do as You have said.” I love to put my finger on a promise and then to plead it with the Lord, saying, “This is Your Word, my Father, and I know that You will not run back from it. O God, I believe in the Inspiration of this Book and I take every word of it as coming from Your lips. Will You not seal it to my conscience, my heart, my experience, by proving it to be true?” Have you ever found the Lord’s promises fail you? I remember one who had put in the margin of her Bible in several places, “T and P”—and when she was asked what those letters meant, she said, “They mean, ‘Tried and Proved.’” As I go through life, I keep trying and proving the promises of God and then I put a mark in the margin of my Bible next to each one I have tested, that I may not forget it the next time I have to plead it.” That is the way to see the Covenant at the right hand of God, when you plead it in prayer!

And there are some of us, I think, who can say that *our experience up till now proves* that God does not forget His Covenant. We have wandered, but we have been able to say, “He restores my soul,” for He has restored us! We have needed many things and we have gone to Him in prayer and pleaded that word, “No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly,” and He has listened to the cries of His servants! He said He would do so—“Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver

you, and you shall glorify Me.” He has remembered us in our low estate, for His mercy endures forever and some of us who are no longer young can set to our seal that God is true because of many experiences of His faithfulness! If they tell us that there is nothing in the Bible, and nothing in God, and nothing in the Gospel of Christ, we laugh them to scorn! We have now, for many a year, lived upon the faithfulness of God, and we cannot be driven into a distrust of Him. He is faithful and His mercy endures forever!

Do you not also think that, *when we arrive in Heaven, we shall have a wonderful retrospect*, and that retrospect will all come to this—“The Temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was seen in His Temple the ark of His covenant”? Miss Hannah Moore very prettily puts it that we do not often see the right side of things here. She went into a carpet factory and she looked at what the workmen were doing—and she could see nothing that looked like beauty of design. There were tags and ends hanging out and she said to the men, “I cannot perceive any design here,” and they answered, “No, Madam, for you are on the wrong side of the carpet.” When she went round to the other side, she saw the beauty of the workmanship! Alas, we are at present on the wrong side of God’s work—we must get to Heaven to see it perfectly! And when we get there, we shall—

**“Sing, with wonder and surprise,
His loving kindness in the skies,**

and we shall say, “It was all right. It could not have been better.”—

**“Every dark and bending line
Meets in the center of His love.”**

God has not erred. He has not gone about the longest way to do His work, but He has done it in the wisest and most prudent manner, all that was for the best and highest interests of His dear covenanted ones!

Thus I have shown you that sometimes, and it should be always, God’s people see that glorious Covenant of Grace which is in the Temple above.

III. Now I want to have your attention while I say briefly, in the third place, that the Covenant contains much that is worth seeing.

Let us think of what was in the ancient Ark of the Covenant, for all that was in that ark as a *type* is to be seen in Christ, our heavenly Covenant Ark above.

In that ark, if you and I could have gone into the Holy Place, and have had our eyes strengthened to look, we would have seen, first, *God dwelling among men*. What a wonderful thing! Over the top of the lid of that sacred coffer which was called the ark, there shone an amazing light which was the index of the Presence of God. He was in the midst of the camp of Israel. He that fills Heaven and earth, the infinite Jehovah, deigned to make that place His special dwelling place, so that He is addressed as, “You that dwells between the cherubim.” Here is a part of the New Covenant—“I will dwell in them and walk in them.” It is marvelous that God speaks with men. He whom you heard thundering, last night, as He drove His chariot through the sky—that God in infinite condescension speaks with us—He has come down to us and taken us into rela-

tionship with Himself in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is at once the Fellow of the Almighty, and the Brother of the sons of men! O Beloved, rejoice in the Covenant, that God is no longer divided from men! The chasm made by sin is filled! The gulf is bridged and God now dwells with men and manifests Himself to them! “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.”

Next, in that ark you would have noticed, if you could have seen into it, *God reconciled and communing with men upon the Mercy Seat*. Over the top of that ark, as I have told you, was a golden lid, which fitted it and covered it exactly. That golden lid was called the Mercy Seat, the Throne of Grace. There God spoke with men. He sat there, as it were, enthroned as the Friend of men. Now, it is a part of the Covenant that God hears prayer, that God answers our petitions, that He meets us in a way of reconciled love, that He speaks to us in tones which the spirit can hear though the ear cannot. Thank God for a blood-sprinkled Mercy Seat! What would we do if we had not that as our meeting place with the thrice-holy Jehovah?

Then, within the ark, underneath the lid, if we could have looked in, we would have seen the Law, *the two tablets of stone* which represent *Law fulfilled in Christ* and forever laid up in His heart, and laid up in our hearts, too, if we delight in the Law of God after the inward man! Now, this is our joy, that the Law of God has nothing against the Believer. It is fulfilled in Christ and we see it laid up in Christ, not to be a stone to fall upon us to grind us to powder, but beautiful and fair to look upon as it is in the heart of Christ and fulfilled in the life of Christ. I rejoice in the Covenant which contains in it stipulations all fulfilled and commands all executed by our great Representative!

Together with those tablets of the Law there was laid up a rod, a rod which had originally been a dry stick in the hands of Aaron, but when it was laid up before the Lord, it budded, and blossomed, and brought forth almonds! So, in the Covenant of Grace, we see *the Kingdom established and flourishing in Christ*, and we rejoice in it. Oh how pleased we are to bow before His fruitful scepter! What wonderful fruit we gather from that blessed rod! Reign, reign, Jesus, reign! The more You rule us, the more You are absolute Sovereign of our hearts, the happier shall we be, and the more shall we delight ourselves in You! There is no liberty like complete subjection beneath the sway of Jesus who is our Prophet, Priest and King!

Then, by the side of that rod there was laid up the *golden pot full of manna, the provision made for the wilderness*. Let us rejoice that there is in the Covenant all the provision that we need. God has laid up for us in Christ all our spiritual meat, all the food that we shall ever need between here and Heaven. “Feed me till I need no more,” we cry to our blessed Covenant Representative—and He will do so!

Then, over the top of the ark, sat *the cherubim with outstretched wings*, as, I think, *representing how the angels are in league with us, and with the angels all the forces and powers of the universe*. This day the beasts of the field are our friends and the stones of the field have ceased

to be our foes. Child of God, you may travel by land or sea. You may go where you will, for everywhere you are in your Father's house! All that you see about you is a friend to you, since you are a friend to God. I often wonder that the earth bears up ungodly men. It must groan beneath the weight of a swearer! It must wish to open and swallow him up. But with the gracious man, the man who fears God, all things are at peace, and we may know it to be so. “You shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.”

We do not often enough realize, I think, the friendship of all God's creatures to those who are His children. St. Francis, though he was a Romish monk, yet had a true idea when he used to regard the sparrows and other birds of the air, and even the dogs in the street, as his friends and his brothers, and talked to them as such. And Luther was much of the same mind when he opened his window and listened to the chirpings of the robins in the early spring, and felt that they had come to teach the theological doctor some lesson which he had not learned. Oh yes, oh yes, we are quite at home anywhere, now that God is our God! True, the earth travails, and is in pain, and the creation suffers and will suffer till Christ comes again, but still, her travail is *our* travail, and we are in sympathy with her, and when she reflects the Glory of her God she is our mirror in which we see our Father's face.

Thus, I think, I have shown you that there is much to be seen in the Ark of the Covenant. God give us Grace, like the angels, to fix our eyes upon it! “Which things the angels desire to look into.” We have more to do with the Ark of His Covenant than they have—let us be more desirous, than they are, to look therein!

IV. I close with this fourth point. The Covenant has solemn surroundings. Listen—“There were lightning, and voices, and thunder, and an earthquake, and great hail.”

When the people entered into covenant with God on Sinai, the Lord came down upon the top of the mountain and there were thunder, and lightning, and voices, and an earthquake. There were all these tokens of His Presence and *God will not leave the Covenant of His Grace without the sanctions of His power*—that thunder, that lightning, that storm—all these are engaged to keep His Covenant! When they are needed, the God who smote Egypt with great hailstones, the God who made the Kishon to sweep His enemies away, the God who made the stars in Heaven to fight against Sisera will bring all the overwhelming forces that are at His command to the help of His people and the fulfilling of the Covenant which He has made with them!

O you who are His people, fall back in confidence upon the God who has treasures of snow, and hail, and the dread artillery of storm and tempest! Most of you, my Hearers, have never seen a great storm, nor heard in its majesty the thunder of God's power. You must be in the tropics to know what these can be—and even then you would have to say—“These are but parts of His ways.” Oh, how the Lord can shake the earth and make it tremble, even, to its deep foundations when He

pleases! He can make what we call, “the solid earth,” to be as weak as water when He does but lift up His finger! But all the power that God has—and it is boundless—is all in that right hand which has been lifted high to Heaven in the solemn oath that He will save His people! Therefore, lean upon God without the shadow of a doubt! He may well put all your fears to rest even by the thunder of His power!

Then reflect that there is another side to this Truth of God. You who are not in covenant with God, you who have not believed that Jesus is the Christ, you who have never fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before you, you who refuse the Divine mercy which comes to you through the bleeding Person of the suffering Christ—remember that there will be for you the thunder, the lightning, the voices, the earthquake and the great hail, for these set forth the *terrors of eternal Law overthrowing God’s adversaries!* You have no conception of what God will do with the ungodly! False teachers may smooth it down as much as they like, but this Book is full of thunderbolts to you who refuse God’s mercy! Listen to this one text—“Consider this, you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.” Can you sport with that?

Listen to another—“Ah, I will ease Me of My adversaries, and avenge Me of My enemies!” What will you say to that, or to this? “And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up forever and ever.” “The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the Presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends up forever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.” They talk as if we invented these terrible words, but we did not—we merely quote the Scriptures of the Truths of God and they are terrible, indeed, to the wicked! They should make men start in their sleep and never rest until they find a Savior!

A Universalist once said to a Christian man that whatever he did, God would not punish *him*. And the other replied, “If I spit on your god, I suppose he will not punish me. If I curse him, if I defy him, it will all come right at last?” “Yes,” said the Universalist. “Well,” answered the other, “that may be the character of *your* God, but don’t you try that kind of thing with *my* God, the God of the Scriptures, or else you will find that because He is Love, He cannot and He will not suffer this world to be in anarchy, but He will rule it, and govern it, and He will punish those that refuse His infinite compassion.”

So I beseech you, my Hearers, fly to Jesus at once! Weary, and heavy-laden, look to Him, for He says especially to you, “Come unto Me, and I will give you rest.” The Lord add His blessing to His Truths I have tried to preach to you, the sweet and the terrible alike, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
*Hebrews 9***

Verse 1. *Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of Divine service and a worldly sanctuary.* That is to say, a material sanctuary, a sanctuary made out of such things as this world contains. Under the Old Covenant, there were certain outward symbols. Under the New Covenant, we have not the symbols, but we have the *substance* itself. The old Law dealt with types and shadows, but the Gospel deals with the spiritual realities themselves.

2, 3. *For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All.* All this was by Divine appointment—the form of the rooms, the style of the furniture—everything was ordained of God and that not merely for ornament, but for purposes of instruction. As we shall see farther on, the Holy Spirit intended a significance, a teaching, a meaning, about everything in the old tabernacle, whether it was a candlestick, or a table, or the showbread.

4, 5. *Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and over it the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.* It would not have been to the point which the Apostle had in hand, so he waived the explanation of those things for another time.

6-8. *Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest, alone, once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: the Holy Spirit this signifying.* It is from this sentence that I am sure that the Holy Spirit had a signification, a meaning, a teaching, for every item of the ancient tabernacle and Temple, and we are not spinning fancies out of idle brains when we interpret these types, and learn from them important Gospel lessons. “The Holy Spirit this signifying”—

8. *That the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing.* It was necessary that you should take away the sacred tent, the tabernacle, yes, and take away the Temple, too, before you could learn the spiritual meaning of them. You must break the shell to get at the kernel. So God had ordained. Hence, there is now no tabernacle, no Temple, no holy court, no inner shrine, the Holy of holies. The material worship is done away with in order that we may render the *spiritual* worship of which the material was but the type.

9. *Which was a figure for the time then present.* Only a figure, and only meant for “the time then present.” It was the childhood of the Lord’s people. It was a time when, as yet, the Light of God had not fully broken in upon spiritual eyes, so they must be taught by picture books. They must have a kind of Kindergarten for the little children, that they might learn the elements of the faith by the symbols, types and representations of a material worship. When we come into the true Gospel Light, all that is done away with—it was only “a figure for the time then present.”

9. *In which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience. All these rites could only give a fleshly purity, but they could not touch the conscience. If men saw what was meant by the outward type, then the conscience was appeased, but by the outward sign, itself, the conscience was never comforted if it was a living and lowly conscience.*

10. *Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. These ordinances were only laid upon the Jews—not upon any other people and only laid upon them until the better and brighter days of reformation and fuller illumination.*

11. *But Christ*—Oh, how we seem to rise when we begin to get near to Him, away from the high priests of the Jews! “But Christ”—

12. *Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.* The Jewish high priests went once a year into the Holy of Holies. Each year, as it came round, demanded that they should go again. Their work was never done! But, “He entered in once,” and only once, “into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” I love that expression, “eternal redemption”—a redemption which really does redeem and redeems forever and ever! If you are redeemed by it, you cannot be lost. If this redemption is yours, it is not for a time, or for a season, but it is, “eternal redemption.” Oh, how you ought to rejoice in the one entrance within the veil by our Great High Priest who has obtained eternal redemption for us!

13-15. *For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause He is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.* When you come to deal with Christ, you have to do with eternal things. There is nothing temporary about Him, or about His work. It is “eternal redemption” that He has obtained for us! It is an “eternal inheritance” that He has purchased for us!

16, 17. *For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator lives.* Or, “Where a covenant is, there must also be the death of him who covenants, or of that by which the covenant is established.” Or read it as we have it in our version, for it seems as if it must be so, although we are loathe to give the meaning of “testament” to the word, since its natural meaning is evidently *covenant*—“Where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator lives.” Or, if you will, while the victim that was to confirm the covenant lived, the covenant was not ratified—it must be slain before it could be thus effective.

18-22. *Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God has enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the Law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.* There is no truth more plain than this in the whole of the Old Testament! And it must have within it a very weighty lesson to our souls. There are some who cannot endure the doctrine of a substitutionary Atonement. Let them beware lest they be casting away the very soul and essence of the Gospel! It is evident that the Sacrifice of Christ was intended to give ease to the conscience, for we read that the blood of bulls and of goats could *not* do that. I fail to see how any doctrine of atonement except the Doctrine of the Vicarious Sacrifice of Christ can give ease to the guilty conscience! Christ in my place suffering the penalty of my sin—that pacifies my conscience, but nothing else does! “Without shedding of blood is no remission.”

23. *It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these.* These things down below are only the *patterns*, the models, the symbols of the heavenly things! They could, therefore, be ceremonially purified with the blood which is the symbol of the atoning Sacrifice of Christ.

23, 24. *But the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into Heaven, itself, now to appear in the Presence of God for us.* He never went within the veil in the Jewish Temple—that was but the symbol of the true Holy of Holies. He has gone “into Heaven, itself, now to appear in the Presence of God for us.”

25-28. *Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world has He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.* There is no need that He should die again, His one offering has forever perfected all His people! There remains nothing but His final coming for the judgment of the ungodly and the acquittal of His redeemed.

28. *And unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.* Christ’s second coming will be “without sin,” and without a sin offering, too, wholly apart from sin, unto the salvation of all His chosen. May we all be among those who are looking for Him! Amen.

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

HOW THEY CONQUERED THE DRAGON NO. 1237

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MAY 30, 1875,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*"They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."
Revelation 12:11.*

IT is not my main objective, at this time, to expound the chapter before us. I scarcely consider myself qualified to explain any part of the Book of Revelation and none of the expositions I have ever seen entice me to attempt the task, for they are mostly occupied with a refutation of all the interpretations which have gone before—and each one seems to be very successful, indeed, in proving that all the rest know nothing at all about the matter! The sum total of substantial instruction in nearly all the comments upon Revelation amounts to this—that our heavenly Father has said in His Word some mysterious things which few of His children can yet comprehend.

This is just what we might have expected when the Infinite God speaks to finite men. It is, no doubt, intended to humble us and draw forth our reverent adoration. Happily there is a blessing to those who read and hear and keep the words of His prophecy, for had that blessing been confined to those who *understand* it, few would have obtained the benediction. The Revelation is a most blessed book, but its unfolding has yet to be accomplished. If you refer to the expositors you will find that they discover, in this passage, the dragon-ensign of pagan Rome and its removal from its position by Constantine, who set up the Cross in its stead.

I do not believe the Lord took any more interest in Constantine than in any other sinner and it seems to me little short of blasphemous to say that *he* was the Man-Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron and was caught up into God and to His Throne. His adoption of Christianity as the State religion was not a thing for glorified spirits to rejoice in, but a dreadful calamity, fitted only to make sport for Milton's Pandemonium. No one ever did the Church a worse turn than he who first joined her to the State. The act was a piece of State policy and kingcraft and no more—a business utterly unworthy of record by an Inspired pen.

It would be unprofitable to follow great interpreters through the history of the Roman empire, all of which they find in the visions of John—such an exercise would be more suitable to another day and would rather come under the head of *history* than theology! I can only give you what it occurs to me that you and I would have understood by the vision if it had been granted to us. It does not appear to me to be a portion of a consecutive revelation, but a sort of summary of the visions which *follow* it and, in some respects, a preface to them. Remember that it is a *vision* and is not to be interpreted in cold blood, word by word, or read as if its coherence and connection would always be apparent.

In this chapter we may see, as in a panorama, the entire conflict between the principles of good and evil, between God and Satan. We have before us the old original quarrel between the woman and the serpent with which the Inspired Volume commences, and a clear development of the first promise, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her Seed." Woman, in her innocence, was attacked by "that old serpent called the devil, and Satan," and she readily enough fell a prey to his deceptions, to the utter ruin of our race.

At the end of that first crafty assault and speedy victory, the dragon met with his rebuff in words like these—"The Seed of the woman shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel," a promise which declared that, though the woman's Seed must suffer greatly at Satan's hand in consequence of sin, yet He would conquer in the end and destroy the power of evil. In Revelation the scene is changed from Eden to the heavens and there before you stand, again, the woman and the serpent in the same position of antagonism as before. The serpent still the assailant, only this time more openly so.

Observe how both woman and serpent have developed—the one has become a queen bedecked with celestial splendor, and the other a python with a tail so vast that he threatens to obliterate the stars with every sweep of it. The woman is no longer a simple, childlike personage, but a *wonder*. She walks not among the trees and the flowers, but amid the orbs of Heaven. She is clothed with the sun, the moon is under her feet and upon her head is a coronet of 12 stars. In her you see the great cause of Truth and Righteousness embodied—she is, in fact, the Church of God in all ages, the woman whose Seed blesses all the nations of the earth. The glorious cause of holiness and God, Incarnated in the Church, is clothed with the splendor of light, truth and majesty.

We will not stay to explain the details of the gorgeous imagery, for in such a matter it is almost frivolity to go into detail. The Church has her greater and her lesser lights—she is covered with the underived splendor of indwelling Deity, and her walk is bright with the reflected glory of holiness—while her crown of joy is found in her complete ministry as represented by the Apostolic twelve. She is fair as the moon, clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners. Behold, then, the *typical* woman, and see how glorious is the cause of Truth and holiness. In the vision the queenly woman is about to bring forth the promised Seed. She cries in her anguish, "travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered."

This, of course, may represent the Church crying day and night unto God in times gone by for the coming of the promised Deliverer—a cry which increased in intensity and agony of desire as the time drew on. But it may also depict the constant condition of a true Church—always travelling in birth till Christ is formed in the hearts of men. Till the Man-Child, namely Christ mystical, is born here below. Till the Christ is so brought forth among the sons of men that He and all those who, by Grace, are enabled to overcome the Wicked One, shall rule the nations with a rod of iron. (Rev. 2:26, 27).

You see, then, in vision the woman, the Church, and before her stands another wonder—the serpent mightily developed. He is called a great red

dragon—huge in bulk and terrible in appearance is this emblem of evil, and he is clothed with the horrible splendor peculiar to himself—the splendor of deadly hate and imperious rebellion. Bright and burning, like flames of fire, the huge serpent is terrible to gaze upon! The python is red with wrath, and covered with persecuting malice. Red is the color of Edom, the adversary of the Lord and of His Israel—and it is still the chosen color of the monstrous power of antichrist which holds its court at Rome. What is the last of its evil gifts to our own country but a red hat for its arch-priest?

This great red dragon is full of craft, for it has seven heads. One Satanic head were enough, but our great enemy possesses an almost perfect ingenuity of wickedness. He uses a wisdom all but infinite to effect the overthrow of the Church of God and the destruction of Christ and the rest of the heaven-born seed among men! These seven heads are supplemented by 10 horns, the emblems of power, for the Prince of the power of the air is by no means weak. He has, in fact, more power than wisdom, having but seven heads to ten horns and, yet, according to the order of nature, each head should have *two* horns, we may also say that he has not power enough to execute all that his wicked cunning enables him to invent!

By the power wielded by the dragon, he leads men to rebel against the Law of the Lord, and induces them to persecute the Church. The power of evil is great in all lands and as opposed to a defenseless woman in a sorrowful condition, it seems quite impossible that she should stand against it. The heads are also crowned, for Satan sways with more than regal power the minds of men—he is the god of this world—it lies in the Wicked One. He delights to display that power and trusts much to outward pomp, therefore he wears seven crowns upon his seven heads, as if one diadem were not sufficient to denote his kingship.

His enormous energy is also set forth by his lashing the skies in his fury and tearing down a third part of the stars—it is always his ambition to deepen darkness and destroy Light—and terribly successful has he been in this, his choicest pastime. See, then, before you, the woman in her brightness and loveliness, and the dragon in his rage and power! The dragon is watching for the expected birth. He is eager to devour the Man-Child as soon as it is born—the ideal man, the offspring of the Divine Life—he longs to destroy. It was so when our Lord Jesus was born—Satan stirred up Herod to seek the young Child and, therefore, the massacre of the innocents. But the dragon was foiled—Jesus lived till His hour was come—and then He was caught up unto God and to His Throne.

Thus Satan strove to devour the new-born seed, when the converts to Christ were few, and His mystical body upon earth was like unto that of a little child. He persecuted the Man-Child when first the Gospel was preached, but the more his servants persecuted the saints, the more they multiplied! The method followed by Pharaoh in Egypt was a crafty one, but it did not and could not succeed! Persecution always fails. Today, Brothers and Sisters, the Man-Child, even our Lord Jesus, is caught up unto God and sits upon His Throne and, in part, also, the mystical body of Christ is there, far beyond the reach of the dragon!

Jesus reigns with His saints in a region in which there is no more place for the dragon, a domain from which he is forever cast out into the earth. All the power which Satan ever had in heavenly things is now ended by the finished work of our ascended Lord—

***“Bruised is the serpent’s head
Hell is vanquished, death is dead
And to Christ gone up on high
Captive is captivity.”***

By reason of our sin and his own power over death, Satan shut Heaven against us, but now the battle in the higher regions between the dragon and the woman’s Seed is over and we are in the heavenly places and Satan banished forever. There is no condemnation unto us any more, nor a foot for the Evil One to stand upon, now that we are in Christ! When we read, here, “Heaven,” do not understand, by it, the place of the blessed, where God dwells, but the *spiritual* region, the *realm* of spiritual things.

The first fight between Truth and error lies in purely spiritual matters, in those heavenly places into which Christ has lifted up His Church. It is a wrestling between good and evil spirits and not a contention with flesh and blood. We find angels first entering into this strife. We know but little about it, but it would seem that the great dragon of evil has made war with angels as well as with men. Milton sang of those angelic conflicts in majestic verse, but Milton was not Inspired to speak Infallibly, and we must take heed not to confuse poets with Prophets. It is clear that good and evil spirits are at necessary variance, one with another, and, it is also clear that in ages gone by Satan tempted the angelic band. And those angels which kept the first estate were victorious over him once and for all. They rejected his sinful solicitations and now he has no more power over them.

Never again can he tempt them—they shall stand fast forever—confirmed in their blessed estate. Michael and his angels have defeated the devil and his angels in one decisive battle and by remaining true to their allegiance have chased away from angelic realms the invading power of evil. Dwelling in the spirit realms there are others besides angels, our Brothers and Sisters who have left the body, the saints of ancient times and the faithful of the early Church. These, also, dwell in a region out of which Satan is expelled. He cannot molest them anymore.

The text bids us hear the glorified chanting of the song of victory over Satan, forever cast down from the realms of the blessed and never again to enter into the spiritual domain to vex them. “And I heard a loud voice saying in Heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.”

To the singers of this song I want to call your attention and mainly to one point concerning them. They have conquered Satan. I want you to observe this and to note the weapons by which they overcame. Leaving all the rest, we will pay our attention to the victors and the weapons by which they won the day. First, we shall notice that *the blessed ones before the Throne were all warriors and victors*. Secondly, *they all fought with the same weapons*. And thirdly, *they all fought the same spirit*.

I. First, ALL THE BLESSED ONES WHO ARE REJOICING IN HEAVEN WERE ONCE WARRIORS AND VICTORS HERE BELOW. It is a very simple truth to mention, but we need to be reminded of it—

***“Once they were a mourning liege below,
And wet their couch with tears;
They wrestled hard, as we do now,
With sins and doubts and fears.”***

We, too, often think of the saints that have gone before as if they were men of another race from ourselves, capable of nobler things, endowed with Divine Graces which we cannot reach, and adorned with holiness impossible to us. The medieval artists were apt to paint the saints with rings of glory about their heads! But, indeed, they had no such halos! Their brows were furrowed with care, even as ours, and their hair grew gray with grief.

Their light was *within* and we may have it! Their glory was by Grace and the same Grace is available for us! They were men of like passions with ourselves, “our brethren,” though a little elder born. It is clear from our text that every one of the saints in Heaven was assailed by Satan. How could there be a victory without a battle? They were all attacked by one or other of the dragon’s heads and horns. When you suffer from a fearful temptation which almost stirs you, count it no strange thing! Be not dismayed as though a new temptation had befallen you. That fiery dart had been aimed at other men’s hearts before it was caught upon your shield.

If the insinuation should happen to be profane and blasphemous to a very high degree, so that you condemn yourself and say, “No other human mind could ever have been defiled with so foul a suggestion as this,” do not despond, for such suggestions have been injected into the minds of the purest, even as the worst of thieves may seek to enter the house of the most honest man in the city. Even to those who, at this moment, are without fault before the Throne of God, it happened while here below that horrible temptations assailed them! Satan always has been, since his fall, a tempter of the worst order—and ever since he first beguiled our mother, Eve—he has gone on to ensnare men’s souls with the same craft, the same cruelty, the same falsehood and the same impiety against the Lord.

It will help you, if you reflect that you are not alone, and the pathway which you follow was trod by the most honored of the elect of God. Paul, who won provinces for Christ, nevertheless had his messengers of Satan to buffet him, and had to stand against doubts and sins insinuated by the old serpent, even as you must stand. If you could have examined the celestial victors, one by one, as they entered within the pearly gates, you would have found them all covered with scars—though they now bear neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing, they had, all of them, in the day of their flesh, to feel the cruel tooth and fang of that infernal serpent! Not one of them traversed a clear course and took his throne unchallenged—and neither will you conquer without conflict. For you, also, if there is no cross, there will be no crown. Therefore, be not astonished if you are attacked in all ways.

The glorified, in addition to having been attacked, were led to *resist* the Evil One, for nobody overcomes an antagonist without fighting with him.

There must be, in order for a real battle, two sides of the question. But I feel sure there are some *professors* who know much about being tempted, but they do not know much about resisting. Now, Brothers and Sisters, however great our temptation, our resistance must be greater. To be tempted is common, even to the worst and most reprobate of men—but to *resist* temptation is the mark of the child of God! The verse I quoted just now says—

***“They wrestled hard, as we do now
With sins and doubts and fears.”***

It is not merely that they had “sins and doubts and fears,” these all may have, but they “*wrestled hard*” with them. They would not be put down by them! They would not yield an inch—they stood upon their guard until they drove the Sword of the Spirit through the very heart of the foe! “They resisted unto blood, striving against sin.”

Rest assured, dear Friends, that sin will never be conquered without resistance! And if we fold our arms and suppose that we shall get the victory by *believing* that we have it, we shall be mightily mistaken! We must watch, pray, strive, agonize and press forward—“This kind goes not out but by prayer and fasting.” Salvation is not by works, but conquest over sin involves fighting from day to day! Victory will not come to us while we lie passive. We must be stirred up with all the energy of the eternal Spirit to vanquish evil. These Canaanites must be driven out of the land by force of arms before we can take full possession of our inheritance. Let this, then, be our plea to our great Joshua as we gird on our harness and unsheathe our swords—

***“Almighty King of saints,
These tyrant lusts subdue;
Drive the old dragon from his throne,
And all his hellish crew.”***

We find that these warriors all *overcame*, for Heaven is not for those who merely fight, but for those who overcome! “He that overcomes shall inherit all things.” “I fight against my sin,” says one. Brother, do you *overcome* it? Did it seem a hard question just now when I said, do you resist? It is a harder question which I now put, “Do you overcome?” For if sin overcomes you—if as an habitual matter of fact *sin* is your *master*—then you have yet to know what true religion is! For of the saints, it is said, “Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the Law, but under Grace.” There is a groaning and a crying which is common to the saints. “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” is not an experience of an hour, never to be repeated—it runs, more or less, throughout the whole of life! But remember that it is also attended with hopeful confidence in the power of Divine Grace, for the Apostle goes on to say, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The Believer feels the battle, but he also rejoices in the victory! He wrestles and conquers at the same time. I wish that some of our Brethren could see how possible this is. We are victorious, though not without a conflict. Our victory is gained and we are more than conquerors, but still we march on to new conflicts and never lay aside our swords. The Christian’s position is very much like that of Napoleon, who used to say, “Conquest has made me what I am, and conquest must maintain me.” And so

with you, Christian—you have conquered through Jesus Christ, but you have to conquer, still, and go on as He did—“conquering and to conquer.” All this by the power of the Holy Spirit!

What if today I have been enabled by Grace to overcome some besetting sin? Before an hour is over I may find another sin stirring within my bosom and I must not yield to it—I am bound to conquer each temptation as it assails me. If I overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb, I am a Christian, but no way else, for if any sin permanently overcomes me, I cannot enter Heaven. If I overcome one sin by the power of the Holy Spirit, I must still be looking out to wrestle with others, for between here and Heaven I may *never* accept a truce, or hope for a cessation of hostilities! Never may the Christian take off his harness, never say to himself, “The battle is fought and the victory is won, and I have nothing more to do.”

You are enlisted, Brothers and Sisters, in a lifelong fight! When you shall lie down in your grave, *then* may it be said, “The battle is over.” But as long as you are here, you will be within gunshot of the enemy, and it is just possible your sharpest conflict will be upon your dying bed! John Knox, after conquering the devil in all ways and shapes, waged, as he lay a-dying, the sternest struggle of his entire life! Even thus it may be with you, but you are bound to overcome. Attack, resist and victory must be yours! So, then, in Heaven they all *rejoice* because they have overcome, for the next verse to our text puts it, “Therefore rejoice, you heavens, and you that dwell in them.”

It is a theme for gladness in Heaven that they did fight and resist and overcome. Those white robes mean victories and so do those palms! But there could not have been victories if there had never been conflicts. There is joy among the angels, for they had their conflict when they stood firm against temptation and did not swerve when the dragon’s tail swept away a third part of the stars of Heaven! But ours will be a victory peculiarly sweet, a song especially melodious, because our battle has been peculiarly severe. We fell, we rose again, we were kept, upheld, sustained and enabled to overcome, at last and, therefore, we will rejoice forever before the Throne of God!

I leave this point, but I would like you to make a personal application—Are you resisting? Are you conquering? Does the life of God in you get the upper hand of sin? Do not let us deceive ourselves. If sin is our master we shall perish! Grace must reign in us or we are in a wretched condition. Do not let us look upon victory over sin as a luxury to be enjoyed by the higher life—it is a condition into which we must all enter or we are not saved. Holiness is not a luxury for the few, it is a *necessity* for *all* saints! And what is preached as an accomplishment which may be obtained by a second conversion is, in truth, a necessary part of the *first* conversion if it is of the Lord.

The slaves of sin are not the children of God. If sin reigns in your mortal bodies, you are dead in it. If Satan has dominion over you, you are not in Christ Jesus, for, “they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.” Wherever Grace lives, it either reigns or fights for the throne—it enters the soul on purpose to war with evil and overthrow it. Where the ark of the Lord is, Dagon must fall upon his face and be

broken. "He that sins has not seen Him, neither known Him," says the Apostle John, and he says correctly.

"That which is born of God overcomes the world," and if you let the world get the mastery, you cannot be born of God. Thus I leave the point, hoping that we may endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ and receive a crown of life at the last.

II. Now, secondly, **THE VICTORS ALL FOUGHT WITH THE SAME WEAPONS.** They had two weapons and these two were one—the blood and the Word. "They overcame him through the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony." First, *the blood of the Lamb*—it was theirs. The blood of the Lamb will not help us until it becomes our own. They went to Jesus by faith and received the Atonement. The cleansing blood was sprinkled on them—it spoke peace in their consciences, it took away their sin—they were washed in it, they were made white as the driven snow. "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin."

They were afar off, and, "They were made near by the blood of Christ." This blood continued to give them access to God, for it gave them boldness to draw near unto the Throne of Grace. In fact, this blood was so theirs that it was the life of their spirit. It was a generous wine to them and became the highest joy of their souls. Brothers and Sisters, if you and I are ever to be among these victors, the blood must be our own, appropriated by faith. How is it with you this morning? Has the blood cleansed you, my Brother, my Sister? Does the blood dwell in you as your life? Has the blood of the Lamb given you fellowship with God and brought you near? If so, you are on the way to overcoming by the blood! The blood of the Lamb, according to the verse which precedes the text, had given them all they needed, for it gave them *salvation*.

They were saved, completely saved. Jesus Christ, when they laid hold upon Him and felt the power of His blood, redeemed them from all iniquity and translated them from the kingdom of Satan. Then they received strength—note that word. They had been dead, but they obtained life! They had been weak, and they were made strong in the Lord, for he who knows the power of the blood of Jesus is made strong to do great exploits. Then they obtained the *kingdom*, for the kingdom comes to us by the way of the conquering blood of Jesus, and He has made us kings and priests unto God because He was slain.

We are told, also, that they had *power*, or authority. Our Lord, who has risen from the dead, clothed all His disciples with authority when He said, "All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth. Go you, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them." Beloved, if we have participated in the blood of Jesus Christ, I hope we feel it to be all these four things to us—salvation from sin, strength out of weakness, a kingdom in fellowship with Christ and authority to speak in His name. It is the blood of the Covenant and it secures all the Covenant gifts of God to us. It is the life of our life, the all in all of all that we possess. So, then, they had the blood of the Lamb and they possessed the privileges which the blood brings with it.

But the gist of the text lies in the fact that they fought with the dragon by means of the blood of the *Lamb* and overcame with it. How did they do that? It is easy to discover. They overcame Satan's *terrors* with the blood

of Atonement. Satan is the great red dragon, a hideous seven-headed python, horrible to look upon, horned like the serpent called the Egyptian Cerastes. Man dreads the serpent but would dread, more, a monster so dire as this, so full of poison, so red with fury. The conflict appears to be unequal enough between this horrid monstrosity and the seed of a timid woman. Yet when we are sprinkled with the blood of Jesus we are invulnerable and fear not the dragon, for we remember the promise which says, "You shall tread upon the lion and the adder."

When the Atonement brings peace to our hearts, the great dragon dwindles down to a mere snake with a broken head, of which it is written, "Upon your belly you shall go and dust shall you eat." We can see the heel mark of Christ upon his broken head and, what is more, we expect to set our own heel there, for we are told that the Lord will bruise Satan under our foot shortly. I reckon upon the tune when the Lord will bruise him under my foot—it shall be as heavy a bruise as I can give him, I guarantee you! He has tempted and tried us all so much that the victory we shall gain will be one which will bring to Jesus much renown! And we will not fail to sing His praises as long as we have any being.

Thus our fear of Satan ceases when we see that Christ has redeemed us from the curse and put Satan as an enemy under our feet. Our hearts exult in Your Presence, O Destroyer of the devil and his works, and we triumph in You—

***"When we behold death, Hell, and sin,
Vanquished by that dear blood of Yours,
And see the man that groaned and died
Sit glorious by His Father's side."***

By the blood of the Lamb we overcome Satan as the *accuser of the Brethren*. The chapter expressly tells us that he accuses the Brethren day and night. There is an instructive tradition among the Jews that Satan accuses the elect of God all day and all night long, except on the day of Atonement, and then he is quiet. Glory be to the dying Lamb, the Atonement shuts the mouth of the lion continually, for the Atonement lasts all the year round. Neither in the court of Heaven, nor in the court of conscience can the enemy's accusations harm us, for the blood of our Substitute is a bar to all suits against us.

If we, by faith, are assured that Jesus has put away our sin, what cause have we for alarm? If the punishment due to our sin and the sin, itself, have both been carried away by our great Surety so that sin is plunged into the depths of the sea and cast behind God's back, then who is he that shall harm us? Brethren, grasp the doctrine of the Atonement. Know your own interest in it, and the accuser of the Brethren will be silenced by the voice of the blood! We overcome Satan by the same means as to his *craft*. He has seven heads, but we tell him Jesus died and that breaks all the seven heads and destroys the sevenfold ingenuity of his snares. He would, if it were possible, deceive even the very elect, but the secret of the sprinkled blood is that which prevents the elect from ever being deluded by him. Who shall separate them from the love of Christ? Does not redemption by blood hold them fast to their Redeemer?

You cannot be right anywhere if you are wrong upon the Atonement, but if you are sound upon the substitutionary Sacrifice, there is little fear

of your falling into any serious error. As the needle once magnetized continues to seek the pole, so they who are once touched with the love of their dying Surety are sure to remember it and cannot long be turned in any other direction. As for the dragon's horns of *power*, the power of the blood is far greater. Since we have been redeemed by Christ from under the power of Satan, he cannot regain his hold of us. His power is broken. As to the *crowns* which he wears, what do we care about them? We are delivered from under his power by being redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, and Satan can never again have rule over us.

As for the *energetic influence* which is figured by his tail, he may quench the very stars of Heaven and pull down the most brilliant professors and make them fall to the earth as apostates—but he cannot harm us! Because of the blood of Jesus we are protected by the power of God through faith unto salvation. Cling to the Cross, dear Brethren, for *there* you are out of the reach of the old serpent's venom! He may hiss, but he can do no more. No wave can ever wash a poor sinner off from the Rock of Ages! No storm can drive a penitent out of the clefts of the Rock. Within the wounds of Jesus we are secure from all the rage of Satan! In our battles with Satan we need no other artillery but the atoning blood—it meets and conquers him at all points.

The other weapon is for use in spreading the Gospel and defeating the devil in his power over our fellow men. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and *by the word of their testimony*. Now, Brothers and Sisters, what is the testimony of the saints? It is their testimony concerning the blood of the Lamb! If ever we are to conquer Satan in the world, we must preach the atoning blood. Whenever the Doctrine of the Atonement has been obscured in the Church in any measure, to that extent the power of the Church has declined. But you shall find that where there is a clear declaration of Justification by Faith in Jesus Christ, then the Church comes forth in her Glory and bruises the dragon's head.

Dear Brothers, if you want to deliver souls from the power of Satan, you must preach the Sacrifice of Jesus and its power to remove sin. Does Satan cast the chains of drunkenness about men, or uncleanness, or self-righteousness? Preach the blood of Jesus as the only way of salvation! Let them see how sin was punished in Him and how ready the Lord is to forgive them, and they will arise and go unto their Father. Tell the sinner that God is able to put away his sin because Jesus died and, touched with repentance through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, you will find the sinner break loose from the dominion of the devil! If you find that same sinner trembling with despair, accused in his conscience, alarmed as at a great red dragon, you may cheer him by the old, old story of redeeming Grace and dying Love!

The blood of Jesus is the end of despair! There is no weapon like a testimony to the cleansing blood with which to kill despondency. Tell the sinner that there is no sin that man has done but what the blood can put it away! Go to the very gates of Hell with your testimony for remission by blood and you will find some welcome you upon the borders of destruction! Tell the thieves in prison and the criminals condemned to die—and the reprobates upon their deathbeds—that there is still life in a look at the

Crucified One! And if you do this, you will deliver them from the hardness of heart which says, “there is no hope.”

If Satan deceives sinners with false hopes and causes them to trust in priestcraft and Sacramentarianism, there is no way to overcome Satan in them but by the blood of Jesus. I do believe, Brothers, that if the Atonement of Christ had been properly preached in the Churches of England some years ago, we should not, now, be pestered with this revived popery. But there has been a great deal of mystification upon the doctrine of satisfaction for sin, a great deal of keeping back of the grand Doctrine of Vicarious Sacrifice and, therefore, as men need a Savior and a Sacrifice, if you do not present them the true one, they will go off to find a false one—and they find such a false one in the priestcraft of the Roman and Anglican churches!

Keep up the preaching of the one finished Sacrifice and the dragon must fly! As St. Patrick is said to have driven out all the venomous creatures from Ireland, so let Jesus Christ come and all the serpent’s seed will fly before Him—they cannot bear the great Truth of the atoning death of the Son of God! Lift up the Cross, young man, when you stand in the corners of the streets! Whatever you do not know, know the Doctrine of the Atonement! Whatever you cannot tell the people, tell them about Jesus Christ who hung upon the tree for sinners! Make Him the main theme of all your conversation. If you write tracts, if you cannot explain the apocalypse, and few of us can, explain Calvary! Dwell much upon Golgotha and Gethsemane, “for I, if I am lifted up,” says Christ, “will draw all men unto Me.”

Keep to the Cross, this is the main attraction! This is the Tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations! This is the central sun of the Gospel and its light will scatter the darkness, but nothing else will do it. Israel never came out of Egypt until the blood of the Lamb was sprinkled on the lintel and the two side posts of the houses—they overcame by the blood of the Lamb! The world of redeemed sinners will never be converted till we bring forth that grandest of all miracles, the Paschal Lamb and the blood by faith sprinkled on the door! Let us always proclaim salvation by the dying Lamb and shake the power of Satan to its foundations!

III. I must close with this last remark, that while they all fought with the same weapons **THEY ALL FOUGHT WITH THE SAME SPIRIT**, for the text says, “they loved not their lives unto the death.” My Brothers and Sisters, what does this mean? I wish we could reach to it and interpret it by our lives. The expression indicates *dauntless courage*. They were never afraid of the doctrine of a bleeding Savior, nor ashamed to cry, “Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.” Let us never be ashamed of our hope!

There is such a straining, in these days, after learned preaching. Such love of word-spinning and theory-inventing. But let *us* be fools for Christ’s sake and stick to the old Gospel, having no banner for our war but the bronze serpent, lifted high, even Jesus Christ and Him Crucified! Let us never yield to sneers or ridicule. Some of us have been styled the echo of the Puritans—yes, the honorable title of, “*Ultimus Puritanorum*”—the last of the Puritans, has been assigned to us. It is well, we need no higher de-

gree, for the old theology is very dear to us! We nail our colors to the mast. The atoning blood is the very life, soul and core of our ministry, and shall be so as long as we live!

These Brethren, in addition to dauntless courage, had *unswerving fidelity*. They “loved not their lives unto the death.” They thought it better to die than to deny the faith! They could not be tempted, or led aside, by bribes and offers of emoluments. And when life, itself was put into the scale, they did not hesitate—they stuck by the Cross. Brothers and Sisters, I want you *all* to do this, to have the courage to stick to your convictions about Christ and, then, the fidelity to stand forth in evil times. More than that, they were *perfect in their consecration*. “They loved not their lives unto the death.” They gave themselves up, body, soul and spirit, to the cause of which the precious blood is the symbol—and that consecration led them to perfect self-sacrifice.

No Christian of the true type counts anything to be his own. He who really knows the power of the blood of Jesus says, “I am not my own. I am bought with a price.” And to him, to live or die, to be poor or rich, to be sick or in health, to be in honor or in shame is not a matter of choice—he is his Master’s own and has given himself up unreservedly, loving not his life even to the death. I think that this is the spirit in which to preach Christ’s Gospel. Brothers, we shall never see the Gospel come to the front so as to conquer the dragon till we bring it there in this spirit!

When God shall raise up among us men and women who live only to prove the power of the blood of Jesus Christ, and live for nothing else—when He shall raise up those who tell out the Savior’s name and show, *in their lives*, what that blood has done for them and are ready to die to glorify their Lord—then will come the times in which the song of victory shall be heard! Then shall the travailing woman have her reward! And then shall the dragon be covered with everlasting shame! May God bless you this morning by giving you to know the power of the blood for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—
Isaiah 51:9-16; Revelation 12.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—
852, 630, 578; AND “HOLD THE FORT.”**

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THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB, THE CONQUERING WEAPON NO. 2043

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 9, 1888,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. And they loved not their lives unto the death.”
Revelation 12:11.***

WHEREVER evil appears, it is to be fought with by the children of God in the name of Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit. When evil appeared in an angel, straightway there was war in Heaven. Evil in mortal men is to be strived against by all regenerate men. If sin comes to us in the form of an angel of light we must still war with it. If it comes with all manner of deceivableness of unrighteousness we must not parley for a single moment but begin the battle at once—if we belong to the armies of the Lord. Evil is at its very worst in Satan himself—with him we fight. He is no mean adversary. The evil spirits which are under his control are, any one of them, terrible foes. But when Satan himself personally attacks a Christian, any of us will be hard put to it.

When this dragon blocks our road, we shall need heavenly aid to force our passage. A pitched battle with Apollyon may not often occur. But when it does you will know it painfully—you will record it in your diary as one of the darkest days you have ever lived. And you will eternally praise your God when you overcome him. But even if Satan were ten times stronger and more crafty than he is, we are bound to wrestle with him—we cannot for a moment hesitate, or offer him terms. Evil in its highest, strongest and proudest form is to be assailed by the soldier of the Cross and nothing must end the war but complete victory.

Satan is the enemy, the enemy of enemies. That prayer of our Lord's, which we usually render, “Deliver us from evil,” has the special significance of “Deliver us from the Evil One,” because Satan is the chief embodiment of evil and in him evil is intensified and has come to its highest strength. That man had need have Omnipotence with him who hopes to overcome the enemy of God and man. He would destroy all godly ones if he could. And though he cannot, such is his inveterate hate that he worries those whom he cannot devour with a malicious eagerness.

In this chapter the devil is called the “great red dragon.” He is great in capacity, intelligence, energy and experience. Whether or not he was the chief of all angels before he fell I do not know. Some have thought that he was such and that when he heard that a man was to sit upon the Throne of God, out of very jealousy he rebelled against the Most High. This also is conjecture. But we do know that he was and is an exceedingly great spirit as compared with us. He is a being great in evil—the Prince of Darkness—

having the power of death. He shows his malice against the saints by accusing the Brethren day and night before God. In the Prophets we have the record of Satan standing to accuse Joshua the servant of God. Satan also accused Job of serving God from mercenary motives—"Have not You made an hedge about him and all that he has?"

This ever active enemy desires to tempt as well as accuse—he would have us and sift us as wheat. In calling him the dragon, the Holy Spirit seems to hint at his mysterious power and character. To us a spirit such as he is must ever be a mystery in his being and working. Satan is a mysterious personage though he is not a mythical one. We can never doubt his existence if we have once come into conflict with him. Yet he is to us all the more real because so mysterious. If he were flesh and blood it would be far easier to contend with him. But to fight with this spiritual wickedness in high places is a terrible task. As a dragon he is full of cunning and ferocity.

In him, force is allied with craft. And if he cannot achieve his purpose at once by power, he waits his time. He deludes, he deceives. In fact, he is said to deceive the whole world. What a power of deception must reside in him, when under his influence the third part of the stars of Heaven are made to fall and myriads of men in all ages have worshipped demons and idols! He has steeped the minds of men in delusion so that they cannot see that they should worship none but God, their Maker. He is styled "the old serpent." And this reminds us how practiced he is in every evil art.

He was a liar from the beginning, and the father of lies. After thousands of years of constant practice in deception he is much too cunning for us. If we think that we can match him by craft we are grievous fools for he knows vast more than the wisest of mortals. And if it once comes to a game of policies, he will certainly clear the board and sweep our tricks into the bag. To this cunning he adds great speed so that he is quick to assail at any moment, darting down upon us like a hawk upon a poor chick. He is *not* everywhere present. But it is hard to say where he is not.

He cannot be omnipresent—but yet by that majestic craft of his—he so manages his armies of fallen ones that, like a great general, he superintends the whole field of battle and seems present at every point. No door can shut him out, no height of piety can rise beyond his reach. He meets us in all our weaknesses and assails us from every point of the compass. He comes upon us unaware and gives us wounds which are not easily healed.

But yet, dear Friends, powerful as this infernal spirit certainly must be, his power is defeated when we are resolved never to be at peace with him. We must never dream of terms or truce with evil. To suppose that we can let him alone and all will be well is a deadly error. We must fight or perish—evil will slay us if we do not slay it. Our only safety will lie in a determined, vigorous opposition to sin, whatever shape it assumes, whatever it may threaten, whatever it may promise. The Holy Spirit, alone, can maintain in us this enmity to sin.

According to the text it is said of the saints, "They overcame him." We are never to rest until it is said of us also, "They overcame him." He is a

foeman worthy of your steel. Do you refuse the conflict? Do you think of turning back? You have no armor for your back. To cease to fight is to be overcome. You have your choice between the two—either to gird up the loins of your minds for a life-long resistance—or else to be Satan’s slave forever. I pray God that you may awake, arise, and give battle to the foe. Resolve once and for all that by the Grace of God you will be numbered with those who overcome the archenemy.

Our text brings before us a very important subject for consideration. What is the conquering weapon? With what sword did they fight who have overcome the great red dragon? Listen! “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.” Secondly, how do we use that weapon? We do as they did who overcame “by the word of their testimony. And they loved not their lives unto the death.”

I. First, WHAT IS THIS CONQUERING WEAPON? They overcame him by “the blood of the Lamb.”

The blood of the Lamb signifies, first, the death of the Son of God. The sufferings of Jesus Christ might be set forth by some other figure but His death on the Cross requires the mention of blood. Our Lord was not only bruised and smitten but He was put to death. His heart’s blood was made to flow. He of whom we speak was God over all, blessed forever. But He condescended to take our manhood into union with His Godhead in a mysterious manner. He was born at Bethlehem a babe. He grew as a child, He ripened into manhood and lived here among us, eating and drinking, suffering and rejoicing, sleeping and laboring as men do. He died in very deed and was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

That death was the grand fact which is set forth by the words “the blood of the Lamb.” We are to view Jesus as the Lamb of God’s Passover—not merely separated from others, dedicated to be Israel’s memorial and consecrated to Divine service but as the Lamb slain. Remember that Christ viewed as living and not as having died, is not a saving Christ. He Himself says, “I am He that lives and was dead.” The moderns cry, “Why not preach more about His life and less about His death?” I reply, Preach His life as much as you will but never apart from His death. For it is by His blood that we are redeemed.

“We preach Christ.” Complete the sentence—“We preach Christ crucified,” says the Apostle. Ah, yes, there is the point. It is the *death* of the Son of God which is the conquering weapon. Had He not poured forth His soul unto death, even to the death of the Cross—had He not been numbered with the transgressors and put to a death of shame—we should have had no weapon with which to overcome the dragon prince. By “the blood of the Lamb,” we understand the death of the Son of God. Hear it, O men! Because you have sinned, Jesus dies that you may be cleared from your sin. “He His own Self bare our sins in His own body on the tree” and died that He might redeem us from all unrighteousness.

The point is His death and, paradoxically, this death is the vital point of the Gospel. The death of Christ is the death of sin and the defeat of Satan and hence it is the life of our hope and the assurance of His victory. Be-

cause He poured out His soul unto death, He divides the spoil with the strong.

Next, by “the blood of the Lamb” we understand our Lord’s death as a substitutionary sacrifice. Let us be very clear here. It is not said that they overcame the archenemy by the blood of Jesus, or the blood of Christ, but by the blood of the Lamb. And the words are expressly chosen because, under the figure of a lamb, we have set before us a *sacrifice*. The blood of Jesus Christ, shed because of His courage for the truth, or out of pure philanthropy, or out of self-denial conveys no special Gospel to men and has no peculiar power about it. Truly it is an example worthy to beget martyrs. But it is not the way of salvation for guilty men.

If you proclaim the death of the Son of God but do not show that He died the Just for the unjust to bring us to God, you have not preached the blood of the Lamb. You must make it known that “the chastisement of our peace was upon Him,” and that “the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all,” or you have not declared the meaning of the blood of the Lamb. There is no overcoming sin without a *substitutionary sacrifice*. The lamb under the old Law was brought by the offender to make atonement for his offense and in his place it was slain.

This was the type of Christ taking the sinner’s place, bearing the sinner’s sin and suffering in the sinner’s place and thus vindicating the justice of God and making it possible for Him to be just and the Justifier of Him that believes. I understand this to be the conquering weapon—the death of the Son of God set forth as the propitiation for sin. Sin must be punished—it is punished in Christ’s death. Here is the hope of men.

Furthermore, I understand by the expression, “The blood of the Lamb,” that our Lord’s death was effective for the taking away of sin. When John the Baptist first pointed to Jesus, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.” Our Lord Jesus has actually taken away sin by His death. Beloved, we are sure that He had offered an acceptable and effectual propitiation when He said, “It is finished.” Either He did put away sin, or He did not. If He did not, how will it ever be put away? If He did, then are Believers clear. Altogether apart from anything that we do or are, our glorious Substitute took away our sin, as in the type, the scapegoat carried the sin of Israel into the wilderness.

In the case of all those for whom our Lord offered Himself as a substitutionary sacrifice, the justice of God finds no hindrance to its fullest flow—it is consistent with justice that God should bless the redeemed. Near nineteen hundred years ago Jesus paid the dreadful debt of all His elect and made a full atonement for the whole mass of the iniquities of them that shall believe in Him, thereby removing the whole tremendous load and casting it by one lift of His pierced hand into the depths of the sea. When Jesus died, an atonement was offered by Him and accepted by the Lord God so that before the high court of Heaven there was a distinct removal of sin from the whole body of which Christ is the Head.

In the fullness of time each redeemed one individually accepts for himself the great atonement by an act of personal faith but the atonement itself was made long before. I believe this to be one of the edges of the con-

quering weapon. We are to preach that the Son of God has come in the flesh and died for human sin and that in dying He did not only make it possible for God to forgive but He secured forgiveness for all who are in Him. He did not die to make men savable but to save them. He came not that sin might be put aside at some future time but to put it away then and there by the sacrifice of Himself. By His death He “finished transgressions, made an end of sin and brought in everlasting righteousness.”

Believers may know that when Jesus died they were delivered from the claims of Law and when He rose again their justification was secured. The blood of the Lamb is a real price which did effectually ransom His elect. The blood of the Lamb is a real cleansing which did really purge away sin. This we believe and declare. And by this sign we conquer. Christ crucified, Christ the Sacrifice for sin, Christ the effectual Redeemer of men—we will proclaim everywhere, and thus put to rout the powers of darkness.

II. I have shown you the sword. I now come, in the second place, to speak to the question, How DO WE USE IT? “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.”

When a man gets a sword, you cannot be quite certain how he will use it. A gentleman has purchased a very expensive sword with a golden hilt and an elaborate scabbard—he hangs it up in his hall and exhibits it to his friends. Occasionally he draws it out from the sheath and he says, “Feel how keen is the edge!” The precious blood of Jesus is not meant for us merely to admire and exhibit. We must not be content to talk about it and extol it and do nothing with it. But we are to use it in the great crusade against unholiness and unrighteousness, till it is said of us, “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.”

This precious blood is to be used for overcoming and consequently for holy warfare. We dishonor it if we do not use it to that end. Some, I fear, use the precious blood of Christ only as a quietus to their consciences. They say to themselves, “He made atonement for sin, therefore let me take my rest.” This is doing a grievous wrong to the great sacrifice. I grant you that the blood of Jesus does speak better things than that of Abel and that it sweetly cries, “Peace! Peace!” within the troubled conscience. But that is not all that it does. A man who wants the blood of Jesus for nothing but the mean and selfish reason, that after having been forgiven through it he may say, “Soul, take your ease, eat, drink and be merry—hear sermons, enjoy the hope of eternal felicity, and do nothing”—such a man blasphemes the precious blood and makes it an unholy thing.

We are to use the glorious mystery of atoning blood as our chief means of overcoming sin and Satan—its power is for holiness. See how the text puts it—“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb”—these saints used the doctrine of atonement not as a pillow to rest their weariness but as a *weapon* to subdue their sin. O my Brothers, to some of us, atonement by blood is our battle-ax and weapon of war by which we conquer in our struggle for purity and godliness—a struggle in which we have continued now these many years. By the atoning blood we withstand corruption within and temptation without. This is that weapon which nothing can resist.

Let me show you your battlefield. Our first place of conflict is in the heavenlies and the second is down below on earth. First, then, my Brothers and Sisters who believe in the blood of Jesus, have to do battle with Satan in the heavenlies. And there you must overcome him “by the blood of the Lamb.” “How?” you say. I will lead you into this subject. First, you are to regard Satan this day as being already literally and truly overcome through the death of the Lord Jesus. Satan is already a vanquished enemy. By faith grasp your Lord’s victory as your own since He triumphed in your nature and on your behalf.

The Lord Jesus Christ went up to Calvary and there fought with the Prince of Darkness, utterly defeated him and destroyed his power. He led captivity captive. He bruised the serpent’s head. The victory was the victory of all who are in Christ. He is the representative seed of the woman and you who are of that seed and are in Christ actually and experimentally, you then and there overcame the devil by the blood of the Lamb. Can you get a hold of this tog? Do you not know that you were circumcised in His circumcision, crucified on His Cross, buried with Him in Baptism and therein also risen with Him in His resurrection? He is your federal Head and you, being members of His body, did in Him what He did.

Come, my Soul, you have conquered Satan by your Lord’s victory. Will you not be brave enough to fight a vanquished foe and trample down the enemy whom your Lord has already thrust down? You need not be afraid, but say, “Thanks be to God which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” We have overcome sin, death and Hell in the Person and work of our great Lord. And we should be greatly encouraged by that which has been already worked in our name. Already we are more than conquerors through Him that has loved us. If Jesus had not overcome the enemy, certainly we never should have done so. But His personal triumph has secured ours.

By faith we rise into the conquering place this day. In the heavenlies we triumph, as also in every place. We rejoice in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Michael of the angels, the Redeemer of men. For by Him we see Satan cast out and all the powers of evil hurled from their places of power and eminence.

This day I would have you overcome Satan in the heavenlies in another sense—you must overcome him as the Accuser. At times you hear in your heart a voice arousing memory and startling conscience. A voice which seems in Heaven to be a remembrance of your guilt. Hark to that deep, croaking voice, boding evil! Satan is urging before the Throne of Justice all your former sins. Can you hear him? He begins with your childish faults and your youthful follies. Truly a black memory. He does not let one of your wickednesses drop out. Things which you had forgotten he cunningly revives. He knows your secret sins, for he had a hand in most of them.

He knows the resistance which you offered to the Gospel and the way in which you stifled conscience. He knows the sins of darkness, the sins of the bedchamber, the crimes of the inner chambers of imagery. Since you have been a Christian he has marked your wickedness and asked, in

fierce sarcastic tones, "Is this a child of God? Is this an heir of Heaven?" He hopes to convict us of hypocrisy or of apostasy.

The foul fiend reveals the wanderings of our hearts, the deadness of our desires in prayer, the filthy thoughts that dropped into our minds when we have been at worship. Alas, we have to confess that we have even tolerated doubts as to eternal verities and suspicions of the love and faithfulness of God! When the Accuser is about his evil business he does not have to look far for matter of accusation, nor for facts to support it. Do these accusations stagger you? Do you cry, "My God, how can I face You? For all this is true and the iniquities now brought to my remembrance are such as I cannot deny. I have violated Your Law in a thousand ways and I cannot justify myself."

Now is your opportunity for overcoming through the blood of the Lamb. When the Accuser has said his say and aggravated all your transgressions, be not ashamed to step forward and say, "But I have an Advocate as well as an Accuser. O Jesus, my Savior, speak for me!" When He speaks, what does He plead but His own blood? "For all these sins I have made atonement," says He, "all these iniquities were laid on Me in the day of the Lord's anger and I have taken them away." Brethren, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's dear Son, cleans us from all sin. Jesus has borne the penalty due to us—He has discharged for us upon the Cross all our liabilities to the justice of God and we are free forever, because our Surety suffered in our place.

Where is the Accuser now? That dragon voice is silenced by the blood of the Lamb. Nothing else can ever silence the Accuser's cruel voice but the voice of the blood which tells of the infinite God accepting, in our behalf, the sacrifice which He Himself supplied. Justice decrees that the sinful shall be clear, because the accepted Substitute has borne his sin in His own body on the tree. Come, Brother or Sister, the next time you have to do with Satan as an accuser in the heavenly places, take care that you defend yourself with no weapon but the Atonement. All comfort drawn from inward feelings or outward works will fall short.

The bleeding wounds of Jesus will plead with full and overwhelming argument and answer all. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us." Who, then, shall accuse the child of God? *Every* accuser shall be overcome by the invincible argument of the blood of the Lamb.

Still further, the Believer will have need to overcome the enemy in the heavenly places in reference to access to God. It may happen that when we are most intent upon communing with God, the Adversary hinders us. Our heart and our flesh cry out for God, the living God. But from one cause or another we are unable to draw near unto the Throne. The heart is heavy, sin is rampant, care is harassing and Satanic insinuation is busy. You seem shut out from God and the Enemy triumphs over you. You feel very near the world and very near the flesh and very near the devil—you mourn your miserable distance from God. You are like a child

who cannot reach his father's door because a black dog barks at him from the door.

What is the way of access? If the foul Fiend will not move out of the way, can we force our passage? By what weapon can we drive away the Adversary so as to come to God? Is it not written that we are made near by the blood? Is there not a new and living way consecrated for us? Have we not boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus? We are sure of God's love when we see that Christ died for us. We are sure of God's favor when we see how that Atonement has removed our transgressions far from us. We perceive our liberty to come to the Father and therefore we each one say—

***“I will approach You—I will force
My way through obstacles to You;
To You for strength will have recourse,
To You for consolation flee!”***

Pleading the propitiation made by the blood of the Lamb, we dare draw near to God. Behold, the evil spirit makes way before us. The sacred name of Jesus is one before which he flees. This will drive away his blasphemous suggestions and foul insinuations better than anything that you can invent. The dog of Hell knows the dread name which makes him lie down—we must confront him with the authority and especially with the Atonement of the Lamb of God. He will rage and rave all the more if we send Moses to him—for he derives his power from our breaches of the Law and we cannot silence him unless we bring to him the great Lord who has kept the Law, and made it honorable.

We next must overcome the enemy in prayer. Alas, we cannot always pray as we would! Do you ever feel, when you are in prayer, as if something choked your utterance—and, what is worse—deadened your heart? Instead of having wings as of an eagle to mount to Heaven, a secret evil clips your wings and you cannot rise. You say within yourself, “I have no faith and I cannot expect to succeed with God without faith. I seem to have no love. If I have any, my heart lies asleep and I cannot stir myself to plead with God. Oh, that I could come out of my closet, saying, ‘Vici! Vici!’—‘I have overcome! I have overcome!’ But, alas, instead I groan in vain and come away unrelieved. I have been half dead, cold and I cannot hope that I have prevailed with God in prayer.”

Whenever you are in this condition fly to the blood of the Lamb as your chief remedy. When you plead this master argument you will arouse yourself and you will prevail with God. You will feel rest in pleading it and a sweet assurance of success at the Mercy Seat. Try the method at once. This is the way in which you should use this plea. Say, “My God, I am utterly unworthy and I admit it. But, I beseech You, hear me for the honor of Your dear Son. By His agony and bloody sweat, by His Cross and passion, by His precious death and burial, I beseech You hear me! O Lord, let the blood of Your Son prevail with You! Can You put aside His groans, His tears, His death, when they speak on my behalf?”

If you can thus come to pleading terms with God upon this ground, you must and will prevail. Jesus must be heard in Heaven. The voice of His

blood is eloquent with God. If you plead the atoning sacrifice, you must overcome through the blood of the Lamb.

Thus have I spoken of overcoming in the heavenlies. But I shall have to show you how you must contend against the Evil One in a lower sphere, even on this earth. You must first overcome in the heavenly places before the Throne. And when you have been thus triumphant with God in prayer, you will have Divine Grace to go forth to service and to defeat evil among your fellow men. How often have I personally found that the battle must first be fought above! We must overcome in order to service. Many a score of times of late I should not have ventured into this pulpit had it not been for power at the Mercy Seat. Those who know the burden of the Lord are often bowed down and would not be able to bear up at all were it not for having in secret battled with their enemy and won the day.

I have been bowed down before the Lord and in His Presence I have pleaded the precious blood as the reason for obtaining help and the help has been given. Faith, having once made sure that Jesus is hers, helps herself out of the treasury of God to all that she needs. Satan would deny her but in the power of the blood she takes possession of Covenant blessings. You say to yourself, "I am weak but in the Lord, my God, there is power—I take it to myself. I am hard and cold but here is tenderness and warmth and I appropriate it. It pleased the Father that in Jesus should all fullness dwell and by virtue of His precious blood, I take out of that fullness what I need and then with help thus obtained I meet the enemy and overcome him."

Satan would hinder our getting supplies of Divine Grace wherewith to overcome him. But with the blood mark on our foot we can go anywhere. With the blood mark on our hand we dare take anything. Having access with confidence, we also take with freedom whatsoever we need and thus we are provided against all necessities and armed against all assaults through the atoning sacrifice. This is the fountain of supply and the shield of security—this, indeed, is the channel through which we receive strength for victory.

When we really feel the power of the precious blood of Christ we overcome the great enemy by laying hold upon the all-sufficiency of God. Thus, being victorious in the heavenlies, we come down to the pulpit or to the Sunday school class made strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Having overcome Satan at the Throne of Grace, we see him like lightning fall from Heaven even before our feeble instrumentality. We speak and God speaks with us. We long for souls and God's great heart is yearning with us. We entreat men to come and the Lord also pleads with them to come so that they no longer resist. Spiritual power of a holy kind rests upon us to overcome the spiritual power of an evil kind which is exerted by Satan, the world and the flesh.

The Lord scatters the power of the enemy and breaks the spell which holds men captive. Through the blood of the Lamb we become masters of the situation and the weakest among us is able to work great wonders. Coming forth to the service of God in the power of our victory in Heaven

gained by pleading the blood of the Lamb we march on conquering and to conquer and no power of the enemy is able to stand against us.

It is time that I now showed you how this same fight is carried on on earth. Among men in these lower places of conflict saints overcome through the blood of the Lamb by their testimony to that blood. Every Believer is to bear witness to the atoning sacrifice and its power to save. He is to confirm the doctrine. He is to emphasize it by earnest faith in it. And he is to support it and prove it by his experience of the effect of it. You cannot all speak from the pulpit but you can all speak for Jesus as opportunity is given you. Our main business is to bear witness with the blood in the power of the Spirit. To this point we can all testify. You cannot go into all manner of deep doctrines or curious points but you can tell to all those round about you that "There is life in a look at the Crucified One."

You can bear witness to the power of the blood of Jesus in your own soul. If you do this you will overcome men in many ways. First, you will arouse them out of apathy. This age is more indifferent to true religion than almost any other. It is alive enough to error but to the old faith it turns a deaf ear. Yet I have noticed persons captivated by the Truth of Substitution who would not listen to anything else. If any discourse can hold men, as the ancient mariner detained the wedding guest, it is the story of Divine Love, incarnate in the Person of Jesus, bleeding and dying for guilty men. Try that story when attention flags. It has a fascination about it. The marvelous history of the Son of God, who loved His enemies and died for them—this will arrest them.

The history of the Holy One who stood in the sinners' place and was in consequence put to shame and agony and death—this will touch them. The sight of the bleeding Savior overcomes obduracy and carelessness. The doctrine of the blood of the Lamb prevents or scatters error. I do not think that by reasoning we often confute error to any practical purpose. We may confute it rhetorically and doctrinally but men still stick to it. But the doctrine of the precious blood—when it once gets into the heart—drives error out of it and sets up the throne of Truth. You cannot be clinging to an atoning sacrifice and still delight in modern heresies.

Those who deny inspiration are sure to get rid of the vicarious atonement because it will not allow their errors. Let us go on proclaiming the doctrine of the great sacrifice and this will kill the vipers of heresy. Let us uplift the Cross and never mind what other people say. Perhaps we have taken too much notice of them already. Let the dogs bark, it is their nature to. Go on preaching Christ crucified. God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ!

We also overcome men by softening rebellious hearts. Men stand out against the Law of God and defy the vengeance of God. But the love of God in Christ Jesus disarms them. The Holy Spirit causes men to yield through the softening influence of the Cross. A bleeding Savior makes men throw down their weapons of rebellion. "If He loves me so," they say, "I cannot do other than love Him in return." We overcome men's obduracy by the blood, shed for many for the remission of sins.

How wonderfully this same blood of the Lamb overcomes despair. Have you ever seen a man shut up in the iron cage? It has been my painful duty to talk with several such prisoners. I have seen the captive shake the iron bars but he could not break them, or break from them. He has implored us to set him free by some means. But we have been powerless. Glory be to God, the blood is a universal solvent and it has dissolved the iron bars of despair, until the poor captive conscience has been able to escape. How sweet for the desponding to sing—

***“I do believe, I will believe,
That Jesus died for me”!***

Believing that, all doubts and fears and despairs fly away and the man is at ease.

There is nothing, indeed, dear Friends, which the blood of the Lamb will not overcome. For see how it overcomes vice and every form of sin. The world is foul with evil like a stable which has long been the lair of filthy creatures. What can cleanse it? What but this matchless Stream? Satan makes sin seem pleasurable, but the Cross reveals its bitterness. If Jesus died because of sin, men begin to see that sin must be a murderous thing. Even when sin was but imputed to the Savior it made Him pour out His soul unto death. It must, then, be a hideous evil to those who are actually and personally guilty of it. If God’s rod made Christ sweat great drops of blood, what will His axe do when He executes the capital sentence upon impenitent men! Yes, we overcome the deadly sweetness and destructive pleasures of sin by the blood of the Lamb.

This blood overcomes the natural lethargy of men towards obedience. It stimulates them to holiness. If *anything* can make a man holy, it is a firm faith in the atoning sacrifice. When a man knows that Jesus died for him, he feels that he is not his own but bought with a price and therefore he must live unto Him that died for him and rose again. In the Atonement I see a motive equal to the greatest heroism—yes, a motive which will stimulate to perfect holiness. What manner of persons ought we to be for whom such a sacrifice has been presented! Now are we quickened into intensity of zeal and devotion. See, dear Brothers, how to use the blood of the Lamb in this lower sphere while contending with evil among men.

But I must close with this. It is not merely by testimony that we use this potent Truth. We must support that testimony by our zeal and energy. We need concentrated, consecrated energy. For it is written, “They loved not their lives unto the death.” We shall not overcome Satan if we are fine gentlemen, fond of ease and honor. As long as Christian people enjoy the world, the devil will suffer little at their hands. They that overcame the world in the old days were humble men and women, generally poor, always despised. They were never ashamed of Christ. They only lived to tell of His love and died by tens of thousands rather than cease to bear testimony to the blood of the Lamb.

They overcame by their heroism. Their intense devotion to the cause secured the victory. Their lives to them were as nothing when compared with the honor of their Lord. Brethren, if we are to win great victories we must have greater courage. Some of you hardly dare speak about the

blood of Christ in any but the most godly company. And scarcely there. You are very retiring. You love yourselves too much to get into trouble through your religion. Surely you cannot be of that noble band that love not their own lives unto the death!

Many dare not hold the old doctrine nowadays because they would be thought narrow and bigoted and this would be too galling. They call us old fools. It is very likely we are. But we are not ashamed to be fools for Christ's sake and the Truth's sake. We believe in the blood of the Lamb, despite the discoveries of science. We shall never give up the doctrine of atoning sacrifice to please modern culture. What little reputation we have is as dear to us as another man's character is to him. But we will cheerfully let it go in this struggle for the central Truth of Revelation. It will be sweet to be forgotten and lost sight of, or to be vilified and abused, if the old faith in the substitutionary sacrifice can be kept alive.

This much we are resolved on, we will be true to our convictions concerning the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus. For if we give up this, what is there left? God will not do anything by us if we are false to the Cross. He uses the men who spare not their reputations when these are called for in defense of the Truth of God. Oh to be at a white heat! Oh to flame with zeal for Jesus! O my Brothers and Sisters, hold to the old faith and say, "As for the respect of men, I can readily forfeit it. But as for the Truth of God, that I can never give up." This is the day for men to be men. For, alas, the most are soft creatures. Now we need backbones as well as heads. To believe the Truth concerning the Lamb of God and truly to believe it—this is the essential of an overcoming life. Oh for courage, constancy, fixedness, self-denial, willingness to be made nothing for Christ! God give us to be faithful witnesses to the blood of the Lamb in the midst of this ungodly world!

As for those of you who are not saved, does not this subject give you a hint? Your hope lies in the blood of the Lamb—

***"Come, guilty souls and flee away,
Like doves, to Jesus' wounds."***

The atoning sacrifice, which is our glory, is your salvation. Trust in Him whom God has set forth to be the propitiation for sin. Begin with this and you are saved. Every good and holy thing which goes with salvation will follow after. But now, this morning, I pray you accept a present salvation through the blood of the Lamb. "He that believes in Him has everlasting life."

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SATAN IN A RAGE

NO. 1502

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 2, 1879,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Woe to the inhibitors of the earth and of the sea! For the devil has
come down to you, having great wrath, because
he knows that he has but a short time.”
Revelation 12:12.***

THE great battle in the heavenlies has been fought—our glorious Michael has forever overthrown the dragon and cast him down. In the highest regions the great principle of evil has received a total defeat through the life and death of our Lord Jesus. Atonement has been made for human sin and the great quarrel between God and man has come to a happy end. Everlasting righteousness has been brought in and the peace of God reigns in Heaven. The conflict, from now on, rages here below and in these inferior regions the Prince of this world is warring mightily against the cause of God and truth. Much woe does this cause to the sons of men—woe which will never end till his power is altogether taken away.

Observe concerning our archenemy that he exercises forethought and care as to the evil enterprise to which he has set his hand. Whatever foolish men may do, the devil *thinks*. Others may be heedless and thoughtless, but he is anxious and full of consideration. He knows that his time, or, “opportunity” is short and he bides his time till its close, for he is no careless waster of time and forgetter of the end. He values his opportunity to maintain his kingdom, to distress the people of God and to dishonor the name of Christ. And since it is but a short one, he treats it as such. He infers the brevity of his time from the victory which Jesus has already gained over him.

In reading the chapter, we saw how the Man-Child who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron was caught up unto God and to His Throne. And then we saw the war in Heaven and how the devil was cast out into the earth and his angels were cast out with him. Then was a loud voice heard on high, “Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.” Right well may the old serpent conclude that he will be routed on earth since he has already sustained so dire a defeat that he has fallen from Heaven never to rise again!

Because the Man-Child, Christ Jesus, has met him in conflict, met him when as yet all his power was unbroken and has cast him down from his high places, he is persuaded and well he may be, that his reign is ended and that his opportunity is short. He feels about him, even now, a chain which is lengthened for a while, but which shall be drawn into shorter compass and fastened down, by-and-by, so that he shall roam the earth no longer, but lie as a captive in his prison. Fallen as this apostate spirit

has become, he has wit enough to look forward to the future! O that men were half as wise and would remember their latter end!

I beg you to notice this fact concerning the evil spirit, that you, too, may learn to acquire knowledge and then use it for practical purposes. Why should it always be that the powers of darkness appear to act more wisely than the children of light? For once I would point out a matter in which our worst foe may read us a lesson. Among men there are some who know a great many important matters, but act as if they did not know them—their knowledge is so much waste stored up in the lumber room of their minds and never brought into the workshop to be used for practical purposes. For instance, we know our mortality and yet live as if we never meant to die! There is great necessity for many of us to pray, “Lord, teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”

We must know that our time is short and that our life will soon come to an end and yet we fail to know it practically, for we are not as earnest as dying men ought to be. In this, the archenemy is not so foolish as we are, for he so well knows that his time is short that he remembers the fact and is actuated by it. Note well the direction in which this knowledge operates upon him. It excites his emotions. The deepest emotion of which he is capable is that of anger, for he knows not how to love. Wrath is his very soul, as hatred is his very life! He knows nothing of gentleness, nothing of affection and, therefore, the fact that his time is short moves within him his master passion and he has great wrath.

His evil nature is all on fire and his excitement is terrible! How much the shortness of our time ought to stir our hearts! With what ardency of love and fervency of zeal ought we to pass the days of our sojourning here! Knowing that the time of our departure is at hand and that the season in which we can serve God among the sons of men is very brief, we ought to be excited to flaming zeal and passionate love! We are not half stirred as we ought to be. Devils feel great hatred—how is it that we do not feel great love? Shall they be more eager to destroy than we are to save? Shall they be all alive and shall we be half dead?

Nor is the result of knowing that his time is short merely *emotional* on the part of the archenemy, for, in consequence of his great wrath he is moved to make earnest efforts. His energy is excited! He persecutes the woman whose Seed he dreads and he pours floods out of his mouth against her. There is nothing which Satan can do for his evil cause which he does not do. We may be half-hearted, but he *never* is. He is the very image of ceaseless industry and indefatigable earnestness. He will do all that can be done in the time of his permitted range. We may be sure that he will never lose a day.

My Brothers and Sisters, you and I, on the other hand, should be moved by the shortness of our opportunity to an equal energy of incessant industry, serving God continually because, “the night comes wherein no man can work.” My Friend, if you want your children brought to Christ, *speak to them*, for they will soon be without a father! If you wish your servants to be saved, labor for their conversion, for they will soon be without a mistress! If you desire your brother to be converted, speak to him, for your sisterly love will not much longer avail him. Minister, if you would

save your congregation by the Spirit of God, seek to do it at once, for your tongue will soon be silent. Teacher in the Sunday school, if you would have your class gathered into the Good Shepherd's fold, treasure up every Lord's Day opportunities, for in a short time the place which knows you, now, shall know you no more forever!

Thus, as of old the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen every man his plowshare and his axe and his shovel, so have I bid you quicken your diligence by the example of the Prince of Darkness. Shall we not learn wisdom from his subtlety and zeal from his fury? Shall he discern the signs of the times and, therefore, bestir himself, and shall we sleep? Shall evil compass sea and land and shall the children of God creep about in idleness? God forbid! By the great wrath of the old dragon, I beseech you, my Brothers and Sisters, awake out of your sleep!

The text tells us that the shortness of Satan's opportunity excites his wrath and we may gather a general rule from this one statement—namely, that *in proportion as the devil's time is shortened, his energy is increased* and we may take it as an assured fact that when he rages to the uttermost his opportunities are nearly over. He has great wrath, knowing that his time is short. I hope there will be something of instruction in this and of comfort for all those who are on the right side. May the Holy Spirit make it so!

In the world around us we must not consider that things go altogether amiss when the powers of evil become strong. We should be foolish if we wept in despair because the tares are ripening, for is not the wheat ripening, too? True, the dead become more and more corrupt, but if the living become more and more active, why should we lament? Because blasphemy grows loud; because infidels seek to undermine the foundation of the faith, or because the clouds of superstition grow more dense, we must not, therefore, conclude that we have fallen upon evil times, the like of which were never seen before. Not so! Oftentimes the development of evil is an indication that there is an equal or a greater development of good—and the climax of ill is frequently its end.

Do you not know that in the world of Nature the darkest time of the night is that which precedes the dawning of the day? May it not be the same in the spiritual and moral world? Does not the old proverb tell us, concerning the year, that "as the day lengthens the cold strengthens"? As the spring comes with lengthened days, the frosts often grow more sharp and hard. Is it not also plain to the simplest mind that the turning of the tide happens when the ebb has reached its utmost? Even so, when evil is at its height, it is nearest to its fall. Look for confirmation in the pages of history. When the tale of bricks was doubled, Moses came to deliver the oppressed! When Pharaoh would by no means let the people go and his yoke seemed riveted upon the neck of Israel, *then* the right arm of God was made bare and the Red Sea beheld His vengeance!

When despots grow most tyrannical, liberty's hour is coming. When the lie becomes exceedingly bold and wears a bronze forehead, then it is that the Truth of God confounds her. When Goliath stalks abroad and defies the armies of Israel, then is the stone already in the sling and the David hard at hand to lay the giant low. Do not, therefore, dread the advent of greater opposition, nor the apparent increase in strength of those opposi-

tions which already exist, for it has always been so in the history of events that the hour of the triumph of evil is the hour of its doom. When Belshazzar profanes the holy vessels, the handwriting blazes on the wall! And when Haman is at the king's banquet seeking the blood of the whole race of the Jews, the gallows are prepared for him upon his own roof! It shall be seen, even to the last hour of history, that the devil rages the more when his empire is the nearer to its end.

At the very last he shall go about to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle. They shall come up in great hosts, fierce for the conflict, to "the battle of the great day of God Almighty" at Armageddon. It shall then seem as if the light of Israel must be quenched and the Truth of God utterly extinguished. But in that dread hour the Lord shall triumph gloriously and He shall smite His adversaries to their final overthrow. Then shall the angel standing in the sun invite the vultures and all the fowls that fly in the midst of Heaven to gather to the grim feast of vengeance to eat the flesh of horsemen and men of might! Then, also, shall the devil that deceived them be cast into the Lake of Fire and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever. Then, also, shall the shout be heard, "Hallelujah, hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!" On the greatest possible scale, the greatness of the dragon's wrath is a sure prophecy of the end of his reign!

Now, what is true on a great scale is true in the smaller one. Missionaries in any country will generally find that the last onslaught of heathenism is the most ferocious. We shall find, whenever the Truth of God comes into contact with falsehood, that when error is driven to its last entrenchments, it fights for life, tooth and nail, with all its might! Its wrath is great because its time is short. In any village or town in England, or in any other country, whenever the opposition to the Gospel reaches its most outrageous pitch and men seem as if they would murder the preacher of the Word, you may reckon that the power of the opposition is almost over. After the mad fit, active persecution will cease and there will come a time of calm and, perhaps, of general reception of the Gospel.

When once the bad passions of mankind shall have boiled up, they will cool down again. Has not the Lord promised to restrain it? As the burning heat of the noontide sun lasts not forever, but gradually abates when it has reached the hottest point, so is it with the wrath of man which the foul fiend so often uses for his base purposes. The same truth will apply to every individual man. When God begins His great work in a sinner's heart, to lead him to Christ, it is no bad sign if the man feels more hatred to God than ever; more dislike to good things than before. Nor need we despair if he is driven into greater sin than ever. The ferocity of the temptation indicates the vigor with which Satan contends for any one of his black sheep.

Satan will not lose his subjects if he can help it and so he drives forth all his strength to keep them under his power. And he is especially vigilant and furious when the power of Grace is about to prevail for their salvation. I will not, however, dwell upon this point, because it is to be the subject of our discourse. The general fact is further illustrated in the cases of many Believers. There are times when, in the Believer's heart, the

battle rages horribly; when he hardly knows whether he is a child of God at all and is ready to give up all hope. He is so distracted he cannot pray or praise. He cannot read the Scriptures without horrible thoughts. It seems as if he must utterly perish—no space is given him in which to refresh his heart—the attacks are constant and violent. But such dreadful excitements are often followed by years of peace, quiet usefulness, holiness and communion with God!

Satan knows that God is about to set a limit to his vexations of the good man and so he rages extremely because his opportunity is short. It is very remarkable that some of the greatest of the saints have died in the midst of the most fearful conflicts for the same reason—the dog howled at them because he knew that they would soon be out of his reach. You would not suppose that Martin Luther, a man so brave and strong that he could defy the Pope and the devil, should, on his dying bed, be woefully put to it—and yet it was so—his worst struggle was the closing one. He was more than a conqueror, but the fight was severe, as if the devil, that old coward, waited until he had his antagonist down! Waited until he was weak and feeble and *then* leaped upon him to worry if he could not devour him. Truly Luther had worried the devil and we do not wonder at the malice of the fiend. Satan knew that Luther would soon be out of the reach of his fiery arrows forever and, therefore, he had to have a last shot at him.

It was precisely the case with John Knox who, being observed to sigh deeply, was asked the cause of it and replied, “I have formerly, during my frail life, sustained many tests and many assaults of Satan. But at present he has assailed me most fearfully and put forth all his strength to devour and make an end of me at once. Often before has he placed my sins before my eyes. Often he has tempted me to despair. He has often endeavored to ensnare me by the allurements of the world, but these weapons were broken by the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Now he has attacked me in another way—the cunning serpent has labored to persuade me that I have *merited* Heaven and eternal blessedness by the faithful discharge of my ministry.

“But, blessed be God who has enabled me to beat down and quench this fiery dart by suggesting to me such passages of Scripture as these—‘What have you that you have not received?’ ‘By the Grace of God I am what I am: not I, but the Grace of God in me.’ Upon this, as one vanquished, he left me. And I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ, who has been pleased to give me the victory. And I am persuaded that the tempter shall not again attack me, but, within a short time, I shall, without any great pain of body or anguish of mind, exchange this mortal and miserable life for a blessed immortality through Jesus Christ.”

Do you wonder that the devil was eager to have another knock at one who had given so many knocks to his dominion? Do not, therefore, be at all surprised if Satan rages against you! Do not marvel if you should seem to be given into his power, but rather rejoice in this, that his great wrath is the token of the shortness of his time! He wages war with us all the more cruelly because he knows that he will ultimately be defeated! His degraded mind delights in petty malice—if he cannot destroy, he will disturb—if he cannot kill, he will wound. Subtle as he is, he acts right foolishly in pursuing a hopeless object. In his war against any one of the Seed

of the woman, he knows that he is doomed to defeat and yet he gnaws at the heel which breaks his head!

It is the doom of evil to persevere in its spite after it knows that it is all in vain—to be forever vanquished by the invincible Seed of the living God—and yet forever to return to the fray! He is forever rolling upward, a huge stone which returns upon him! This is a true picture of the devil vainly laboring to remove the Truth of God out of its place. His is, indeed, “labor in vain.”

I thought this morning that I would call attention to one particular instance which is seen in the soul that is coming to Christ, in whom Satan often has great wrath knowing that his time is short. My objective is to comfort those who are awakened and are seeking the Savior. If they are sorely beset, I long that they may find peace, rest and hope very speedily. When the poor man who was possessed with an evil spirit was being brought to Christ, we read that, “as he was a coming, the devil threw him down and tore him.” That is the way with the great enemy—when he is about to be cast out, his energy is more displayed than ever—that if possible he may destroy the soul before it has obtained peace with God. May the sacred Comforter help me while I try to speak encouragingly upon this subject.

I. Our first head shall be, How DOES SATAN KNOW WHEN HIS TIME IS SHORT IN A SOUL? He watches over all souls that are under his power with incessant maliciousness. He goes about the camp like a sentinel, spying out every man who is likely to be a deserter from his army. In some men’s hearts he dwells at ease, like a monarch in his pavilion—their minds are his favorite mansions—he goes in and out whenever he pleases and he makes himself wonderfully much at home. He counts the man’s nature to be his own inheritance and he works within him after his own evil pleasure.

Alas, the deceived man yields his members as instruments of unrighteousness and is willingly held in thralldom. In such a case all the man’s faculties are so many chambers for Satan to dwell in and his emotions are so many fires and forges for Satan to work with. But, by-and-by, if Divine Grace interposes, there comes a change and Satan, who has lived there 20, 30, 40, 50, 60 years, begins to think that he shall not be able to keep this residence of his much longer. He perceives that his time is short and, I suppose, he perceives it first by discovering that he is not quite so welcome as he used to be.

The man loved sin and found pleasure in it, but now sin is not so sweet as it was, its flavor is dull and insipid. The charms of vice are fading and its pleasures are growing empty, vain and void—and this is a token of a great change. Once, whenever a pilgrim sin came that way, the soul kept open house to entertain it with all hospitality, but now it is not half so eager. Even the home-dwelling habitual lusts do not yield so much content as before and neither is so much provision made for them. The black prince and his court are out of favor and this is an intimation that he must soon be gone. When sin loses its sweetness, Satan is losing his power. The adversary perceives that he must soon stretch his dragon wings when he sees that the heart is growing weary of him and is breaking away from his fascinations.

He grows surer of his speedy ejection when *he does not get the accommodation he used to have*. The man was once eager for sin. He went in the pursuit of vice, hunted after it and put himself in the way of temptation. Satan reigned securely, then, but now he begins to forsake the haunts where sin walks openly and he abandons the cups of excitement which inflame the soul. You find him going to a place of worship, listening to a sermon, whereas before he frequented the theater and enjoyed a loose song at a music hall. The devil does not like this change and takes it as a warning that he will soon have to give up the key. The man does not drink as once he did, nor swear as once he did. Nor does he yield himself up with readiness to every temptation. The fish is getting shy of the bait!

The awakened man has not decided for Christ, but he is no longer at ease in bondage, no longer the glad slave of iniquity. He is on the wrong road, but he does not run in it. On the contrary, he pauses, he heaves a sigh and wishes he could leave the evil road. He wishes he knew how to leap a hedge and get into the narrow way. Satan marks all this and he says to himself, "There is not the preparation made for me that there used to be. There is little readiness to run on my errands and therefore I perceive that my time is short."

He is still more convinced of the shortness of his possession of a man's heart *when he hears a hand, whose power he has felt, knocking at that heart's door*. He knows the kind of knock it is—a gentle, but an irresistible knocking upon the heart. Continual, perpetual, persevering—the knock of One who means to enter! The knock as of one that has a hole in his hand. He knocks not as one whose power lies in a blow, but as one whose tears and love are his battery of attack. He has an energy of compassion, an irresistibility of gentle love and as Satan hears the knock and perceives that the tenant of the house hears it, too, and is half inclined to open the door, he is afraid. When the heart relents at the sound of the Gospel summons, he trembles more. If the knocking still continues, waking up the tenant in the dead of night, a sound heard amid the noise of traffic and above the laughter of fools, he says, "My time is short."

He knows the hand, which broke his head of old, and its knocking is ominous to him. He knows that in the gentleness of Jesus there is an irresistible energy which must and will prevail and he, therefore, counts that his possession of the tenement is precarious when the Gospel is felt upon the heart. Between the knocks he hears a voice that says, "Open to Me! Open to Me, for My head is wet with dew and My locks with the drops of the night!" And Satan knows that this pleading Voice bodes the downfall of his power.

Another indication to the enemy that his time is short is *when he knows that the tenant of the house steals away, sometimes, to court and asks for a guarantee of ejection against him*. You know what I mean—when the man feels that he cannot, himself, get rid of sin and cannot, in his own strength, conquer Satan and, therefore, cries, "O God help me! O God, for Christ's sake, drive out the old dragon from my soul, I beseech You." This is asking for a guarantee of ejection! This is going to the court of Heaven and pleading with the great King to issue a summons and send His officer to throw out the intruder, that he may no longer pollute the spirit.

“Ah,” says the Evil One, “this is not the place for me much longer. Behold he prays!” More fierce than the flames of Hell to Satan are the prayers of convicted sinners! When they pray, he must be gone. He must cry “boot and saddle” when men sound the trumpet of prayer! There is no tarrying in the camp any longer when the advance guard of prayer has come to take possession! One thing more always makes Satan know that his time is short and that is *when the Holy Spirit’s power is evidently at work within the mind*. Light has come in and the sinner sees and knows what he was ignorant of before. Satan hates the light as much as he loves darkness and, like an owl in the daylight, he feels that he is out of place.

Life comes in, too, by the Holy Spirit. The man *feels*! He becomes sensitive! He becomes penitent! And Satan, who loves death and always abides among the tombs, is bound to flee before spiritual life! The Holy Spirit is beginning to work upon the man very graciously and Satan knows every throb of the Spirit’s power, for it is the death of his power and so he says, “I will go to the place from where I came out, for this house trembles as if it were shaken with earthquakes and affords me no rest.” Joyful tidings for a heart long molested by this fierce fiend! Away, you enemy, your destruction shall soon come to a perpetual end!

II. This brings me, secondly, to notice that, inasmuch as the shortness of his tenure excites the rage of Satan, we must next observe HOW HE DISPLAYS HIS GREAT WRATH. His fury rages differently in different persons. On some he displays his great wrath by stirring up outward persecution. The man is not a Christian yet. He is not actually converted yet, but Satan is so afraid that he will be saved that he sets all his dogs upon him. The poor soul goes into the workshop and though he would give his eyes if he could say, “I am a Christian,” he cannot quite say so—and yet his workmates begin to pounce upon him as much as if he were, in very deed, one of the hated followers of Jesus!

They scoff at him because he is serious and sober; because he is beginning to think and to be decent; because he begins to listen to the Gospel and to care for the best things. Before the Man-Child was born, the dragon was longing to devour Him! Before the man gets to be a Christian, the Prince of the power of the air labors, if possible, to destroy him. The devil will lose nothing through being behind. He begins as soon as ever Grace begins!

Now, if the Grace of God is not in the awakened man and his reformation is only a spasm of remorse, it is very likely that he will be driven back from all attendance upon the means of Grace by the ribald remarks of the ungodly. But if the Lord Jesus Christ has really been knocking at his door and the Spirit of God has begun to work, this opposition will not answer its purpose. The Lord will find wings for this poor soul, that he may flee away from the trial which, as yet, he is not able to bear. I have sometimes known such opposition even tend to *undo* Satan’s work and answer quite the opposite purpose.

I know one who was much troubled about the Truth of Scripture and about the doctrines of the Gospel although he was a sincere searcher into the Truths of God. He commenced to attend this house of prayer and to listen to the Gospel, rather as an enquirer than as a Believer. As yet he could not say that he was a Christian, though he half wished he could.

Now, it came to pass that the opposition which he immediately received from the world strengthened his faith in the Bible and became a sort of missing link between him and the Truth of God. The sneers of his friends acted in this way. He said to himself, "Why should they all attack me on the bare supposition of my being a Christian? If I had been a Muslim or a Jew, they would have regarded me with curiosity and left me alone. But inasmuch as they only *suspect* me of becoming a Christian, they are all down upon me with contempt and anger. Now (said he), why is this? Is not this a proof that I am right and that the Word of God is right, for did it not say that there should be enmity between the seed of the serpent and the Seed of the woman?"

The devil did not know what he was doing when he opposed that young man and made a Believer of him by that which was meant to drive him into unbelief! If the men of this world oppose the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ more fiercely than any other, surely it must be that there is something special in it! There must be something opposed to their sinful ways or to their proud hopes—something which is of God! That was the inference which my young friend drew from the treatment he received and that inference established him in the faith! Thus, you see, Satan often hopes to save his dominion when his time is short by vehement persecution against the awakened sinner.

Much worse, however, is his other method of showing his wrath, namely, by vomiting floods out of his mouth to drown, if possible, our newborn hope. When the hopeful hearer as yet has not really found peace and rest, it will sometimes happen that Satan will try him with doubts, blasphemies and temptations such as he never knew before. The tempted one has been amazed and has said to himself, "How is this? Can my desire after Christ be the work of God? I get worse and worse! I never felt so wicked as this till I began to seek a Savior." Yet this is no strange thing, fiery though the trial is. Satan will suggest all the doubts he can upon the Inspiration of Scripture, the existence of God, the Deity of Christ and everything else that is revealed till the poor heart that is earnestly longing for salvation will scarcely know whether there is anything true at all!

The man will be so tumbled up and down in his thoughts that he will hardly know whether he is on his head or his heels. "They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end." The more they read the Bible; the more they attend the means of Grace, the more are they tempted to be skeptical and atheistic! Doubts they never knew, before, will torment them even while they strive to be devout. The evil tenant has notice to quit and he makes up his mind to do all the damage within his power while he is yet within the doors. See how he breaks up precious Truths of God and dashes down the richest hopes—and all with the detestable design of venting his spite upon the poor soul!

At such time, also, Satan will often arouse all the worst passions of our nature and drive them into unknown riot. The awakened sinner will be astonished as he finds himself beset with temptations more base and foul than he has ever felt before! He will resist and strive against the assault, but it may be so violent as to stagger him. He can scarcely believe that the flesh is so utterly corrupt. The man who is anxiously seeking to go to Heaven seems, at such a time, as if he were dragged down by seven strong

demons to the eternal deeps of Hell! He feels as if he had never known sin before, nor been so completely beneath its power! The Satanic troopers sleep as a quiet garrison while the man is under the spell of sin, but when once the heart is likely to be captured by Immanuel's love, the infernal soldiery put on their worst manner and trample down all the thoughts and desires of the soul!

Satan may also attack the seeker in another form, with fierce accusations and judgments. He does not accuse some men, for he is quite sure of them and they are his very good friends. But when a man is likely to be lost to him, he alters his tone and threatens and condemns. He cries, "What, *you* saved? It is impossible! You know what you used to be. Think of your past life!" Then he rakes up a very Hell before the man's eyes. "You!" he says, "why even since you have pretended to be a little better and have begun to attend the means of Grace, you know you have looked back with a longing eye and hungered for your old pleasures! It is quite out of the question that you should be a servant of Christ! He will not have such a scarecrow as you in His house! The great Captain will never march at the head of a regiment which is disgraced by receiving such as you."

Bunyan describes Apollyon as standing across the road and swearing by his infernal den that the pilgrim should go no further or there he would spill his soul. Then he began to fling at him all manner of fiery darts and among them was this one, "You did faint at first setting out, when you were almost choked in the gulf of Despond. You were almost persuaded to go back at the sight of the Lions. You have already been false to your new Lord!" Think for a moment of the devil chiding us for sin! Oh, that the poor burdened soul could laugh at this hypocritical accuser, for he hates to be despised and yet he right well deserves it! Laugh at him, O virgin daughter of Zion, for this great wrath of his is because his time is short! Who is he that he should bring an accusation against us? Let him mind himself—he has enough to answer for! When he turns an accuser, it is enough to make the child of God laugh him to scorn. Yet it is not easy to laugh when you are in this predicament, for the heart is ready to break with anguish!

Once more. Satan at such times has been known to pour into the poor troubled mind floods of blasphemy. I do not remember, as a child, having heard blasphemy. Carefully brought up and kept out of harm's way, I think it could only have been once or twice that I ever heard profane language. And yet, when I was seeking the Lord, I distinctly remember the spot where the most hideous blasphemies that ever passed the human mind rushed through my mind! I clapped my hands to my mouth for fear I should utter one of them! They were none of my inventing, neither had I revived them from my memory—they were the immediate suggestions of Satan himself, who was determined, if possible, to drive me to despair!

Read the story of John Bunyan's five years of torture under this particular misery and you will see how Satan would say to him, "Sell Christ! Sell Christ! Give up Christ," and as he went about his daily business, he would have it ringing in his ears, "Sell Christ! Sell Christ!" When at last, in a moment of worry, he thought he said, "Let Him go if He will," then came the accusation, "Now it is all over with you! Jesus will have nothing to do

with you! You have given Him up! You are a Judas, you have sold your Lord!” Then when the poor man sought the Lord with tears and found peace, again, some other dreadful insinuation would dog his heels. John Bunyan was too precious a servant of the devil for him to lose him easily. And the enemy had, perhaps, some idea of what kind of servant of God the converted tinker would become—and what sort of dreams would charm the hearts of many generations—and so he would not let him go without summoning all the tribes of Hell to wreak their vengeance on him if they could not detain him in their service. Yet Bunyan escaped and so will others in like cases.

Oh, bond slave of the devil, may you have Grace to steal away to Jesus! Hasten away from Satan’s power at once, for otherwise he will, as long as he has *any* opportunity, manifest his great wrath towards you.

III. Thirdly and briefly, let us think HOW ARE WE TO MEET ALL THIS? How must Satan be dealt with while he is showing his great wrath because his power is short? I should say, first, if he is putting himself in this rage, let us get him out all the more quickly. If he would remain quiet, even then we ought to be anxious to be rid of his foul company. But if he shows this great rage, let us out with him straight away. In God’s name let the dragon be smitten if he must be raving! If there is any opportunity of getting him out, back door or front door, straight away do not let us loiter or linger even for a single hour—a devil raging, making us blaspheme and then accusing us—tempting us and betraying us, is such a dangerous occupant of a heart that he is not to be borne with! Out he must go and out at once. Better have a den of lions dwelling in our house than the devil within our heart.

Lord, turn him out at once by Your Grace. We decide, once and for all, to wage war with him! We will linger no longer. We dare not! We will procrastinate no more, it is more than our lives are worth. No, not tomorrow, but today out must the tyrant go! No, not after we leave this Tabernacle, but here, in this very pew, O Lord, drive the old dragon from his throne with all his hellish crew! That is the first advice I give you—let the enemy be cast out at once by Divine Grace. And the next thing is, inasmuch as we cannot get him out by our own unaided efforts, let us cry to the Strong for strength, who can drive out this Prince of the power of the air. There is life in a look at Jesus Christ and as soon as that life comes, away goes this Prince of Darkness as to his domination and reigning power!

Oh, Soul, there is nothing left for you but to look to Jesus Christ alone! Worried as you are and almost devoured, now is your time to put your trust in Jesus who is mighty to save! You know the text which speaks of the shepherds taking out of the lion’s mouth two legs and a piece of an ear? The sheep was almost devoured, but still the shepherd pulled out from between the lion’s jaws the last relics of his prey. And if you seem to be reduced to two legs and a piece of an ear, still our glorious Shepherd can pull you out from between the lion’s teeth and make you whole again, for He will not lose His sheep even at its last extremity!

What can *you* do against Satan? You would gladly be rid of him—what can you do? Do nothing but this—cry to his Master against him! Satan is mighty—set the Almighty One upon him! He accuses you—refer him to your Advocate! He brings your sin before you—throw the blood of Atonement

ment in his face! Here is a text that will drive him down to his den—"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." And, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." Have done with battling with the wily foe! Do not answer the old deceiver! If he tells you, you are a blasphemer, admit it! If he says you are utterly lost, admit it—and then cast yourself at Jesus' feet and HE will overcome your foe and set you free!

One more comfort for you and it is this—the more Satan rages, the more must your poor, troubled heart be encouraged to believe that he will soon be gone. I venture to say that nothing will make him go sooner than your full belief that he has to go. Courageous hope is a weapon which he dreads. Tell him he must soon be gone. He has been accusing you and pouring venom into your ears and making you believe that it is your own blasphemy, whereas it is not yours, but his. Say to him, "Ah, but you will be gone soon. You may rage, but you will have to be gone."

"I have full possession of you," he says, "soul and body, and I triumph over you." Say to him, "And would you triumph over me as you do if you did not know that you will soon be driven out?" "Ah," says he, "you will be lost, you will be lost." He howls at you as if ready to devour. Say to him, "If I was sure to be lost, you would not tell me so, you would sing sweet songs in my ears and lure me to destruction—you have to go, you know you have to." "Oh," says he, "it is impossible you should be saved! You will be damned. You will have the hottest place in Hell." "Yes," reply to him, "but who sent you to tell me that? You never spoke the truth yet! You are a liar from the beginning and you are only saying this because you have to go! You know you have to go."

Tell him so and it is not long before he will depart. Say, "Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; though I fall, yet shall I rise again." Tell him you know his Master. Tell him he may nibble at your heel, but you recollect one that broke his head. Point to his broken head he always tries to hide if he can. Tell him his crown is battered to pieces and tell him where that deed was done and by whose blessed hand! And as you tell him these things, he will shrink back and you shall find yourself alone with Jesus! Then will Jesus say to you, "Where is your accuser?" You will look around and the enemy will be gone. And then your blessed Master will say, "Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more."

The Lord grant us to get such a riddance of our archenemy and to get it this very moment for Christ's dear sake. Amen.

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HEAVENLY WORSHIP

NO. 110

**A SERMON DELIVERED SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 28, 1856,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

“And I looked and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Zion and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father’s name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from Heaven, as the voice of many waters and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voices of harpers harping with their harps. And they sung as it were a new song before the Throne and before the four beasts and the elders and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.”
Revelation 14:1-3.

THE scene of this marvelous and magnificent vision is laid upon Mount Zion by which we are to understand, not Mount Zion upon earth, but Mount Zion which is above, “Jerusalem, the mother of us all.” To the Hebrew mind, Mount Zion was a type of Heaven and very justly so. Among all the mountains of the earth, none was to be found so famous as Zion. It was there that Patriarch Abraham drew his knife to slay his son. It was there, too, in commemoration of that great triumph of faith, Solomon built a majestic Temple, “beautiful for situation and the joy of the whole earth.” That Mount Zion was the center of all the devotions of the Jews—

***“Up to her courts, with joys unknown,
The sacred tribes repaired.”***

Between the wings of the cherubim, Jehovah dwelt. On the one altar, there, all the sacrifices were offered to high Heaven. They loved Mount Zion and often did they sing, when they drew near to her, in their annual pilgrimages, “How amiable are Your tabernacles O Lord God of Hosts, my King and my God!” Zion is now desolate. She has been ravished by the enemy, she has been utterly destroyed—her veil has been torn asunder and the virgin daughter of Zion is now sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But nevertheless, to the Jewish mind it must always, in its ancient state, remain the best and sweetest type of Heaven. John, therefore, when he saw this sight, might have said, “I looked and, lo, a Lamb stood in Heaven and with Him an hundred and forty and four thousand having His Father’s name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from Heaven, as the voice of many waters and as the voice of a great thunder and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps. And they sung as it

were a new song before the Throne and before the four beasts and the elders and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.”

This morning I shall endeavor to show you, first of all, *the object of Heavenly worship*—the Lamb in the midst of the Throne. In the next place we shall look at *the worshippers, themselves*, and note their manner and their character. In the third place we shall listen to *hear their song*, for we may almost hear it. It is like “the noise of many waters and like great thunder.” And then we shall close by noting that it is a new song which they sing and by endeavoring to mention one or two reasons why it must necessarily be so.

I. In the first place, then, we wish to take a view of THE OBJECT OF HEAVENLY WORSHIP. The divine John was privileged to look within the gates of pearl. And on turning round to tell us what he saw—observe how he begins—he says not, “I saw streets of gold or walls of Jasper.” He says not, “I saw crowns, marked their luster and saw the wearers.” That he shall notice afterwards. But he begins by saying, “I looked and, lo, a Lamb!” This teaches us that the very first and chief object of attraction in the Heavenly state is “the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world.” Nothing else attracted the Apostle’s attention as much as the Person of that Divine Being, who is the Lord God, our most blessed Redeemer—“I looked and, lo, a Lamb!” Beloved, if we were allowed to look within the veil which parts us from the world of spirits, we should see, first of all, the Person of our Lord Jesus. If now we could go where the immortal spirits “day without night circle the Throne rejoicing,” we would see each of them with their faces turned in one direction. And if we would step up to one of the blessed spirits and ask, “O bright immortal, why are your eyes fixed? What is it that absorbs you and wraps you up in vision?” He, without deigning to give an answer, would simply point to the center of the sacred circle and lo, we would see a Lamb in the midst of the Throne! They have not yet ceased to admire His beauty and marvel at His wonders and adore His Person—

***“Amidst a thousand harps and songs,
Jesus, our God, exalted reigns.”***

He is the theme of song and the subject of observation of all the glorified spirits and of all the angels in Paradise! “I looked and, lo, a Lamb!”

Christian, here is joy for you! You have looked and you have seen the Lamb! Through tearful eyes you have seen the Lamb taking away your sins! Rejoice, then! In a little while, when your eyes shall have been wiped of tears, you will see the same Lamb exalted on His Throne. It is the joy of the heart to hold daily fellowship and communion with Jesus. You shall have the same joy in Heaven. “There shall you see Him as He is and you shall be like He is.” You shall enjoy the constant vision of His

Presence and you shall dwell with Him forever! “I looked and, lo, a Lamb!” Why, that Lamb is Heaven, itself, for as good Rutherford says, “Heaven and Christ are the same things. To be with Christ is to be in Heaven and to be in Heaven is to be with Christ.” And he very sweetly says in one of his letters, wrapped up in love to Christ—“Oh! my Lord Christ, if I could be in Heaven without You, it would be a Hell. And if I could be in Hell and still have You, it would be a Heaven to me, for You are all the Heaven I need.” It is true, is it not, Christian? Does not your soul say so?—

**“Not all the harps above
Could make a Heavenly place,
Should Christ His residence remove,
Or but conceal His face.”**

All you need to make you blessed, supremely blessed, is “to be with Christ, which is far better.”

And now observe *the figure under which Christ is represented in Heaven*. “I looked and, lo, a Lamb,” Now, you know Jesus, in Scripture, is often represented as a lion—He is so to His enemies—for He devours them and tears them to pieces. “Beware, you that forget God, lest He tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver.” But in Heaven He is in the midst of His friends and therefore He—

**“Looks like a lamb that has been slain,
And wears His priesthood still.”**

Why should Christ in Heaven choose to appear under the figure of a lamb and not in some other of His glorious Characters? We reply because it was as a lamb that Jesus fought and conquered and, therefore, as a lamb He appears in Heaven. I have read of certain military commanders, when they were conquerors, that on the anniversary of their victory they would never wear anything but the garment in which they fought. On that memorable day they say, “No, take away the robes. I will wear the garment which has been embroidered with the saber-cut and garnished with the shot that has riddled it. I will wear no other garb but that in which I fought and conquered.” It seems as if the same feeling possessed the breast of Christ. “As a Lamb,” He says, “I died and worsted Hell. As a Lamb I have redeemed My people and, therefore, as a Lamb I will appear in Paradise.”

But perhaps there is another reason. It is to encourage us to come to Him in prayer. Ah, Believer, we need not be afraid to come to Christ, for He is a Lamb! To a Lion-Christ we need fear to come—but the Lamb-Christ? Oh, little children, were you ever afraid of lambs? Oh, children of the living God, should you ever fail to tell your griefs and sorrows into the breast of One who is a Lamb? Ah, let us come boldly to the Throne of Heavenly Grace, seeing a Lamb sits upon it! One of the things which tend

very much to spoil our Prayer Meetings is the fact that our Brethren do not pray boldly. They would practice reverence, as truly they ought, but they should remember that the highest reverence is consistent with true familiarity! No man was more reverent than Luther. No man more fully carried out the passage, “He talked with his Maker as a man talks with his friend.” We may be as reverent as the angels and yet we may be as familiar as children in Christ Jesus! Now our friends, when they pray, very frequently say the same thing every time. They are Dissenters. They cannot bear the Prayer Book. They think that forms of prayer are bad, but they always use their own form of prayer notwithstanding, as much as if they were to say that the bishop’s form would not do but their own they must always use! But a form of prayer being wrong is as much wrong when I make it as when the bishop makes it! I am as much out of order in using what I compose continually and constantly, as I am when I am using one that has been composed for me! Perhaps far more so, as it is not likely to be one-half as good. If our friends, however, would lay aside the form into which they grow and break up the stereotyped plates with which they print their prayers so often, they might come boldly to the Throne of God and need never fear to do so! For He whom they address is represented in Heaven under the figure of a Lamb—to teach us to come close to Him and tell Him all our sins—believing that He will not disdain to hear them.

And you will further notice that *this Lamb is said to stand*. Standing is the posture of triumph. The Father said to Christ, “Sit You on My Throne, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.” It is done! They *are* His footstool and here He is said to stand erect, like a victor over all His enemies! Many a time the Savior knelt in prayer. Once He hung upon the Cross. But when the great scene of our text shall be fully worked out, He shall stand erect, as more than conqueror, through His own majestic might! “I looked and, lo, a Lamb *stood* on the Mount Zion.” Oh, if we could rend the veil—if now we were privileged to see within it—there is no sight would so enthrall us as the simple sight of the Lamb in the midst of the Throne! My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus, would it not be all the sight you would ever wish to see if you could once behold Him whom your soul loves? Would it not be a Heaven to you if it were carried out in your experience—“My eyes shall see Him and not another”? Would you need anything else to make you happy but continually to see Him? Can you not say with the poet—

***“Millions of years my wondering eyes
Shall over my Savior’s beauty rove,
And endless ages I’ll adore
The wonders of His love”?***

And if a single glimpse of Him on earth affords you profound delight, it must be, indeed, a very sea of bliss and an abyss of Paradise—without a bottom or a shore—to see Him as He is—to be lost in His splendors, as the stars are lost in the sunlight and to hold fellowship with Him, as did John the Beloved, when he leaned his head upon His bosom! And this shall be your lot, to see the Lamb in the midst of the Throne!

II. The second point is, THE WORSHIPPERS, WHO ARE THEY? Turn to the text and you will note, first of all, *their numbers*—“I looked and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Zion and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand.” This is a certain number representing an *uncertain*—I mean uncertain to *us*, though not uncertain to God! It is a vast number, representing that “multitude which no man can number,” who shall stand before the Throne of God. Now here is something not very pleasant to my friend, Bigot, yonder. Note the number of those who are to be saved. They are said to be a great number, even a “hundred forty and four thousand,” which is but a unit emblematic of the vast innumerable multitude who are to be gathered home. Why, my Friend, there are not so many as that belonging to your Church. You believe that none will be saved but those who hear your minister and believe your creed. I do not think you could find one hundred and forty-four thousand anywhere! You will have to enlarge your heart. I think you must take in a few more and not be so inclined to shut out the Lord’s people because you cannot agree with them! I abhor from my heart that continual whining of some men about their own little Church as the “remnant”—the “few that are to be saved.” They are always dwelling upon straight gates and narrow ways and upon what they conceive to be a Truth of God—that but few shall enter Heaven. Why, my Friends, I believe there will be more in Heaven than in Hell! If you ask me why I think so, I answer, because Christ, in everything, is to “have the pre-eminence.” I cannot conceive how He could have the pre-eminence if there are to be more in the dominions of Satan than in Paradise! Moreover, it is said there is to be a multitude that no man can number in Heaven. I have never read that there is to be a multitude that no man can number in Hell. But I rejoice to know that the souls of all infants, as soon as they die, speed their way to Paradise. Think what a multitude there is of them! And then there are the just and the redeemed of all nations and kindreds up till now. And there are better times coming, when the religion of Christ shall be universal. When He shall reign from pole to pole with illimitable sway! When kingdoms shall bow before Him and nations born in a day. And in the thousand years of the great millennial state there will be enough saved to make up all the deficiencies of the thousands of years that have gone before! Christ shall have the pre-eminence at last! His train shall be far larger than that

which shall attend the chariots of the grim monarch of Hell. Christ shall be Master everywhere and His praise sounded in every land! One hundred and forty-four thousand were observed—the types and representatives of a far larger number who are ultimately to be saved.

But notice, while the number is very large, *how very certain it is*. By turning over the leaves of your Bible to a previous Chapter of this book, you will see that at the 4th verse it is written that one hundred and forty-four thousand were *sealed*. And now we find there are one hundred and forty-four thousand *saved*. Not 143,999 or 144,001, but exactly the number that are sealed! Now my friends may not like what I am going to say, but if they do not like it, their quarrel is with God's Bible, not with me—there will be just as many in Heaven as are sealed by God—just as many as Christ purchased with His blood! All of them and no more and no less! There will be just as many there as were quickened to life by the Holy Spirit and were, “born-again, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man but of God.” “Ah,” some say, “there is that abominable Doctrine of Election!” Exactly so, if it is abominable! But you will never be able to cut it out of the Bible. You may hate it and gnash and grind your teeth against it, but, remember, we can trace the pedigree of this Doctrine, even apart from Scripture, to the time of the Apostles. Church of England ministers and members—you have no right to differ from me on the Doctrine of Election—if you are what you profess by your own Articles! You who love the old Puritans, you have no right to quarrel with me, for where will you find a Puritan who was not a strong Calvinist? You who love the fathers, you cannot differ from me! What say you of Augustine? Was he not, in his day, called a great and mighty teacher of Divine Grace? And I even turn to Roman Catholics and, with all the errors of their system, I remind them that even in their body have been found those who have held that Doctrine and, though long persecuted for it, have never been expelled from the church! I refer to the Jansenists, but, above all, I challenge every man who reads his Bible to say that that Doctrine is not there! What says the 9th Chapter of Romans? “The children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to *election* might stand, not of works, but of Him that calls. It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.” And then it goes on to say to the carping objector—“No but, O man, who are you that replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why have you made me thus? Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?” But enough on this subject.

One hundred and forty-four thousand, we say, is a certain number made to represent the certainty of the salvation of all God's elect people.

Now, some say that this Doctrine has a tendency to discourage men from coming to Christ. Well, you say so, but I have never seen it and, blessed be God, I have never proved it so! I have preached this Doctrine ever since I began to preach and I can say this—you shall not (and I am now become a fool in glorying)—you shall not find among those who have not preached the Doctrine, one who has been the instrument of turning more harlots, more drunks and more sinners of every class, from the error of their ways, than I have by the simple preaching of the Doctrine of Free Grace! And, while this has been so, I hold that no argument can be brought to prove that it has a tendency to discourage sinners, or bolster them up in sin. We hold, as the Bible says, that all the elect and those, only, shall be saved, but we hold that *all* who *repent* are elect, that *all* who *believe* are elect and that *all* who *go to Christ* are elect! So that if any of you have in your heart a desire after Heaven and after Christ—if you carry out that desire in sincere and earnest prayer and are born-again—you may as certainly conclude your election as you can conclude that you are alive! You must have been chosen of God before the foundation of the world, or you would never have done any of these things, seeing they are the fruits of Election.

But why should it keep anyone from going to Christ? “Because,” says one, “if I go to Christ I may not be elect.” No, Sir, if you go, you prove that you *are* elect! “But,” says another, “I am afraid to go, in case I should not be elect.” Say as an old woman once said, “If there were only three persons elected, I would try to be one of them and since He said, “He that believes shall be saved,” I would challenge God on His promise and try if He would break it.” No, come to Christ! And if you do so, beyond a doubt you are God’s elect from the foundation of the world and, therefore, this Grace has been given to you! And why should it discourage you? Suppose there are a number of sick folk here and a large hospital has been built. There is put up over the door, “All persons who come, shall be taken in.” At the same time, it is known that there is a person inside the hospital who is so wise that he knows all who will come and has written down the names of all who will come in a book, so that, when they come, those who open the doors will only say, “How marvelously wise our Master was to know the names of those who would come!” Is there anything dispiriting in that? You would go and you would have all the more confidence in that man’s wisdom because he was able to know, before they came, who would come! “Ah, but,” you say, “it was ordained that some should come.” Well, to give you another illustration. Suppose there is a rule that there always must be a thousand persons, or a very large number in the hospital. You say, “When I go, perhaps they will take me in and perhaps they will not.” “But,” says someone, “there is a rule that

there *must* be a thousand in—somehow or other they must make up that number of beds and have that number of patients in the hospital.” You say, “Then why should not I be among the thousand? And have not I the encouragement that whoever goes shall not be cast out? And have I not, again, the encouragement that if they will not go, they must be fetched in somehow or other? For the number must be made up—so it is determined and so it is decreed.” You would therefore have a double encouragement, instead of half a one, and you would go with confidence and say, “They must take me in because they say they will take all in that come. And on the other hand, they must take me in because they must have a certain number—that number is not made up and why should not I be one?” Oh, never doubt about Election! Believe in Christ and then rejoice in Election! Do not fret about it till you have believed in Christ!

“I looked and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Zion and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand.” And who were these people, “having His Father’s name written on their foreheads?” Not *Bs* for, “Baptists.” Not *Ws* for, “Wesleyans.” Not *Es*, for “Established Church.” They had their *Father’s* name and nobody else’s! What a deal of fuss is made on earth about our distinctions! We think such a deal about belonging to this denomination and the other. Why, if you were to go to Heaven’s gates and ask if they had any Baptists there, the angel would only look at you and not answer you. If you were to ask if they had any Wesleyans, or members of the Established Church, he would say, “Nothing of the sort.” But if you were to ask him whether they had any *Christians* there, “Yes,” he would say, “an abundance of them—they are all one now—all called by one name. The old brand has been obliterated and now they have not the name of this man or the other—they have the name of God, even their Father, stamped on their brow.” Learn, then, dear Friends, whatever the connection to which you belong, to be charitable to your Brothers and Sisters and kind to them, seeing that, after all, the name you now hold, here, will be forgotten in Heaven and only your Father’s name will be known there!

One more remark and we will turn from the worshippers to listen to their song. It is said of all these worshippers that they learned the song before they went there. At the end of the third verse it is said, “No man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth.” Brothers and Sisters, we must begin Heaven’s song here below or else we shall never sing it above! The choristers of Heaven have all had rehearsals upon earth before they sing in that orchestra. You think that, die when you may, you will go to Heaven without being prepared? No, Sir, Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people and unless you are “made meet to be partakers of the

inheritance of the saints in light,” you can never stand there among them! If you were in Heaven without a new heart and a right spirit, you would be glad enough to get out of it, for Heaven, unless a man is heavenly, would be worse than Hell! A man who is unrenewed and unregenerate going to Heaven would be miserable. There would be a song—he could not join in it. There would be a constant hallelujah—but he would not know a note. And besides, he would be in the Presence of the Almighty, even in the Presence of the God he hates and how could he be happy there? No, Sirs. You must learn the song of Paradise here, or else you can never sing it! You must learn to sing—

**“Jesus, I love Your charming name,
‘tis music to my ears.”**

You must learn to feel that “sweeter sounds than music knows, mingle in your Savior’s name,” or else you can never chant the hallelujahs of the blessed before the Throne of the great “I AM.” Remember that thought, whatever else you forget! Treasure it up in your memory and ask Grace of God that you may here be taught to sing the Heavenly song, that afterwards in the land of the hereafter, in the home of the beatified, you may continually chant the high praises of Him that loved you!

III. And now we come to the third and most interesting point, namely, THE LISTENING TO THEIR SONG. “I heard a voice from Heaven, as the voice of many waters and as the voice of a great thunder. And I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps” singing—how loud and yet how sweet!

First, then, singing *how loud!* It is said to be “like the voice of many waters.” Have you ever heard the sea roar and the fullness thereof? Have you ever walked by the seaside when the waves were singing and when every little pebble stone did turn chorister to make up music to the Lord God of Hosts? And have you ever in time of storm, beheld the sea, with its hundred hands, clapping them in gladsome adoration of the Most High? Have you ever heard the sea roar out its praise, when the winds were holding carnival—perhaps singing the dirge of mariners, wrecked far out on the stormy deep but far more likely exalting God with their hoarse voice and praising Him who makes a thousand fleets sweep over them in safety and writes His furrows on their own youthful brow? Have you ever heard the rumbling and booming of the ocean on the shore when it has been lashed into fury and has been driven upon the cliffs? If you have, you have a faint idea of the melody of Heaven. It was “as the voice of many waters.” But do not suppose that it is the whole of the idea! It is not the voice of *one* ocean but the voice of *many* that is needed to give you an idea of the melodies of Heaven! You are to suppose ocean piled upon ocean, sea upon sea—the Pacific piled upon the Atlantic, the Arctic upon that, the Antarctic still higher and so ocean upon ocean, all

lashed to fury and all sounding with a mighty voice the praise of God. Such is the singing of Heaven! Or if the illustration fails to strike, take another. We have mentioned, here, two or three times the mighty falls of Niagara. They can be heard at a tremendous distance, so awful is their sound. Now, suppose waterfalls dashing upon waterfalls, cataracts upon cataracts, Niagara upon Niagara, each of them sounding forth their mighty voices—and you have got some idea of the singing of Paradise. “I heard a voice like the voice of many waters.” Can you not hear it? Ah, if our ears were opened. we might almost catch the song. I have thought, sometimes, that the voice of the Aeolian harp, when it has swollen out grandly, was almost like an echo of the songs of those who sing before the Throne. On the summer eve when the wind has come in gentle zephyrs through the forest, you might almost think it was the floating of some stray notes that had lost their way among the harps of Heaven and come down to us, to give us some faint foretaste of that song which hymns out in mighty peals before the Throne of the Most High!

But why so loud? The answer is because there are so many there to sing! Nothing is more grand than the singing of multitudes. Many have been the persons who have told me that they could but weep when they heard you sing in this assembly, so mighty seemed the sound when all the people sang—

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow.”

And, indeed, there is something very grand in the singing of multitudes. I remember hearing 12,000 sing on one occasion in the open air. Some of our friends were then present when we concluded our service with that glorious hallelujah. Have you ever forgotten it? It was, indeed, a mighty sound! It seemed to make Heaven, itself, ring again! Think, then, what must be the voice of those who stand on the boundless plains of Heaven and, with all their might, shout, “Glory and honor and power and dominion unto Him that sits on the Throne and to the Lamb forever and ever!”

One reason, however, why the song is so loud is a very simple one, namely, because all those who are there think themselves bound to sing the loudest of all. You know our favorite hymn—

***“Then loudest of the crowd I’ll sing,
While heaven’s resounding mansions ring
With shouts of Sovereign Grace.”***

And every saint will join that sonnet and each one lift up his heart to God! Then how mighty must be the strain of praise that will rise up to the Throne of the glorious God, our Father!

But note next, while it was a loud voice, how *sweet* it was. Noise is not music. There may be “a voice like many waters” and yet no music. It was sweet as well as loud, for John says, “I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps.” Perhaps the sweetest of all instruments is the

harp. There are others which give forth sounds more grand and noble, but the harp is the sweetest of all instruments. I have sometimes sat to hear a skillful harpist till I could say, "I could sit and hear myself away," while with skillful fingers she touched the chords gently and brought forth strains of melody which flowed like liquid silver, or like sounding honey into one's soul. Sweet, sweet beyond sweetness! Words can scarcely tell how sweet the melody. Such is the music of Heaven! No jarring notes there. No discord but all one glorious harmonious song. You will not be there, Formalist, to spoil the tune! Nor you, Hypocrite, to mar the melody! There will be all those there whose hearts are right with God and, therefore, the strain will be one great harmonious whole, without a discord! Truly do we sing—

***"No groans to mingle with the songs
That warble from immortal tongues."***

And there will be no discord of any other sort to spoil the melody of those before the Throne. Oh, my beloved Hearers, that we might all be there! Lift us up, you cherubs! Stretch your wings and bear us up where the sonnets fill the air! But if you must not, let us wait our time—

***"A few more rolling suns at most,
Will land us on fair Canaan's coast,"***

and then we shall help to make the song, which now we can scarcely conceive, but which yet we desire to join!

IV. We now close with a remark upon the last point—WHY IS THE SONG SAID TO BE A NEW SONG? But one remark here. It will be a new song because the saints were never in such a position as they will be when they sing this new song. They are now in Heaven, but the scene of our text is something more than Heaven. It refers to the time when all the chosen race shall meet around the Throne, when the last battle shall have been fought and the last warrior shall have gained his crown. It is not *now* that they are thus singing, but it is in the glorious time to come, when all the hundred and forty and four thousand—or rather, the number typified by that number—will be all safely housed and all secure! I can conceive the period. Time was—eternity now reigns! The voice of God exclaims, "Are my Beloved all safe?" The angel flies through Paradise and returns with this message, "Yes, they are." "Is *Fearful* safe? Is *Feeble-Mind* safe? Is *Ready-to-Halt* safe? Is *Despondency* safe?" "Yes, O King, they are," he says. "Shut the gates," says the Almighty, "they have been open night and day, shut them now." THEN, when all of them shall be there, *then* will be the time when the shout shall be louder than many waters and the song shall begin which will never end!

There is a story told in the history of brave Oliver Cromwell which I use here to illustrate this new song. Cromwell and his Ironsides, before they went to battle, bowed the knee in prayer and asked for God's help.

Then, with their Bibles in their breasts and their swords in their hands—a strange and unjustifiable mixture but which their ignorance must excuse—they cried, “The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.” And rushing to battle they sang—

**“O Lord our God, arise and
Your enemies scattered be,
And let all those that do You hate
Before Your Presence flee.”**

They had to fight up hill for a long time but at last the enemy fled. The Ironsides were about to pursue them and win the booty, when the stern harsh voice of Cromwell was heard—“Halt! Halt! Now the victory is won, before you rush to the spoil, return thanks to God.” And they sang some such song as this—“Sing unto the Lord, for He has gotten us the victory! Sing unto the Lord.” It was said to have been one of the most majestic sights in that strange, yet good man’s history. (I say that word without blushing, for good he was). For a time the hills seemed to leap, while the vast multitude, turning from the slain, still stained with blood, lifted up their hearts to God. We say, again, it was a strange sight, yet a glad one.

But how great shall be that sight when Christ shall be seen as Conqueror and when all His warriors, fighting side by side with Him, shall see the dragon beaten in pieces beneath their feet? Lo, their enemies are fled. They were driven like thin clouds before a Biscay gale. They are all gone, death is vanquished, Satan is cast into the Lake of Fire and here stands the King, Himself, crowned with many crowns—the Victor of the victors! And in the moment of exaltation, the Redeemer will say, “Come let us sing unto the Lord.” And then, louder than the shout of many waters, they shall sing, “Hallelujah! the Lord God Omnipotent reigns.” And that will be the full carrying out of the great scene! My feeble words cannot depict it. I send you away with this simple question, “Shall *you* be there to see the Conqueror crowned?” Have *you* “a good hope through Divine Grace” that you shall? If so, be glad. If not, go to your houses, fall on your knees and pray to God to save you from that terrible place which must certainly be your portion, instead of that great Heaven of which I preach, unless you turn to God with full purpose of heart.

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

THE LAMB OUR LEADER

NO. 2456

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, MARCH 15, 1896.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 7, 1886.**

***"These are they which follow the Lamb wherever He goes."
Revelation 14:4.***

YOU, dear Friends who belong to the Tabernacle, are well acquainted with our venerable friend, George Rogers. It was a great joy to me to find him alive when I came home from the Continent. He said that he must keep on living till he had seen me once more, and then he hoped that he should go Home. That was a month ago, but yesterday I saw him again and he seemed to be greatly revived and refreshed. He has attained an extremely advanced age and it is only natural that he should soon go to his rest and reward. He remarked to me, yesterday, that he had bid farewell to the world, entirely, and he did not wish to renew the acquaintance! He did not know why he should linger here any longer, for everything was finished and he was ready to depart. And then he said to me, in his cheery way, "I wonder whether I shall see that new Baptist Chapel completed." You know that he is not a Baptist, but a Congregationalist, yet he has been with us so many years that we always claim him!

He added, "When it is built, I hope they will send a regular old-fashioned Baptist to preach in it." I asked him, "What sort of old-fashioned Baptist do you mean?" "Why," he replied, "the oldest-fashioned Baptist was the man that cried, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.' That is the old-fashioned sort of Baptist I mean—John the Baptist—and that is the sort I hope will come there." "Yes," I said, "and I wish that was the sort of preacher who would go *everywhere*, for that is the Truth of God which still needs to be preached." "Ah, yes," said Mr. Rogers, "there is nothing like the doctrine of the Atoning Sacrifice! It is the doctrine for this world and it is the doctrine for the next." "Do you not think," he said, "that this passage would make you a good text for tomorrow, 'These are they which follow the Lamb wherever He goes'?" "Yes," I answered, "that will make me a good text. May God send me the sermon!"

That is why I have taken this text—it really comes to you from that venerable man who is so far advanced in years and so close to the border of the eternal state. He feels that the old-fashioned Baptist doctrine that ought to be continually preached is this, "Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world," and that the best character that can be ascribed to Christians in any age is this, "These are they which follow the

Lamb wherever He goes.” Upon that theme I am now going to speak to you as the Holy Spirit shall enable me.

I. And, first, I would make this observation, that THIS IS CHARACTERISTIC OF SAINTS—“These are they which follow the Lamb wherever He goes.” This has always been the way of the saints. This is the way the holy Prophets went, the way of the martyrs, the way of the reformers and confessors, the way of all who shall meet above around the Throne of God and of the Lamb.

Begin at the beginning. When do you see Abel at his best? It is when he brings of the firstlings of his flock and stands beside the altar of sacrifice whereon lies the God-accepted lamb! The first of the martyrs is a martyr to the doctrine of Sacrifice by Blood! He, being dead, yet speaks, bearing his testimony that there is no way of access to God except by the sacrifice of a lamb.

Pass on to Abraham. What is one of the most memorable sayings of the father of the faithful? “My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering.” Did not Abraham, then, by faith, see Christ’s day? Yes, he saw it afar off and was glad. He knew that the great Jehovah-Jireh would provide a wondrous Substitute who would die in the place of His people, even as the ram took the place of Isaac. And Abraham saw in his own offering of his son whom he so dearly loved, a faint image of that greater Offering of the Eternal Father when He would give His only-begotten and well-beloved Son to die that His people might live.

Again I say that it is always characteristic of God’s people that they follow the Lamb, for look at Israel in Egypt. They are slaves at the brick kilns. They are building treasure cities and pyramids, but they cannot stir out of Egypt until, first of all, they have slain and eaten the paschal lamb and sprinkled his blood upon their dwelling places. Then they go out singing the song of Moses, the servant of God and of the Lamb! All through their marching in the wilderness there was the offering of the morning lamb and the evening lamb. The people of God were known by their trust in a great Sacrifice, that Sacrifice being prefigured by “the blood of bulls and of goats, and the sprinkling of the ashes of an heifer,” and especially by the Passover lamb and the morning and the evening lamb.

I do not know any clearer characteristic of the saints throughout the ages that are past than this, “These are they which follow the Lamb.” Think of the Prophet Isaiah and as you remember him and his prophecy, does not the thought of the Lamb of God rise up to your mind at once? “He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opens not His mouth.”

Then, when the new saints come into the world in the brighter day—the clearer dispensation of the Gospel—does not John the Baptist point all who hear him to the Lamb of God? That morning star of the Christian solar system throws its bright beams upon Jesus, the one great Sacrifice! John cried, “Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world,” and that other John, who heard Him speak, started following the Lamb and all through his life he kept close company with that blessed

Lamb of God till, in his extreme old age, on the island of Patmos, he saw visions of God and wrote that wonderful Book of the Revelation out of which we were reading just now. And one of the noteworthy points in that Book is that John continually speaks of the Lord Jesus as the Lamb. The one Sacrifice has been offered, the redemption price has been fully paid, the sins of the redeemed have been all put away and now one might have thought that the Lord Jesus would assume some other form—for instance, that of the Lion of the tribe of Judah would always be predominant in the apocalyptic vision—yet it is not so! John says, “I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Zion.”

Sacrifice is always first—first before the angels, first before the elders who represent the Church, first in the very center of the Throne of God, Himself—for it is the Throne of God and of Him who offered Himself as the Sacrifice, that is, the Lamb! This, then, is the emblem on the escutcheon of the Church triumphant as well as the Church militant, “a Lamb as it had been slain.” For the wilderness and for Canaan, for the battlefield and for the palace, for the Cross and for the Throne, it is always the Lamb, the Lamb that was slain and that lives again, and lives to die no more. God forbid that this matchless figure should ever be dim to our eyes, but may we gaze upon it with ever-increasing delight!

Saints in all ages have followed the Lamb and I do not wonder that they have done so, for *it was the Lamb that made them saints*. They have “washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Sainthood begins at Calvary! There is no possibility of being holy till first there has been remission of sin—and there is no remission of sin without the shedding of the blood of the Lamb! No, dear Friends, we have no hope of being clean in God’s eyes unless we have been washed. And there is no fountain of cleansing for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but that which was opened when Christ hung on the Cross! Well may they follow Christ who have been made saints by Him.

They follow the Lamb, again, because *it is He who keeps them saints*. “He keeps the feet of His saints.” If we walk in the light, as God is in the light, and so have fellowship, one with another, it is still, “the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son,” which, “cleanses us from all sin.” We need perpetual cleansing and we get that perpetual cleansing in the ever-flowing stream from the wounds of Christ which, in effect, perpetually bleed for those who put their trust in Him. Well may the saints follow the Lamb, for to Him they owe not only the beginning, but the continuance of their spiritual life and saintship!

And, Brothers and Sisters, *what other leader could they follow?* What model, except Christ, is there for a saint to copy? How can we attain to holiness if we work not after this pattern? Where shall any manhood be seen as fit for imitation except where it is linked with the Godhead in the Divine Son of God? Where shall we see the Law of God written out in living characters but in the life of this glorious Man, this blessed Son of God? Beloved, it is not possible for saints, in all respects, to follow any other leader, and it is characteristic of them that they follow the Lamb!

Ask yourselves, my dear Hearers, whether you are among these followers of the Lamb.

II. The second part of our subject shows us that THIS EXPRESSION IS INSTRUCTIVE TO THOSE WHO DESIRE TO BE SAINTS. Those of us who have already the commencement of sanctification should remember that we can only be saints in the fullest sense by following the Lamb wherever He goes.

First, then, *we are to follow the Lamb*. Some men spurn the idea of following anybody—they have very capacious brains and they like to think and to excogitate. They will have nothing but what is beaten out on their own anvils. To accept the Word of God as a little child receives it is altogether beneath their dignity. They think that the Word of God, itself, is mistaken when it says, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” They fancy that *their* thoughts are even a little higher than the thoughts of God! They are followers of nobody. They are leaders or, at any rate, they are “self-contained.” They have their own revelation and each man of them is a god to himself. Very well, you may stand there by yourselves, you learned people! You may have your degrees, M.A., D.D., or whatever else you like, for you are those who follow nobody! But of the true people of God, it is written, “These are they which follow the Lamb.” These are *not* they who follow their own leading, striking out a path of their own. These are *not* the great eccentrics, or the wonderful originals, but these are they which *follow*—they are content to be merely followers—they do not aspire to be anything more than followers. But they are glad, however, to add that they are followers of the Lamb! “These are they which follow the Lamb.”

There are other persons in the world who follow some one of their fellow men. Whatever he says is gospel to them! Whatever he has written is, of course, infallible. “Be you followers of me,” says the Apostle Paul, but then he adds directly, “even as I, also, am of Christ.” While we are children, we are necessarily under instructors, but we must take heed, as we grow in Grace, that we never follow an instructor so blindly as to follow him where he goes wrong. No, “to the Law and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.” Every true instructor will beg you to see that, when he errs, you are not to err with him, but to keep a conscience and an understanding of your own so that it will not be said, “These are they who follow this or that eminent preacher or divine.” But, “These are they which follow the Lamb.” Mind that, dear Friends, for it is most important!

I know another company of people who follow “the church.” That is a wonderful thing, you know, “the historic church.” This is the great door of entrance into the church of Rome and many have been attracted to it, and have gone through it down into Hell! There are certain persons who think that “the church” cannot err, but I do not know a more erring community than that which is commonly called “the church”! Yet there are certain people who must follow the church wherever she goes and, as

she has gone to Rome, there they will also go! Or if they think she has gone to Oxford, there they will abide. Or if she has gone to Canterbury, there they will dwell. Well, I have great respect for some of these brethren, but I prefer to be numbered with those of whom it is written, "These are they which follow the Lamb wherever He goes." Whether He goes to Rome, or to Geneva, or to Wittenberg, or to Canterbury, or to Smithfield amidst the martyrs' burning stakes, or among the misnamed Anabaptists, or the Methodists, follow the Lamb wherever He goes!

I have been sometimes called to book for saying—yet I will venture to say it again—that if I lived in a village, or if I lived in any other place where I knew there was a Baptist or other Dissenting Chapel, before I decided to attend it, I would want to know, first, "Is the Gospel preached there?" I am not so blindly wedded to any denomination whatever, that I should cling to the denomination if it did *not cling* to Christ! "Follow the Lamb wherever He goes." If you can hear sound doctrine concerning Christ preached anywhere, go and hear it! If it is in connection with those who also follow the Lamb in the waters of Baptism, show your preference for that form of worship, but do not cling merely to an old name and an old flag when Christ has gone from them. The first thing for your soul is to get near to Christ, to feed upon His Truth and so to let it be said of you, dear Friends, "These are they which follow the Lamb wherever He goes." And if they do not hear the Gospel in one place, they will go to another, for they are not going to listen to false doctrine. They have, as sheep of Christ, received a taste by which they know what is the Truth of God and what is error. 'A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.' But when they hear their Shepherd's voice, they will follow that! 'These are they which follow the Lamb wherever He goes.'" The church is all very well in its place, but the church has often lost her Lord. In the Song of Solomon we read how she went about the streets seeking Him. So I should not like to have to follow her wherever *she* goes—but it is safe and right to follow the Bridegroom wherever *He* goes. So let us keep to that and be among those that "follow the Lamb wherever He goes."

A further instruction is this. *We may always follow the lead of the Lamb of the atoning Sacrifice.* We can never follow it too closely in our thought. You know that you may get some one thought into your head and it may rule your whole being till you hardly know where it may lead you. Few men know the consequences of introducing any single doctrine into their minds, for it is pretty sure to bring another and another in its train! This is especially true about the doctrine of the Atonement offered by Christ, the Lamb of God, yet you may accept it without fear, whatever its consequences may be, and never be at all afraid to follow it wherever it goes!

For instance, when you think of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, dying in unutterable pain to redeem men, it gives you the true idea of the terrible blackness of sin. Well, follow out that thought and if you begin to be greatly depressed under a sense of sin—if conscience should sting and scourge your heart, if it should almost drive you to despair to think that

sin could not be put away except by the death of the Son of God—still follow out the thought, for the process will not hurt you! “Follow the Lamb wherever He goes.” Though He should lead you into a very trying experience and a very humbling sense of your own guilt, go on still further with Him, for He who leads you into that gloom will lead you out of it in the most efficient manner—you need not be afraid to “follow the Lamb wherever He goes.”

“If it is so,” says one, “that the Son of God must die before sin can be put away, then it follows that there is no salvation out of Christ.” Just so! Follow up that thought! Go on with it to its ultimate issues. Do not be afraid, even though the consequences should startle you. Rest assured that where the doctrine of the Cross may lead you, you may follow it quite safely. One thing I know, the doctrine of the Cross will never make you trifle with sin! It will never let you imagine that the death of the wicked is a slight matter. It will never make you indifferent as to the state of men when they pass into another world. “Follow the Lamb wherever He goes,” and you will hate sin more and more—you will love souls more and more, you will have an intense awe of the Law of God—and you will have an intense love for the Person of your Redeemer. You cannot push this thought too far—it is a Truth of God about which you can never go to an extreme! No, I wish that you *would* go to any extreme that lies along this route, “These are they which follow the Lamb wherever He goes,” as a matter of thought.

But now, once more, you may also very safely follow the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Atoning Sacrifice, in matters of fact. That is to say, you may be in this world, as far as you can in your measure, as Christ was. The man who believes in the doctrine of the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, will feel that sin is bitter and he will become very intolerant of sin. He will seek to put it down. He will try to purge it out of his own conduct and he will not endure it in his own family. Go on with that line of conduct and follow the Lamb wherever He goes! How can you tolerate that which cost the Son of God the bloody sweat of Gethsemane? How can you play with the dagger which pierced His heart? No, you must practically, in your life, hate the sins that made Him mourn and nailed Him to the tree! Alas, nowadays I see many who are trifling with sin. We Puritans, they say, are much too precise and too strict. Ah, Sirs, it is that preciseness and that strictness that are needed more and more and we shall never know how to live thus except we abide hard by the Cross of Christ! Unless we believe that sin cost Christ His life, we shall never have that holy enmity towards sin which we ought to have, that blessed intolerance of sin which ought to take possession of every Christian’s heart and mind!

“Follow the Lamb wherever He goes.” If you do, you will have to go outside the camp, just as He did, bearing His Cross. He went forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem—you will have to do the same. You will find people saying of you that they cannot endure you, you have become too religious, too strait-laced, and so on. Blessed are they who are not afraid of hard names, who, indeed, feel that if it is wrong in the judgment of the

world to follow Christ so closely, they intend to be more wrong, even as David said to Michal, “I will yet be more vile.” God help us so to do! “Follow the Lamb wherever He goes,” into the place of separation outside the camp.

If you follow the Lamb, you may be called to *suffer*, you may have to lose friends, you may come under the cruel lash of slander. You may, perhaps, have to lose this world’s gains for righteousness’ sake and holiness’ sake—but whatever the cost may be, follow the Lamb, say to yourself—

**“Through floods and flames, if Jesus leads,
I’ll follow where He goes.”**

“The blood-spattered footprints of my Master shall receive mine! Not with equal strides, but still with gladsome footsteps, I will follow in His track, let that track lead where it may. What He did, I will do, after my measure.” This is what we ought to do, Brothers and Sisters. How different our lives would be if we always worked them out by this rule—“What would Christ do in such a case?” I have sometimes got into a great fix of conscience when I have put to myself the question, “What would Christ do in such a case as this?” And once or twice I have not been able to answer. And then I have had to stand back a little and say, “Would Christ ever have been in circumstances similar to mine just now? Is there not some mistake farther back and had I not better go right back and begin again, somewhere or other, rather than keep on a track in which I cannot suppose my Lord to be?” Oh, that we might feel, from now on, that we will follow the Lamb wherever He goes, whatever the consequences may be!

Young Christian, I recommend that you, in starting out in the Christian life, aim at obeying your Lord’s commands in every particular. If you have believed in Him, the first thing that you ought to do is to *be baptized*. “Follow the Lamb wherever He goes,” and I am sure that He went down into the waters of Jordan and was baptized by John. And then the Holy Spirit rested upon Him and His Father said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” When you have done that, go and give yourself to the Church of Christ, for the Lord Jesus Christ, from the very first, began to gather round about Him those who feared God—and He had a company of disciples who constituted His Church. Still keep on following the Lamb wherever He goes and if you do, you will be a very amiable, loving, generous, hearty, self-denying, laborious Christian. If you follow the Lamb wherever He goes, you will go about doing good. You will lay yourself out in service for the Master. Perhaps you will teach little children, for He said, “Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not.” Perhaps you will stand and preach in the streets, for He, by the hillside and on the mountain, and by the sea, always spoke the things of God. If you follow Him, you will do good in one way or another—and not be a lazy lie-a-bed in the Kingdom of Christ—expecting to be honored and rewarded for doing nothing at all.

“These are they which follow the Lamb wherever He goes.” Brothers and Sisters, *are we not happy that we may follow Him?* His track leads to

rest, for He sits at the right hand of God! His track leads to victory, for the Lamb is enthroned and He will give us to overcome and to sit with Him upon His Throne, even as He has overcome and sits with the Father upon His Throne! Oh then, by that sweet ending, let us make a good beginning and a blessed, persevering continuance, in following the Lamb wherever He goes!

III. I close with this remark—our text IS SUGGESTIVE TO ALL WHO WOULD BE SAINTS.

You perceive that if you are to be true saints, first of all, you must trust Christ. A man does not follow another unless he has faith in him. Brethren, your way to Heaven lies in trusting yourself with Christ as a Sacrifice for sin—as the Lamb of God. Trust yourself with Him and you have begun the new life, you have started as a saint!

But, next, *this trust must be of a practical kind.* It is not said in our text, “These are they which trust the Lamb,” merely, but, “These are they which *follow* the Lamb.” You must do *what* He bids you, *as* He bids you, *because* He bids you and because you trust Him. You must begin, from this day forth, to show by your lives that your faith in Christ is no mere sentiment, but a vital active principle within your minds. In that way you shall find eternal life in trusting the Lamb and following Him.

But, if you follow Him, remember that *you must make no terms with Him.* “These are they which follow the Lamb wherever He goes.” “Lord,” you say, “I will follow You across the grassy lawn, or over the smoothly rolled road.” No, no—you must make no conditions! You must follow Him up the crags and down into the marshes. You must follow Christ everywhere, with no picking and choosing of the road. Where He bids you, you must go. Where He leads you, you must follow. Will you do that? If so, you shall be His in the day of His appearing—but you must take that, “wherever,” into the contract. “These are they which follow the Lamb *wherever* He goes.” O Sir, will you follow Christ at this rate? If you will, you are Christ’s man—this is the sort of soldier that He would enlist in His army—the man who is ready to follow Him wherever He goes!

I heard of a young man who wanted to be an officer in Napoleon’s army and he came to get a commission wearing a fine new hat and a suit of clothes of the very neatest cut possible. And the officer asked him, “Sir, if you were in a situation with mountains on either side of you which you could not ascend, and there was no possibility of going back, and the enemy in front was at least ten times your number, what would you do in such a case as that?” He answered, “I should resign my commission.” They did not make an officer of him, you may be sure of that, but there are plenty of that kind who, as soon as they come to a difficulty in the Christian faith, say, “Take my name off the roll! I did not bargain for this.” Now, if you mean to be a Christian, you must “follow the Lamb wherever—wherever—*wherever* He goes.”

And if you do this, *you must be like He is.* Christ and His followers must be of one mind. Christ the Lamb is not to be followed by the devil’s lions. If you follow the Lamb, you must grow more and more lamb-like—and that means being more gentle, more meek, more self-sacrificing,

more ready to submit to the Divine will. The Lord make us so and may we be among the blessed people who shall have this for their epitaph—no, not for their epitaph, for they are not dead—but who shall have this for their *motto*, “These are they which follow the Lamb wherever He goes!”

Lastly, remember that Jesus came to the Communion Table and His followers should be like He in this respect, also. If there is any child of God who has forgotten this Truth up to now, let him no longer forsake the assembling of himself with God’s people in the keeping of this sacred feast. God bless you all, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
REVELATION 14.**

The Church of God had undergone a very great trial. There had arisen a cruel and wicked persecuting system, described by John in his vision as a beast—a terrible dragon, of which we read that “it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.” This was bad enough, but afterwards there arose another system of evil which was even more dangerous, because it was an *imitation* of the Truth of God. Another beast came up out of the earth, having two horns like a lamb, yet he spoke as a dragon; and of him, John writes, “He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark on their right hand, or on their foreheads.” I will not go into the symbolic meaning of these two beasts—it is sufficient to observe that they had very terrible power and one might have thought that under their successive attacks the Church of God would have been destroyed. Yet note how this chapter begins.

Verse 1. *And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Zion.* Jesus is not dead! He still lives! He is not defeated—“a Lamb stood on the Mount Zion.” He is not disturbed or troubled, but He stands in the posture of quiet confidence. “A Lamb stood on the Mount Zion.” Jesus is not driven out of His Church, but He is still dwelling in the midst of His people. That is something, yet unbelief says, “Well, I can understand that John saw the Lord there, but had He any people with Him? Had He any Church? Listen—“I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Zion.”—

1. *And with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father’s name written on their foreheads.* They are all there, a vast number, a *complete* number, the exact number which in the seventh chapter of this Book had been described as sealed! They are all there without exception—not one of them is lost—they all stand fast as a great army surrounding their glorious Leader. Yes, my Brothers and Sisters, in the darkest times Christ has His Church still around Him! It is with Him as it was when the Lord said to Elijah, “Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which has not kissed him.” Be of good courage! If your eyes are but anointed with the heavenly eye salve, you may see, as John saw, the Lamb on Mount Zion, surrounded by multitudes of faithful followers!

2. *And I heard a voice from Heaven, as the voice of many waters, and so the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps.* As loud as thunder and yet as musical as the choicest notes from a band of harps—such is the testimony of the saints, such is the expression of their exultant joy in their Lord!

3. *And they sung, as it were, a new song before the Throne, and before the four living creatures, and the elders.* See Brothers and Sisters, how little the powers of darkness can do? Not only are the saints all there, but they are singing! The devil cannot rob Christ of a single sonnet. The stanzas of our grateful praise shall continue to be poured forth, though all the dragons howl as they may! “They sung, as it were, a new song before the Throne, and before the four living creatures, and the elders.”

3. *And no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.* There is a special redemption, a “redemption from the earth.” For such redeemed men there is a special song which no others can learn—and that song will be sung by them in the darkest of all days, in the roughest of all weathers. When the dragons seem to triumph, Christ shall still have His praise, blessed be His holy name!

4. *These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins.* This is the Scriptural metaphor for those who have not turned aside to idol gods, or to false opinions, or to unholy practices. You remember how Paul longed to present the Corinthian Christians, “as a chaste virgin,” to Christ—he desired that Christ might have all their love. These servants of God are of this sort, wholly the Lord’s.

4. *These are they which follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.* Let no man deny, then, that there is a special and particular redemption of God’s people. All men are not redeemed as these were redeemed, else the expression would be untruthful, or without meaning—“These were redeemed from among men.” There is an elect company for whom Christ especially laid down His life! They are His and they are made to know that they are His, and to take the position of a blood-bought people who belong not to themselves, but to Him who has bought them with His blood. These are the hundred and forty and four thousand who stand on the Mount Zion with the Lamb in the midst of them.

5. *And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the Throne of God.* Kept, by Divine Grace, pure in doctrine, holy in life, devout in heart—these are the bodyguard of the Lamb, the chosen companions of the King of kings—whose reward shall be unspeakably great forever and ever.

6, 7. *And I saw another angel fly in the midst of Heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made Heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.* The old interpreters used to understand these two verses as referring to the great Protestant Reformation. When the old dragon had

done His utmost against the Church of God and the thick darkness of the Middle Ages rested alike on the Church and the world, then God sent the Reformers, like flying angels, to preach the everlasting Gospel, and their special message was, "Worship not saints, angels, relics and crucifixes, but, 'worship Him that made Heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.'"

8. *And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.* Babylon always goes down when the Gospel is preached! The very flight of the angelic preachers is sufficient to make old Rome totter to her fall! So our fathers used to explain this chapter, for so they understood it. I am not sure whether it refers to that or to any other particular form of anti-Christ, but whatever it may be, whenever the Gospel is exalted, down goes the devil and down goes the whole Babylonian system.

9, 10. *And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark on his forehead, or on his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the Presence the Lamb.* How we ought to dread any collusion with deadly error, any fellowship with the hypocrisies and falsehoods of those who would deceive, for if we receive the mark of the beast either on our forehead, so as to have unbelieving *thoughts*, or on our hand, so as to *do evil* deeds, we shall have to suffer in company with Babylon, that great system of error which is only an imitation and a counterfeit of Christianity! What tremendously terrible words these are—"He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the Presence of the Lamb"!

11-15. *And the smoke of their torment ascends up forever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them. And I looked, and behold a white cloud and upon the cloud One sat like unto the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Your sickle, and reap: for the time is come for You to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.* This is the ingathering of the people of God. You notice that this harvest of God is reaped by the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, that Son of Man who sat upon the cloud, "having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle."

16. *And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.* May you and I form a part of the great harvest! May we be found among those golden sheaves which are to be the reap-

ing from Christ's great sowing when He gave Himself for His people, and was cast into the earth as a grain of wheat to die, that He might not abide alone!

17. *And another angel came out of the temple which is in Heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. The reaper this time is an angel.*

18. *And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; And cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in your sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. This is the ingathering of the ungodly, they are not the Lord's harvest, they are the vintage of His wrath. This vintage is not reaped by Him who wears the golden crown, the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, but by one of His angels, who is bid to thrust in his sharp sickle and reap, for the hour of Divine judgment has at last come.*

19. *And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. Shall any of us ever be cast into the great winepress of the wrath of god? We shall, if we continue growing upon the evil vine and are not grafted into Christ, the true and living Vine.*

20. *And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs. By which striking symbol the Apostle describes the greatness and the terror of the overthrow which must happen to the ungodly when once God begins to deal with them in judgement! Oh, that the abounding mercy of God would give us a place in His great harvest and not leave us to be gathered in the vintage of His wrath, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.*

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—410, 356, 412.

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY
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THE FOLLOWERS OF THE LAMB

NO. 2324

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“These are they which follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the Throne of God.”
Revelation 14:4, 5.

WHATEVER the saints are in Heaven, they began to be on earth. There is, no doubt, a perfection of character in the world to come, but the character must be formed here. In the next world there will be no real change—where the tree falls, there it will lie. He that is filthy will be filthy, still. He that is holy will be holy, still. I am going to talk to you, to-night, about those who surround the Lamb and are with Him in the blaze of His Glory, singing to His honor. I say that what they are in Heaven they were, in a measure, on earth. The life of Glory is the life of Grace. That life which men have in Heaven comes to them in regeneration on earth. When they are born again, they are born for Heaven—then it is that they receive the life which lives on throughout the eternal ages. If you do not have that life, here, you will never have it. If you die dead in sin, there is nothing for you, forever, but the abode of the dead, “where their worm dies not and their fire is not quenched.” Today is the only time which we have for forming our character. Earth is the great place for making instruments of music—here they are tuned and prepared. Up there, they play them! But they will never play them, there, unless they have had them made and tuned *here*.

The subject of my discourse will be, first, *a survey of the outline of character of those who are to be with Christ hereafter*. And then, secondly, *a contemplation of the perfect picture of the saints with Christ in Glory*, where I trust we, too, shall be, in the Lord's good time.

I do not know whether these verses describe all the saints in Heaven. If they do, then you must be like they, or you can never be among them. If, however, they describe the elect of the elect, the innermost circle of Heaven. If they describe the bodyguard of Christ, the immortals that perpetually surround Him, nearest to His Person, the most divinely like He. If they describe a kind of aristocracy of the skies, the nobility of Heaven—and it seems to me that they do, for they are the first fruits and the rest of

the righteous may be regarded as the harvest afterwards reaped. If these words describe some special saints, then we should seek to be like they. I would cultivate a holy ambition to be among the brightest stars of God! Why should we not reach to the highest prize of our high calling? If there is any specialty among the redeemed above, should it not be our earnest desire to attain to that standard?

I. So, first, here is AN OUTLINE OF THE CHARACTER OF THOSE BLESSED ONES WHILE THEY ARE HERE.

And, first, notice *their adherence to the Doctrine of Sacrifice* while they are here—"These are they which follow *the Lamb*." There are some professing Christians who talk much about the example of Christ, but deny the efficacy of His atoning blood—they are not of those who will be in Heaven. There are some who magnify the philosophy of Christ—all His ethical teaching is greatly to their taste—but, as to His being a Substitute offered up as a Sacrifice on account of human guilt, they cannot agree with it. Very well—they cannot enter Heaven, for, "these are they which follow the Lamb." Not Christ, only, mark you, but Christ as the Lamb of God's Pass-over! Christ as the Lamb of God slain before the foundation of the world, Christ as the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world. You cannot be of that blessed number if you reject Christ as a Sacrifice.

As for me, and I trust for you, also, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!" Christianity without the blood of Christ is a dead Christianity—it has nothing to give life to it—"for the blood is the life thereof." If you take away the Doctrine of Sacrifice, you have taken away the core, the heart, the pith, the marrow of all Christianity. You have left bones for dogs, but you have not left food for immortal spirits. Whoever will be saved, before all things, it is necessary that he should believe in Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son: that whoever believes in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." Look, look, look unto Him and be you saved, all you ends of the earth, for He is God, even the bleeding Savior! He is God and beside Him there is none else. May it be said of you all, dear Friends, that you followed the Lamb by your adherence to His atoning Sacrifice!

Many have thus followed the Lamb in spite of fierce persecution. Remember that brave woman, Ann Askew? When they had racked her and pulled every limb out of its place, so that she ached all over in her exquisitely delicate frame, yet she sat on the stone floor of her cell and still defended the Sacrifice of Christ. When she had an opportunity to write her thoughts, she penned that quaint verse—

***"I am not she that list,
My anchor to let fall,
For every drizzling mist
My ship's substantial."***

She thought that being vexed by Popish priests and torn to pieces on the rack was only a drizzling mist, for which it was not worth while to cast her

anchor! She was more than a match for 50 priests. God raise us up a race of such men and women! The devil seems to have taken the backbone out of most people. May we begin to know what we know and to believe what we believe, and to put our foot down and say, "God helping me, I will not forsake my God, nor turn away from His Truth." You remember how Martin Luther, when he stood at the Diet of Worms, closed what he had to say when they bade him recant, and he would not? He said, "Here I stand; I can do no other, so help me God," and thus, invoking the help of his Divine Lord, he committed his body to the flames, if need be, sooner than he would renounce a single Word of the Most High, or sin against the Light of God which he had received!

And, next, it is clear of these people that they followed the Lamb by *practically imitating Christ's example*, for it is written, "These are they which follow the Lamb wherever He goes." They so believed in Him that—

***"They marked the footsteps that He trod,
His zeal inspired their breast,
And following their Incarnate God,
Possess the promised rest."***

You cannot be with Christ unless you are like Christ. If you have really trusted in Jesus, He will transform you, He will take away from you those evil tendencies and vile propensities which are contrary to holiness. He will work in you to will and to do of His own good pleasure. And the highest holiness for you is to be like Christ! The very noblest character to which you could ever reach is to follow the Lamb wherever He goes, in obedience to God, in love to man, in self-sacrifice, in humility, in gentleness, in love! You must follow Him wherever He goes and do what He did, so far as your position makes it fit for you to do it. I mean that you cannot do as He did as God, but you can do what He did as Man. Try to put your feet down in the footprints that He has left you. Aim at complete conformity to Christ and wherein you fail to reach it, mark that you come so far short of what you ought to be. To be like Christ is that which God intends for you and unless you have some measure of it now, you will never be with Him, for all they who are with Christ above are the people who were made like to Christ here below. Note that very distinctly, "These are they which follow the Lamb wherever He goes."

Will you, dear Friends, labor to take Christ for your pattern? Do not come and take His name and then dishonor His Character. There are among you some who are very much like your Master—you are the joy of the Church. There are among all the Churches some who bear Christ's name but are not like He. My venerable predecessor, Dr. Rippon, used to say of His Church, that he had in it some of the best people in England—and then he used to add in a low voice, "and some of the worst." I am afraid that I have to say the same, but I am very sorry that I should have to say it. The worst people in the world are those who profess most and do least. Do not be among that unhappy number, but do, I pray you, by the

blessing of God, and the help of His Spirit, be among those who at least endeavor to “follow the Lamb wherever He goes.”

Now, notice in the sketch of these people, that *they recognized a special redemption*—“These were redeemed from among men.” Christ had done something for them that He had not done for others. They were not redeemed, “among men,” but, “*from* among men.” They recognized the speciality of Christ’s Sacrifice. They could read, for instance, a passage like this and understand its meaning, “Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it,” for His Church, for His body. “These were redeemed from among men.” Come, Beloved, do you belong to this company of persons who have been fetched out from the rest of mankind by the power of the Spirit of God, and also by the merit of the precious blood? Do you feel that you are marked with the blood as others are not? Do you belong to a people who are not of the world, even as He that bought them was not of the world? Are you henceforth not of the common multitude, but one who has been bought and paid for by that redemptive price which was found in the veins and the heart of the Redeemer? And are you so redeemed as no longer to be one of the great mass of mankind, but fetched out, called out, chosen, “not your own, but bought with a price”? These are they that will be with Christ hereafter, as specially redeemed ones.

And as they recognized a special redemption, you will observe that *they made a full surrender of themselves to God and to the Lamb*—“These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.” On a certain day, when the harvest was getting ripe, a man went down to the fields and plucked an ear here, a handful there, and another handful further on. And he passed along the field and gathered ears here and ears there. And when he had collected enough for sheaves, he tied them up and took them to the Temple of God and presented them to the Lord as an offering, to signify that he owed all the harvest to God—and he brought Him the first ripe ears as a sacrifice to Him.

Now, Beloved, has the Grace of God plucked you out from among the rest of mankind and do you feel that you now belong to Christ, that you belong to God, that you are not to be gathered with the mass of men for the great condemnation, but that you are presented unto God and belong to Him altogether? It is a very easy thing for me to talk about this, but, believe me, it is by no means an easy thing to carry it out. I see numbers of people who profess to belong to God, but they live as much for making money as anybody else! They live quite as much for self-seeking as the world does and it would be difficult, even if you had microscopes on both your eyes, to see any difference between them and worldlings. This will never do. “Come out from among them, and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.” If you are the first fruits unto God, be so. If you belong to yourself, serve yourself. But if, by the redemption of Christ, you are not your own, but bought with a price, then live as those who are the King’s own, who must serve God, and cannot be content unless their every action shall tend to the Divine Glory, and to the

magnifying of Christ Jesus. Now this is what all of us who are truly the Lord's have in outline. Oh, that the sketch might be properly filled up, that we might become more and more the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb!

I must take you a little further. These people who are to be with Christ, the nearest to Him, are *a people free from falsehood*. "In their mouth was found no guile." Brothers and Sisters, if we profess to be Christians, we must have done with all craft, policy, double-dealing and the like. The Christian man should be a plain man who says what he means and means what he says. I know of no worse suspicion against any man who professes to be a Christian than the suspicion of not being transparent. It were better for us to be simple as fools than to be cunning as hypocrites, even though our cunning should place us in the front rank of the governors of mankind! The Christian man should scorn to tell a lie! Exaggeration and equivocation should be strangers to his lips. "In their mouth was found no guile." The Lord Jesus Christ was a great Speaker of the plain Truth of God and those whom He chooses to be near Him, to be His personal attendants in Heaven, must also be free from guile. With many a mistake, with many a weakness, yet, Beloved, the saints are free from falsehood! They are true, whatever may be their mistakes. Look to yourselves and see whether it is so. As I would look to my own soul, I charge you to look to yours.

And then, once more, it is said that they are *free from blemish*. "They are without fault before the Throne of God." "Oh," says one, "I am not without fault!" No, but there is the *outline* of that character in you if you are, indeed, one of the Lord's people. You have already got rid of many faults and you are getting rid of more. You grieve over what remains and you will never rest till every sin is conquered. Is it not so, Beloved? Saints are not only men of honor, but men of holiness! We would not tolerate any known sin in ourselves. Whenever we are carried into a fault by temptation or by inbred sin, we feel unhappy. We bow low in the dust and we cry to God for Grace, that we may not commit the same sin again. But God's people are a blameless people, after all. If you are to find pure and right characters, where will you find them but among the followers of the Lamb? You know and I know many believers in Christ whose lives are blameless—we would not say that they are absolutely without fault, but still, the Grace of God so works in them that we may safely take them for examples and do as they have done.

It was so in the olden time and it is so now! And unless your character is such that your children may safely imitate it, and your servants may tread in your footsteps, and your neighbors may act as you do without going wrong, how can you hope to be where Jesus is? Jesus Christ receives sinners, but He makes them saints! The Gospel opens a great hospital, not for sick men to lie in it and remain sick, but that there they may recover health and may be made strong! He that believes in Christ is saved—saved in this sense among others, that He is saved from the power

of sin, and turned from an unholy and godless life into a life of purity, honesty, and uprightness! “Be not deceived,” any of you, tonight, “God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows that shall he also reap.” If there is not about you a likeness to Christ. If there is not at least the sketch which I have tried to depict, then, surely, you are not among those who will be forever where Jesus is!

I have seen an artist make his crayon drawing. He takes a piece of charcoal and marks out what he is going to draw. I am afraid that is about all that is done with us, here. There is an outline made with the charcoal—all the lines of beauty and all the glory of character are yet to be laid on as we grow in Grace and in likeness to Christ. But, at least, there must be that sketch. If you have not that, come humbly to the feet of Jesus and pray that He would begin in you His good work which He will carry on and perfect in the day of His appearing.

Thus much upon the outline of the character of saints while they are upon the earth.

II. Now indulge me for just a few minutes while I try to give you A GLIMPSE OF THE PERFECT PICTURE IN HEAVEN. I cannot really show you the picture—that is in the upper gallery in Glory and you must go up there to see it. I can only tell you my idea of what that picture is like when it is finished.

Well, first, those who are with Christ *enjoy perfect fellowship with Him*. Up there they “follow the Lamb wherever He goes.” They are always with Him. There were certain young princes chosen in certain courts to attend upon the king. Wherever the king went, they went. Where the court was, there was their abode. Their one business was to behold the king’s face and to abide near him. That is the business of the glorified ones of whom I am speaking. When will the day arrive that you and I shall enjoy this perfect fellowship with our glorious King, never absent from Him, never doubting His love, never cold in our affection towards Him, but being—

“Forever with the Lord”?

Shall I go on with the verse?

“Amen! So let it be!

Life from the dead is in that word,

‘Tis immortality!”

Some of you have dear children who have outstripped their mother and are enjoying this felicity even now. Others of us have mothers, brothers, friends who were very dear to us, who follow the Lamb in Glory. How many who once sat among us, here, are now up there, following the Lamb, and He leads them unto living fountains of waters and all tears are wiped away from their eyes! Oh, to think that wherever my Lord shall go I shall go! When He shall descend from Heaven with a shout, we shall come with Him! When He shall sit upon His Throne to judge the world, His saints shall sit with Him! When He shall reign gloriously among His ancients for a thousand years, we shall reign with Him on the earth! When He shall return to the Father’s Throne—

“All His work and warfare done,”

we shall partake of His triumph, following the Lamb wherever He goes. I vote to cast in my lot with my Lord in life and in death. What say you? My Master, where You dwell, I will dwell. If men put You to shame, I will be put to shame with You. If You die, I will die with You, that I may forever live with You in Your Glory above. Say you not the same, Beloved? Say it deep down in your heart, tonight!

Well, now, notice in this complete picture, next, that up there *they are perfectly accepted with God*—“These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.” God always accepts them. He always looks upon them as His first fruits, bought with His Son’s blood, and brought by His Son into His heavenly Temple, to be His forever! Sometimes, here, we mar our service, but they never mar it there! Our songs get out of tune, but theirs never know a discord. We praise the Lord and yet groan, being burdened. But in Heaven there are—

***“No groans to mingle with the songs
Which warble from immortal tongues.”***

We doubt. We fear. We grieve the Holy Spirit. Sometimes we get very sadly out of gear with God. It is never so there—fully redeemed from sin—they are accepted in the Beloved and to the very top of their bent they know it, and enjoy it. Happy day, happy day, when you and I shall be of them and among them!

Observe, also, that *they have perfect truth, there, in heart and soul*—“In their mouth was found no guile.” “No lie,” says the Revised Version. Here, dear Friends, we inadvertently fall into error and, sometimes, I fear, negligently. We say, not knowingly, *more* than the Truth of God. How often we say much less than the Truth and almost necessarily so when we speak of Divine things—but up there they are not only free from willful guile and deceit, but they are free from all error and mistake. Happy day! Happy day! Do you not long to be there to be rid of every false doctrine, every wrong opinion, every error, every mistake, so that in your mouth there shall never again be guile? This is what they are above—*made perfect*. He who washed their hearts, here, has washed their tongues, there! As they loved the Truth of God, here, they *know* the Truth there! As they sought it here, they have found it there! As they were willing to die for it here, they live in the enjoyment of it there and shall do so forever!

One more feature of that perfect picture is this, *they enjoy perfect sinlessness before God*—“They are without fault before the Throne of God.” That text brings back to my recollection the second sermon I preached to this Church, one Sabbath evening, when we were but few—“They are without fault before the Throne of God.” I had great joy, as a youth, in expatiating upon the perfect blessing of being altogether, “without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” If there were any fault in them, there, they are where it would be seen, for they are before the Throne of the all-seeing God! But even there, in that matchless place of light in which there is no darkness at all, they are declared to be without fault, without blemish.

Can you think that you will be of that happy number one day? I had to put it very mildly just now when I spoke of saints being without blame, here, but you may put it as strongly as you please when you speak of their being without sin there!

They were once, perhaps, before conversion, the very chief of sinners, but in Heaven there shall be no trace of their sin. They will bless the Grace that came to them when they were up to their neck in the filth of sin, but there will be no trace of their filthiness left. There is no blood stain on Manasseh, there is no brand of blasphemy on Saul of Tarsus, now—they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Some of these men were by nature and by practice, too, so depraved that it looked as if they could never escape from their evil habits. We might have said of them, “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may these men, who are accustomed to do evil, learn to do well.” Yet so has the Grace of God changed them that there is no trace of any evil tendency, no propensity to lust, or lewdness, or blasphemy, or any kind of fault!

What a wonderful change it will be for those who were once great sinners to be found without fault—not only without great crime, not only without gross vice, but without fault and that, too, as I have said, before the Throne of God, where, if there *were* a fault, it would be seen! They are cleansed from all the guilt of sin and from all the depravity which the addiction of sin brings to men. “They are without fault before the Throne of God.” Truly, if you had never heard this before, it might make you laugh for joy to think that it should ever be possible that the very chief of sinners, through faith in Christ, might be made so clean as one day to be without fault before the Throne of God! I think that when we get there, part of the joy of Heaven will be a long surprise, an endless wonder—and if we are permitted to remember what we used to be, some of you will recall a night of sin, and say, “And yet I am here!” You will recall, perhaps, some dreadful passion, some atrocious outburst of foul language, or some terrible occasion of sin and you will say, “Yet here I am, clean as the driven snow, washed in the blood of Jesus and renewed by the Spirit of God.”

Although they always praise God, I think that they must, every now and then, have a fresh outburst of hallelujahs when they begin to review the past. One says, “I, even after conversion, was a poor, limping Christian. And I was thrown back once or twice with terrible backslidings. My Christian friends despaired of my ever holding on—and yet here I am, by God’s Grace, without fault before the Throne of God. Hallelujah!” Will not a man be obliged to break out like that and do you not think that all the saints around Him will take up the Hallelujah, too, till it goes in swelling chorus all round the choirs of Heaven, “Hallelujah to God and the Lamb”? And another one will say, “And I, after I had long known the Lord, fell, oh, so sadly, so grievously! But He would not give me up! He followed me and, by His mighty Grace, I was restored, my broken bones were set again and

I was made to sing of Free Grace and forgiving love. He created in me a new heart and renewed a right spirit within me! And now I, even I, am here without fault, without a single fault." You can hardly imagine it, can you? You begin to think, "Well, surely that cannot be," for, if you look within, you see so many faults over which you groan, but you will look without and look within, when you once get there, and neither without nor within, *in any respect whatever*, will you have any kind of fault, for, "they are without blemish before the Throne of God."

I do not feel inclined to preach any more, but just to shout, "Hallelujah," again and again, at the very thought that I shall be there! Oh, it is hard to go to Heaven from such a place as that which I occupy! Your eyes sometimes startle me in my dreams, these thousands of eyes fixed upon one poor mortal man, who has to try to lead you to Christ and lead you to Heaven. Your eyes, at times, seem to pierce me like so many daggers. I think, sometimes, "What if I am not faithful, if I do not preach plainly, if I do not warn them, if I do not invite them earnestly, if I do not, with all my heart cry, 'Come to Christ'? What shall I do in eternity if 6,000 pairs of eyes are forever seeming to stick, like daggers, into my heart?" Oh, but it will not be so! I believe in Him that justifies the ungodly and I have fully preached Him to you, and all my great congregation!

My hope is in the precious blood that cleanses from all sin and I have pointed all my hearers to that precious blood! And the day will come when I, with all who believe in Jesus, shall be without fault before the Throne of God! The very thought of it makes me cry, "Hallelujah!" And with that I finish. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Say "Hallelujah," all of you! ["Hallelujah" from the congregation.] Hallelujah! Hallelujah to God and the Lamb! The Lord bless you, for Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON. REVELATION 14.

Verse 1. *And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb*—John always writes of Jesus as the "Lamb." His Lord is to him in His sacrificial Character, always, "the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world" by the shedding of His blood. "I looked, and, lo, a Lamb"—

1. *Stood on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads.* The Revised Version has it, "having His name, and the name of His Father, written on their foreheads." Now they are known to be the Lord's—on earth that fact was questioned, but His name is now written on their foreheads. Sometimes they, themselves, had to question it, but now it is apparent to all, the distinguishing mark is stamped upon their brow—"having His Father's name written on their foreheads."

2. *And I heard a voice from Heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps.* It was very loud, but very sweet. It is not easy, in earthly mu-

sic, to blend the two, but in Heaven, all the energies of living men shall be thrown into the song and yet it shall be sweet as the touch of a minstrel when he lays his fingers gently among the strings of the harp.

3. *And they sung, as it were, a new song before the Throne.* They could not sing any old song there. The songs of earth, sweet as some of them are, are not good enough to be sung in Heaven. With a new experience, new delights and a clearer vision of their Lord, they must have a new song.

3. *And before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.* Heaven is not the place to learn that song—it must be learned on the earth. You must learn, here, the notes of Free Grace and dying love. And when you have mastered their melody, you will be able to offer to the Lord the tribute of a grateful heart, even in Heaven, and blend it with the eternal harmonies. Suppose, for a moment, that you could go there and that you were unprepared to sing the new song? You would have to say, “I cannot join in the chorus, for I do not know the tune.” You must learn the song, now, the new song of praise unto our God, or you cannot be admitted there. I would not expect, if I went down to the Handel Festival, for the conductor to permit me to take a place in the choir. He would ask me, “Can you sing? Have you ever rehearsed the matchless music of Handel?” And when I answered, “No,” he would tell me to stand aside! So you must learn the music of Calvary, you must learn the music of the name of Jesus, or you cannot sing in Heaven. No man could learn the song but the redeemed from the earth—not redeemed, you see, by a *general* redemption, of which some so loudly talk—but redeemed from among men by a special redemption which took them out from the rest of mankind, by a price paid for them, so that they were bought as others were *not* bought, by the precious blood of Jesus, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot.

4. *These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins.* They were pure and chaste in the sight of God.

4. *These are they which follow the Lamb wherever He goes.* His choice attendants, His bodyguard.

4, 5. *These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile.* “No lie.” They were truthful, they were truth-speakers.

5. *For they are without fault—Or, blemish.*

5. *Before the Throne of God.* Like He with whom they associated, the Lamb of God, they were without blemish and without spot.

6. *And I saw—*What wonderful sights John saw! I do not wonder that he saw them. He had leaned his head on Christ’s bosom and that qualified him to see what you and I cannot see. Near communion to Christ is the best qualification for a vision of mystery. Get into the very heart of Christ and you shall see wonderful things—“I saw”—

6, 7. *Another angel fly in the midst of Heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach, unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him.* Is this the Gospel? It is one version, evidently, of the Everlasting Gospel. “The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.” Truly, to worship Him as He reveals Himself, is true godliness and in it lies all the Gospel—“Having the Everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to Him.”

7, 8. *For the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made Heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen.* This will not happen till the Gospel is fully preached. Superstition does not come down unless true religion is set up. One angel proclaims the Everlasting Gospel—the next declares that the great system of error is fallen—“Babylon is fallen.”

8. *That great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.* You know that gigantic system of error which professes to come from God and to be the only true church—it must fall.

9, 10. *And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead, or on his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.* They sometimes say that we talk very terribly about the world to come. Do we say more than the Scripture says? Do we use more terrible emblems than the Holy Spirit uses when He speaks after this fashion? This is a generation that is not to be pleased, neither do we seek to please it! God’s wrath is terrible and our language cannot be too strong to express the overwhelming power of it.

11. *And the smoke of their torment ascends up forever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.* Keep true to Christ! Wear His name on your forehead. Follow no system of error. Do not be deluded either by Ritualism or Rationalism, by superstition or by unbelief. Keep close to the Word of God and ask to be taught of the Spirit of God.

12, 13. *Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the Commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.* Accursed were they who carried the mark of the beast and went after falsehood. But blessed are they who follow Christ, even though they die. Dying in the Lord, their works survive them and they, themselves, live forever with Him.

14. *And I looked, and behold a white cloud.* One of these days, every eye will look and see what is described here. A little time may elapse, but it

will soon be past. How quickly years fly away! Think where you will be in the day when you, too, will say, "I looked and behold, a white cloud."

14-16. *And upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the Temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Your sickle, and reap: for the time is come for You to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.* This is the gathering in of the godly, who are Christ's wheat. He Himself reaps them! No angel, mark you, but Himself, with His own sharp sickle and with His own dear hands. These are His sheaves. He sowed for wheat, He, Himself, was that wheat which fell into the ground and died, and brought forth much fruit. So He, into His own bosom, gathers His own sheaves with His own hands. "May I be among them!" Make that your prayer tonight. May I be one golden ear in Christ's great harvest!"

17. *And another angel came out of the Temple which is in Heaven, he, also, having a sharp sickle.* Not this time the King, but an angel. Not the Son of Man that sat on the cloud, but an angel, the servant of God, deputized to execute vengeance.

18, 19. *And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in your sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth.* This is the gathering together of the ungodly, those wicked clusters that ripen in sin, and that become red with iniquity. Christ does not gather them, you see. That is left to an angel to do—he thrust in his sickle and gathered the grapes of the earth.

19. *And cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.* Can you see the clusters flung into the winepress? Will you be there? God grant that neither you nor I may, in that terrible day, be among the clusters of the wicked!

20. *And the winepress was trod outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.* So terrible will be even the preliminary destruction of the ungodly! Though they grow in clusters, yet shall they perish. "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished." "He that has ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says" unto each one of us. Amen.

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A VOICE FROM HEAVEN

NO. 1219

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

***“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from now on: Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.”
Revelation 14:12, 13.***

THE text speaks of a Voice from Heaven which said, “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.” The witness of that voice is not needed upon every occasion, for even the most common observer is compelled to feel, concerning many of the righteous, that their deaths are blessed. Balaam, with all his moral shortsightedness, could say, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.” That is the case when death comes in peaceful fashion. The man has lived a calm, godly, consistent life. He has lived as long as he could well have wished to live and, in dying, he sees his children and his children’s children gathered around his bed.

What a fine picture the old man makes, as he sits up with that snowy head supported by snowy pillows. Hear him as he tells his children that goodness and mercy have followed him all the days of his life and now he is going to dwell in the house of the Lord forever! See the seraphic smile which lights up his face as he bids them farewell and assures them that he already hears the harpers harping with their harps—bids them stop those tears and weep not for him but for themselves—charges them to follow him so far as he has followed Christ and to meet him at the right hand of the Judge in the day of His appearing. Then the old man, almost without a sigh, leans back and is present with the Lord!—

***“Heaven waits not the last moment;
Owns her friends on this side death,
And points them out to men;
A lecture silent but of sovereign power!
To vice, confusion—and to virtue peace.”***

Even the blind bat’s-eyed worldling can see that, “blessed are the dead which die in the Lord” in such a fashion as that! Nor is it difficult to perceive that this is the case in many other instances. We have, ourselves, known several good men and women who were afraid of death and were, much of their lifetime, subject to bondage. But they went to bed and fell asleep and never woke again in this world. And as far as appearances go, they could never have known so much as one single pang in departure, but fell asleep among mortals to awake amid the angels! Truly, such gentle loosing of the cable. Such fording of Jordan dry shod. Such ascents of the celestial hills with music at every step are desirable beyond measure!

And we need no Voice out of the excellent Glory to proclaim that blessed are the dead who in such a case die in the Lord.

But that was not the picture which John had before his mind. It was quite another—a picture grim and black to mortal eyes. The sounds which meet the ear are not those of music, nor the whispered consolations of friends, but quite the reverse. All is painful, terrible and the very opposite of blessed, so far as strikes the eyes and ears. Therefore it became necessary that there should be a Voice from Heaven to say, “Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.” I will give you the picture. The man of God is on the rack. They are turning that infernal machine with all their might. They have dragged every bone from its place. They have exercised their tortures till every nerve of his body cries with agony! He is flung into a dark and loathsome dungeon and left there to recover strength enough to be led in derision through the streets.

Upon his head they have placed a cap painted with devils and all his garments they have bedizened with the resemblance of fiends and flames of Hell. And now, with a shaveling priest on each side, holding up before him a superstitious emblem, and bidding him adore the Virgin or worship the cross, the good man, loaded with chains, goes through the streets, say, of Madrid or Antwerp, to the place prepared for his execution. “An act of faith,” they call it—an *auto da fe*—and an act of heroic faith it is, indeed, when the man of God takes his place at the stake, in his shirt, with an iron chain about his loins, and is fastened to the stake where he must stand and burn “quick to the death.”

Can you see him as they kindle the wood beneath him and the flames begin to consume his quivering flesh till he is all ablaze and burning—burning without a cry—though fiercely tormented by the fire? Now assuredly is that Voice from Heaven needed, and you can hear it, “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord”—blessed even when they die like this! “Here is the patience of the saints” and, in the esteem of angels and of glorified spirits, such a death may, under many aspects, be adjudged to be more blessed than the peaceful deathbed of the saint who had some fellowship with Jesus, but was not made to drink of His cup and to be baptized with His Baptism, as to die a painful and ignominious death as a witness for the Truth of God.

It must have been a dreadful thing to watch the rabble rousers hurrying to Smithfield, to stand there and see the burning of the saints. It would have been a more fearful thing, still, if possible, to have been in the dungeons of the Low Countries and seen the Anabaptists put to death in secret. In a dungeon dark and pestilential there is placed a huge vat of water—and the faithful witness to Scriptural Baptism is drowned—drowned for following the Lamb where ever He goes! Drowned alone—where no eyes could pity and no voice from out of the crowd could shout a word of help and comfort. Men hear only the coarse jests of the murderers who have given the dipper his last dip—but the ear of faith can hear ringing through the dungeon, the Voice, “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.”

True, through the connection of their names with a fanatic band, these holy ancestors of ours have gained scant honor *here*, yet their record is on

high! Blessed they are, and blessed they shall be! Where ever on this earth, whether among the snows of Piedmont's valleys or in the fair fields of France, saints have died by sword or famine, or fire or massacre, for the testimony of Jesus because they would not bear the mark of the beast either in their forehead or in their hand, this Voice is heard sounding out of the third heavens, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." It matters not, my Brothers and Sisters, *where* they die, who die in the Lord! It may be that they have not the honor of martyrdom in man's esteem, but yet are witnesses for the Lord in poverty and pain.

Here is the patience and here, also, is the blessedness of the saints. Yonder poor girl lies in an attic, where the stars look between the tiles, and the moon gleams on the ragged hangings of the pallet where she largely suffers and, without a murmur, gradually dissolves into death. However obscure and unknown she may be, she has been kept from the great transgression. Tempted sorely, she has yet held fast her purity and her integrity. Her prayers, unheard by others, have gone up before the Lord and she dies in the Lord, saved through Jesus Christ. None will preach her funeral sermon, but she shall not miss that Voice from Heaven, saying, "Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." We repeat it, it matters not where you die nor in what condition—if you are in the Lord, and die in the Lord—right blessed are you!

Now, it is quite certain that very soon every one of us must leave this world. We know that we are no more immortal than our fellow men. Though by a sad piece of imposition upon ourselves, we count all men mortal but ourselves, right surely mortal we are! And each one of us shall, in due time, pass away out of this world. The saints, themselves, must die, though to them death is far different than to sinners. It is greatly wise to be ready for our undressing, prepared for the sweet sleep in Jesus. And if we are not in Christ, it is all the more imperative upon us to consider our latter end, that we rush not forward in the dark.

I therefore want, for a few minutes only, to disengage your mind from the too abundant snares of this world and the thralldom of human cares, that you may look across the border into the great future so surely yours, perhaps so *nearly* yours. Oh, that you might be helped to prepare for that future, that by such preparation, through Divine Grace, you may be numbered among the blessed who die in the Lord! First, we shall briefly *describe their character*, then mention *the rest* which constitutes their blessedness, and conclude by meditating upon *the reward*, which is a further part of that blessedness.

I. First, then, let us describe THE CHARACTER. "Here is the patience of *the saints*." To be blessed when we die, we *must* be saints. By nature we are *sinners* and by Divine Grace we must become saints if we would enter Heaven, for it is the land of saints and none but saints can ever pass its frontiers. Since *death* does not change character, we must be made saints here below if we are to be saints above.

We have come to misuse the term, "saint," and apply it only to some few of God's people. What does it mean but this—holy? Holy men and holy women—these are saints! It is not *Saint Peter* and *Saint John* merely—YOU are a saint, dear Brother, if you live unto the Lord. You are a saint,

my Sister, however obscure your name, if you keep the Lord's way and walk before Him in sincere obedience. We must be saints—and in order to be this we must be renewed in spirit, for we are sinners by nature—we must, in fact, be born again. All unholy and unclean, we are by nature nothing else but sin—and we must be created anew by the power of the Holy Spirit, or else holiness will never dwell in us.

Our loves must be changed so that we no longer love evil things, but delight only in that which is true, generous, kind, upright, pure, godlike. We must be changed in every faculty and power of our nature by that same hand which first made us. And across our brows must be written these words, "Holiness unto the Lord." The word, *saint*, denotes not merely the pure in *character*, but those who are set apart unto God—dedicated ones, sanctified by being devoted to holy uses—by being, in fact, consecrated to God alone.

My dear Hearer, do you belong to God? Do you live to glorify Jesus? Can you honestly put your hand on your heart and say, "Yes, I belong to Him who bought me with His blood and I endeavor, by His Grace, to live as He would have me live. I am devoted to His honor, loving my fellow men and loving my Lord, endeavoring to be like He is in all things"? You must be such, for, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." "But how am I to attain to holiness?" You cannot rise to it except by Divine strength. The Holy Spirit is the Sanctifier. Jesus, who is our Justifier, is also made unto us sanctification and if we, by faith, lay hold on Him, we shall find in Him all that we need. Let this be a searching matter with everyone here present, as I desire to make it with myself—and may God grant we may be numbered with the saints!

But the glorified are also described in our text as *patient* ones—"Here is the *patience* of the saints," or, if you choose to render it differently, you may lawfully do so—"Here is the *endurance* of the saints." Those who are to be crowned in Heaven must bear the cross on earth. "No cross, no crown," is still most true. Many would be saints if everybody would encourage them. But as soon as a hard word is spoken, they are offended. They would go to Heaven if they could travel there amidst the hosannas of the multitude, but when they hear the cry of, "Crucify Him, crucify Him," straightway they desert the Man of Nazareth, for they have no intention to share His Cross, or to be despised and rejected of men. The true saints of God are prepared to endure scoffing, jeering and scorning—they accept this Cross of Christ without murmuring, remembering Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself.

They know that their Brethren who went before, "resisted unto blood, striving against sin," and as they have not yet come to that point, they count it foul scorn that they should be ashamed or confounded in minor trials, let their adversaries do what they may. Those who are to sing Christ's praise in Heaven must first have been willing to bear Christ's shame below! They must be numbered with Him in humiliation, or they cannot expect to be partakers with Him in Glory.

And now, dear Brothers and Sisters, how is it with us? Are we willing to be reproached for Christ's Glory? Can we bear the sarcasm of the wise? Can we bear the jest of the witty? Are we willing to be pointed at as Puri-

tanical, punctilious and precise? Do we dare to be singular when to be singular is to be right? If we can do this, by God's Grace, let us further question ourselves. Could we endure this ordeal if its intensity were increased? Suppose it came to something worse—to the thumbscrew or the rack—could we bear it, then? I sometimes fear that many professors would cut a sorry figure if persecuting times should come, for I observe that to be excluded from what is called, "society," is a great grievance to many modern Christians!

When they settle in any place, their enquiry is not, "Where can I hear the Gospel?" but, "Which is the most fashionable place of worship?" And the question with regard to their children is not, "Where will they have Christian associations?" but, "How can I introduce them to society?"—introduction to society frequently being an introduction to temptation and the commencement of a life of levity. Oh, that all Christians could scorn the soft witcheries of the world, for, if they cannot, they may be sure that they will not bear its fiery breath when, like an oven, persecution comes forth to try the saints! God grant us Grace to have the patience of the saints—that patience of the saints which will cheerfully suffer loss rather than do a wrong thing in business!

God grant us that patience of the saints which will pine in poverty sooner than yield a principle though a kingdom were at stake! That patience of the saints which dreads not being unfashionable if the right is reckoned so! That patience of the saints which courts no man's smile and fears no man's frown—but can endure all things for Jesus' sake and is resolved to do so! Can you cleave to your Lord when the many turn aside? Can you witness that He has the Living Word and none upon earth beside? Can you watch with Him when all forsake Him and stand by Him when He is the butt of ribald jest and scorn? Can you bear the sneer of science, falsely so called, and the politer sarcasm of those who say they "doubt," but mean that they utterly disbelieve?

Blessed is that *preacher* who shall be true to Christ in these evil days! Blessed is that Church member who shall follow Christ's Word through the mire and through the slough, over the hill and down the dale, caring for nothing but to be true to His Master! This must be our resolve! If we are to win the Glory, we must be faithful unto death. God make us so! "Here is the patience of the saints"—it comes not by nature—it is the gift of the Grace of God. Farther on these saints are described as, "*they that keep the commandments of God.*" This expression is not intended, for a moment, to teach us that these people are saved by their own merits. They are saints to begin with and in Christ to begin with, but they *prove* they are in Christ by keeping the commandments of God.

Let us search ourselves upon this matter. Brothers and Sisters, we cannot hope to reach the end if we do not keep the way. No man is so unwise as to think that he would reach Bristol if he were to take the road to York. He knows that to get to a place he must follow the road which leads there. There is a way of holiness in which the righteous walk and this way of obedience to the Lord's commands must and will be trodden by all who truly believe in Jesus and are justified by faith—for *faith works obedience!* A good tree brings forth good fruit. If there is no fruit of obedience to God's

commands in you, or in me, we may rest assured that the root of genuine faith in Jesus Christ is not in us at all.

In this age the keeping of Christ's commandments is thought to be of very little consequence. It is dreadful to think how Christians, in the matter of the law of God's House, do not even *pretend* to follow Christ and His appointments. They join a Church and they go by the law of that Church, though that Church's rule may be clean contrary to the will of Christ! But they answer to everything, "That is our rule, you know." But then who has a right to make rules for you or for me, but Christ Jesus? He is the *only* Legislator in the kingdom of God and by His commands we ought to be guided. I should not, I could not, feel grieved if Brethren arrived at contrary conclusions to *mine*, I being fallible myself. But I do feel grieved when I see Brethren arrive at conclusions, not as the result of investigation, but simply by taking things just as they find them.

Too many professors have a happy-go-lucky style of Christianity. Whichever happens to come first, they follow. Their fathers and mothers were this or that, or they were brought up in such-and-such a connection, and that decides them. They do not pray, "Lord, show me what You would have me to do." Brothers and Sisters, these things ought not to be! Has not the Master said, "Whoever shall break one of the least of these, My commandments, and teach men so, the same shall be least in the kingdom of Heaven"? I would not stand here to condemn my fellow Christians for a moment. In so doing I should condemn myself, also, but I plead with you, if you do, indeed, believe in Jesus, be careful to observe all things He has commanded you, for He has said, "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you." And again, "If you love Me, keep My commandments."

A worldling once said to a Puritan, "When so many great men make rents in their consciences, cannot you make just a *little* nick in yours, for peace sake?" "No," he said, "I must follow Christ fully." "Ah, well," you say, "these things are non-essential." *Nothing* is non-essential to complete obedience! It may be non-essential to *salvation*, but it is selfishness to say, "I will do no more than I know to be absolutely necessary to my salvation." It is essential to a good servant to obey his master in all things—and it is essential for the healthiness of a Christian's soul that he should walk very carefully and prayerfully before the Lord—otherwise he will miss the blessing of them of whom it is said, "These are they which follow the Lamb where ever He goes." To be blessed in death we must keep the commandments of God.

The next mark of the blessed dead is, that they kept "*the faith of Jesus.*" This is another point upon which I would speak thunderbolts, if I could, for to keep the faith of Jesus is an undertaking much ridiculed nowadays. "Doctrines," one says, "we are tired of doctrines!"—

***"For forms and creeds let graceless bigots fight,
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right."***

The opinion is current that to be fluent and original is the main thing in preaching and, provided a man is a clever orator, it is a proper thing to hear him. The Lord will wither with the breath of His nostrils that cleverness in any man which departs from the simplicity of the Truth of God! There is a Gospel and, "there is also another gospel which is not another,

but there are some that trouble you.” There is a yes, yes, and there is a no, no—and woe unto those whose preaching is yes *and* no, for it shall not stand in the Great Day when the Lord shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. Search, my Brothers and Sisters, and know what the Gospel is—and when you know it, hold it—hold it as with a hand of iron and never relax your grasp!

Grievous wolves have come in among us, wolves of another sort to what were used to be in the Churches, yet, verily, after the same fashion they come disguised in sheep’s clothing! They use our very terms and phrases, meaning all the while something else! They take away the essentials and vitalities of the faith and replace them with their own inventions, which they brag of as being more consistent with modern thought and with the culture of this very advanced and enlightened age, which seems by degrees to be advancing, half of it to Paganism with the Ritualists and the other half of it to Atheism with the Rationalists. From such advances may God save us! May we be enabled to keep the faith and uphold the Truths of God which we know, by which, also, we are saved!

I, for one, cannot desert the grand doctrines of the atoning blood, the substitutionary work of Christ and the Truths which cluster around them. And why can I not desert these things? Because my life, my peace, my hope hang upon them. I am a lost man if there is no Substitutionary Sacrifice, and I know it! If the Son of God did not die, “the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God,” I must be damned! And, therefore, all the instincts of my nature cling to the faith of Jesus. How can I give up that which has redeemed my soul and given me joy and peace and a hope hereafter? I beseech you, do not waver in your belief, but keep the faith, lest you be like some in old time, who “made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience,” and were utterly cast away. Woe unto those who keep not the doctrines of the Gospel, for in due time they forget its precepts, also, and become utterly reprobate! In departing from Christ men forsake their own mercies both for life and death. The blessed who die in the Lord are those who “keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”

Notice that these people *continue faithful till they die*. For it is said, “Blessed are the dead which *die* in the Lord.” Final perseverance is the crown of the Christian life. “You did run well; what did hinder you that you should not obey the Truth?” Vain is it to *begin* to build—we must crown the edifice—or all men will deride us. Helmet and plume, armor and sword—are all assumed for nothing unless the warrior fights on till he has secured the victory. Those who thus entered into rest, *exercised themselves in labors for Christ*. For it is said, “They rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.” The idle Christian can have little hope of a reward. He who serves not his Master can scarcely expect that his Master will at the last gird Himself and serve him!

If I address any here who are not bringing forth fruit unto God, I can say no less than this, “Every tree that brings not forth fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.” “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap.” The rule is invariable. It must be so. If there are no works and no labors for Christ, no suffering or patient endurance, we lack the main *evidence* of being the people of God at all! To

close this description of character, these people who die in the Lord *were in the Lord*. That is the great point! They could not have *died* in the Lord if they had not *lived* in the Lord.

But are *we* in the Lord? Is the Lord, by faith, in us? Dear Hearer, are you resting upon Jesus Christ only? Is He all your salvation and all your desire? What is your reply to my enquiry? You are not perfect, but Jesus is! Are you hanging upon Him as the vessel hangs upon the nail? You cannot expect to stand before God with acceptance in yourself, but are you, “accepted in the Beloved”? That is the question—“accepted in the Beloved.” Are you in Christ, and is Christ in you by real vital *union*—by a faith that is the gift of God and the work of the Holy Spirit in your soul? Answer, I charge you, for if you cannot answer these things before one of your own flesh and blood, how will you answer in your soul when the Lord, Himself shall come?

II. So much with regard to the character. And now a very few words with regard to THE BLESSEDNESS which is ascribed to those who die in the Lord. “They rest from their labors.” By this is meant that the saints in Heaven *rest from such labors as they performed here*. No doubt they fulfill service in Heaven. It would be an unhappy Heaven in which there should be nothing for our activities to spend themselves upon. But such labors as we can do *here* will not fall to our lot *there*. There we shall not teach the ignorant, or rebuke the erring, or comfort the desponding, or help the needy.

There we cannot oppose the teacher of error, or do battle against the tempter of youth. There no little children can be gathered at our knee and trained for Jesus. No sick ones can be visited with the Word of comfort, no backsliders led back, no young converts confirmed, no sinners converted. They rest from such labors as these in Heaven. They rest from their labors in the sense that they are no longer subject to the *toil* of labor. Whatever they do in Heaven will yield then refreshment and never cause them weariness. As some birds are said to rest upon the wing, so do the saints find, in holy activity, their serenest repose. They serve Him day and night in His Temple and therein they rest.

Even as on earth, by wearing our Lord’s yoke, we find rest unto our souls, so in the perfect obedience of Heaven, complete repose is found. They rest, also, from the *woe* of labor, for I find the word has been read by some, “they rest from their wailing.” The original is a word which signifies to beat and, therefore, as applied to beating on the breast it indicates sorrow. But the beating may signify conflict with the world, or labor in any form. The sorrow of work for Jesus is over with for all the blessed dead. Nothing is allowed to approach to molest their sweet peace. They shall no more say that they are sick, neither shall adversity afflict them. Their rest is *perfect*.

I do not know whether the idea of rest is cheering to all of you, but to some of us whose work exceeds our strength, it is full of pleasantness. Some have bright thoughts of service hereafter and I hope we all have, but to those who have more to do for Christ than the weary brain can endure—the prospect of a rest has in it the ocean of rest and very pleasant. They rest from their labors. To the servant of the Lord it is very sweet to

think that when we reach our heavenly home we shall rest from the *faults* of our labors. We shall make no mistakes there! We shall never use too strong language or mistaken words, nor err in spirit, nor fail through excess or lack of zeal. We shall rest from all that which grieves us in the retrospect of our service.

Our holy things up there will not need to be wept over, though now they are daily salted with our tears. We shall, there, rest from the *discouragements* of our labor. There, no cold-hearted Brethren will damp our ardor, or accuse us of evil motives. No desponding Brethren will warn us that we are rash when our faith is strong and obstinate when our confidence is firm. None will pluck us by the sleeve and hold us back when we would run the race with all our might. None will chide us because our way is different from theirs—and none will foretell disaster and defeat when we confidently know that God will give us the victory. We shall also rest from the disappointments of labor. Dear Brother ministers, we shall not have to go home and tell our Lord that none have believed our report!

We shall not go to our beds sleepless because certain of our members are walking inconsistently and others of them are backsliding, while those that we *thought* were converted have gone back again to the world. Here we must sow in tears—there we shall reap in joy! There we shall wear the crown, or rather cast it at our Master's feet. But here we must plunge deep into the sea to fetch up the pearls from the depths, that they may be set in His diadem. Here we labor, there we shall enjoy the fruits of toil where no blight or mildew can endanger the harvest. It will be a sweet thing to get away to Heaven, I am sure, to rest from all *contentions* among our fellow Christians. One of the hardest parts of Christ's service is to follow peace and to maintain His Truth at the same time.

He is a wise chemist who can, in due proportions, blend the pure and the peaceable. He is no mean philosopher who can duly balance the duties of affection and faithfulness and show us how to smite the sin and love the sinner—to denounce the error and yet to cultivate affection for the Brother who has fallen into it. We shall not encounter this difficulty in yon bright world of Truth and Love, for both we and our Brethren shall be fully taught of the Lord in all things! We shall be free from the clouds and mists of doubt which now cover the earth and clear of the demon spirits which seek to ruin men's souls beneath the shadow of deadly falsehood. Blessed be God for this prospect! It will be joy, indeed, to meet no one but a saint! To speak with none but those who use the language of Canaan! To commune with none but the sanctified! Truly blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, if they reach to such as this—

***“To this our laboring souls aspire,
With ardent pangs of strong desire.”***

“Our feet shall stand within your gates, O Jerusalem.”

III. The last matter for our consideration is THE REWARD of the blessed dead—“They rest from their labors and their works do follow them.” They do not go *before* them—they have a Forerunner infinitely superior to their works, for Jesus and His finished work have led the way. “I go,” He says, “to prepare a place for you.” In effect He says to us, “Not your works, but Mine. Not your tears, but My blood. Not your efforts, but My finished work shall lead the van.” How, then, do our works come? Do

they march at our right hand or our left as subjects of cheering contemplation? No, no, we dare not take them as companions to comfort us!

They *follow* us at our heels. They keep behind us out of sight and we, ourselves, in our desires after holiness, always outmarch them. The Christian should always keep his best services behind, always going beyond them, and never setting them before his eyes as objects for congratulation. The preacher should labor to preach the best sermons possible, but he must never have them before him so as to cause him, in self-satisfaction, to say, "I have done well." Nor should he have them by his side, as if he rested in them, or leaned upon them—for this were to make antichrists of them. No, let them come behind! That is their proper place. Believers know where to put good works—they do not despise them, they never say a word to depreciate the Law, or undervalue the Graces of the Holy Spirit—but still they dare not put their holiest endeavors in the place of Christ. Jesus goes before, works follow after.

Note well, that *the works are in existence and are mentioned*—immortality and honor belong to them. The works of godly men are not insignificant or unimportant as some seem to think. They are not forgotten, they are not as the sere leaves of last year's summer. They are full of life and bloom profusely. They follow the saints as they ascend to Heaven, even as the silver trail follows in the wake of the vessel. I pictured, just now, a man burning at the stake. His enemies thought they had destroyed his work, but they only deepened its hold upon the age in which he suffered—and projected his influence into the effect for ages to come! They made a pile of his books and, as they blazed before his eyes, they said, "There is an end of you and your heresies."

Ah, what fools men have become! Truth is not vanquished with such weapons, no, nor so much as wounded! Think of the case of Wycliffe, which I need not repeat to you. They threw his ashes into the brook—the brook carried them to the river and the river to the sea—till every wave bore its portion of the precious relics, just as the influence of his preaching has been felt on every shore! Persecutors concluded beyond all question that they had made an end of a good man's teaching when they had burned him and thrown away his ashes—but they forgot that the Truth of God often gathers a more vigorous life from the death of the man who speaks it—and books once written have an immortality which laughs at fire!

Thousands of infidel and heathen works have gone, so that not a copy is to be found—I hope they never may be unearthed from the salutary oblivion which entombs them—but books written for the Master and His Truth, though buried in obscurity, are sure of a resurrection! Fifty years ago our old Puritan authors' writings, yellow with age and arrayed in dingy bindings, wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, destitute, afflicted, tormented—but they have been brought forth in new editions! Every library is enriched with them! The most powerful religious thought is affected by their utterances and will be till the end of time! You cannot kill a good man's work, nor a good woman's work, either, though it is only the teaching of a few children in Sunday school. You do not know to

whom you may be teaching Christ, but assuredly you are sowing seed which will blossom and flower in the far off ages.

When Mrs. Wesley taught her sons, little did she think what they would become. You do not know who may be in your class, my young Friend. You may have there a young Whitfield and, if the Lord enables you to lead him to Jesus, he will bring thousands to decision. Yes, at your breast, good woman, there may be hanging one whom God will make a burning and a shining light! And if you train that little one for Jesus, your work will never be lost. No holy tear is forgotten, it is in God's bottle. No desire for another's good is wasted, God has heard it.

A word spoken for Jesus, a mite cast into Christ's treasury, a gracious line written to a friend—all these are things which shall last when yonder sun has blackened into a coal and the moon has curdled into a clot of blood. Deeds done in the power of the Spirit are eternal! Therefore, "Be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Good works *follow* Christians and they will be rewarded. The rewards of Heaven will be all of Grace, but there will be rewards. You cannot read the Scripture without perceiving that the Lord, first, *gives* us good works, and then, in His Grace, rewards us for them! There is a, "Well done, good and faithful servant," and there is a proportionate allotment of reward to the man who was faithful with five talents and the man who was faithful with two.

You who live for Jesus may be quite certain that your life will be recompensed in the world to come. I repeat it, the reward will not be of debt, but of Grace—but a reward there will be. Oh, the joy of knowing, when you are gone, that the Truth of God you preached is still living! I think the Apostles, since they have been in Heaven, must often have looked down on the world and marveled at the work which God helped 12 poor fishermen to do! And they must have felt a growing blessedness as they have seen nations converted by the Truth which they preached in feebleness. What must be the joy of a pastor in Glory to find his spiritual children coming in, one by one! I think, if I may, I shall go down to the gate and linger there to look for some of you. Yes, not a few shall I welcome as my children there, blessed be the name of the Lord, and what a joy it will be!

You teachers—you, my good Sister, who has brought so many to Christ—I cannot but believe that it shall multiply your Heaven to see your dear ones entering it! You will have a Heaven in every one of those whose feet you guided there! You will joy in their joy and praise the Lord in their praise. No, no, the good old cause shall never die and the Truth of God shall never perish! As I have lately read many hard things that have been spoken against the Gospel, and as in going up and down throughout this land I have seen the nation wholly given to idolatry, I have felt something of the spirit of the Pole who, wherever he wanders, says to himself, "No, Poland, you shall never perish!" Despite the darkness and ill-savor of the times, the Gospel nears its triumph. It can never perish!

Great men may fall, great reputations may grow obscure, grand philosophies may be cast into the shade, monstrous infidelities may win popularity and old superstitions may come back, again, to darken us, but Your Cross, Emmanuel, Your pure and simple Gospel, the faith our fa-

thers loved and died for, must continue to be earth's brightest light—her daystar—till the day dawns and the shadows flee away! The vessel of the Church can never be wrecked! She rocks and reels in the mad tempest, but she is sound from stem to stern, and her Pilot steers her with a hand Omnipotently wise! Her bow is in the wave, but look, she divides the sea and shakes off the mountainous billows as a lion shakes the dew from his mane! Fiercer storms than those of the present have beat upon her and yet she has kept her eye to the wind—and in the very teeth of Hell's tremendous tempests she has plowed her glorious way!

And so she will till she reaches her appointed haven. The Lord lives and the Lord reigns, and Christ from the Cross has gone to the Throne—from Gethsemane and Golgotha up to Glory—and all power is given unto Him in Heaven and in earth. We have nothing to do but to go on preaching the Gospel and baptizing in His name, according to His bidding. And the day shall come when the might shall be with the right and the Truth—and the right hand of Jesus with the iron rod shall break His adversaries and reward His friends.

The Lord acknowledges every one of us who are on His side, but if we are not on His side, oh, that we may speedily become so by repentance and faith! May the Lord turn us and we shall be turned, for if, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord," depend upon it, *cursed* are they that die *out* of Christ—yes, cursed with a curse—and their works shall follow them or go before them, unto judgement, to their condemnation! May Infinite Mercy save us from being howled at by our works in the next world, save us from being hunted down by the wolves of our past sins risen from the dead! Remember, unless we are forgiven, our transgressions will rise from the grave of forgetfulness and gather around us, and tear us in pieces—and there shall be none to deliver.

May we fly, even now, to Jesus, and through faith in His blood be delivered from all evil, that we also may have it said of us, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." The Lord bless you for Christ's sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Revelation 16.*
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—878, 853, 852.**

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THE HARVEST AND THE VINTAGE

NO. 2910

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1904.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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“And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud One sat like unto the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Your sickle, and reap: for the time is come for You to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in Heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in your sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God and the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.”
Revelation 14:14-20.

I AM no Prophet, nor the son of a Prophet. Neither do I profess to be able to explain all the prophecies in this blessed Book. I believe that many of them will only be explained as the events occur which they foretell. Yet there are some things which are plain even to the most superficial reader. It is plain, for instance, that it is certainly foretold that the power of antichrist shall be utterly and eternally destroyed and that Babylon, that is to say, the Papal system, with all its abominations, shall be cast like a millstone into the flood to rise no more forever. It is also certain that the Jews, as a people, will yet acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of David, as their King, and that they will return to their own land, “and they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.” It is also certain that our Lord Jesus Christ will come again to this earth and that He will gloriously reign among His ancients and that there will be a thousand years of joy and peace such as were never known on this earth before! It is also certain that there will be a great and general judgment when all nations shall be gathered before the Son of Man sitting upon the Throne of His Glory—and His final word concerning these upon His left hand will be, “These shall go away into

everlasting punishment” and, concerning those upon His right hand, “but the righteous into life eternal.”

How all these great events are to be chronologically arranged, I cannot tell. This I know—for I have read a multitude of books upon this subject, and of making them there is practically no end—all the authors seem to me to be wonderfully wise in confuting one another, but not to be so successful in establishing their own theories! Therefore I am content to believe what I see to be clearly taught in the Scriptures and to leave to abler minds than my own the arrangement of the various events in some sort of historical sequence. This, however, seems to me to be clearly revealed in the Scriptures—that there is to come—we know not when—a solemn winding up of all the events of this world’s history. Whatever else may happen, or may not happen, the Apostle Paul plainly declared that God “has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He has ordained. Therefore He has given assurance unto all men in that He has raised Him from the dead.” Even though we cannot comprehend some things that are foretold by John, or Isaiah, or Daniel, or Ezekiel, we know that “it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” And that “we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to what he has done, whether it is good or bad.” Judgment must certainly come, even to the house of God, for Peter says that there it shall *begin*! And if it shall begin there, “what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God?”

That there will be a Day of Judgment appears to be clear even to human reason, for, apart from Revelation, or, perhaps, assisted by some dim relics of it, all nations—I think I may say all, for no exceptions are known to me—have believed in a judgment. They have called it by different names and they have described it in various ways, but they have all believed, more or less clearly, in a great Throne of Justice, before which wrongs will be rectified, sin will be punished and righteousness will be rewarded. This has seemed so self-evident, even to the crudest thoughts of the lowest of mankind, that, in some shape or other, the most unenlightened nations have believed it! And it strikes one, at once, as being most reasonable, for, in this world, how often does infamy triumph! How often is oppression linked with power to destroy innocence and virtue! What are the groans, sighs and wails that I hear and what are the tears that I see but the outbursts of men who are being crushed beneath the awful burden of lifelong injustice? The best of men are, all too often, trodden down as the very mire of the street, while the worst are sitting proudly in the high places of the earth! If there is a God at all—and we know that there is—there must be a time and a way of rectifying all this in another state! And so there is, as David says, “Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily He is a God that judges in the earth.” And, therefore, verily there must be a time of judgment for the *ungodly*—even common reason seems to teach us that!

Moreover, there is within us all a conscience which Shakespeare says, “does make cowards of us all.” And well I think that it may do so since

we have all sinned and turned from the path of right. Let man do what he will with that conscience—unless there is an extraordinary restraint put upon it—it bears testimony to the great fact that the judgment is coming on apace! We have known men stifle or silence this voice till they have come to a sick-bed, or have been at sea in a storm—yet why have they been so alarmed at the approach of death? Death itself is not to be feared, but it is—

**“The dread of something after death—
The undiscovered country, from whose boundary
No traveler returns”—**

that makes a man cling even to an ignominious and shameful life rather than hurry himself, all unprepared, before the bar of God! Men who have, when in health, denied this, have, as they have lain dying, proved that they believed it by the cold clammy sweat that has stood upon their brow at the very thought of passing into the spirit world! They have known that there is a God—a God who must do right—and knowing that they have done wrong they have been afraid to fall into the hands of the living God!

But we are not left to the faint taper of human reason, or to the flickering candle of conscience—we have the full sunlight of Divine Revelation! Our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, has told us, in many different ways, sometimes by parable, and sometimes by plain speech, that there is a day assuredly coming in which all mankind shall stand before His bar. And the Apostle John, in the visions which we are about to consider, had a view—not exactly of the Judgment itself—but of a parable or picture of that Judgment. May the Holy Spirit help us to look into it with Divinely-opened eyes and may He graciously impress the Truth of God concerning the Judgment upon all our hearts!

Before we consider my main subject, let me call your attention to what John says about the coming of the Judge. “I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.”

Observe then, first, *the Judge’s Throne*. On that great Judgment Day, He will come sitting upon a cloud. What can this metaphor mean? Surely it must mean that His Judgment Seat will be far more glorious than the thrones of mere mortal monarchs. They may sit upon thrones of ivory. They may exalt themselves upon thrones made of gold and bedecked with myriads of gems shining like the eyes of the morning, or the stars of the midnight sky—but their thrones can never be compared in splendor with the Judgment Seat of Christ! A Great White Throne shall come sailing along the sky and on it shall sit the King of kings, and Lord of lords—the Judge of All—who has the right to sit in judgment, whose decisions will be impartial and Infallible and whose sentences will assuredly be carried out! He asks not for any throne that this world could supply. He borrows no leave to judge from Parliament, or Pope, or prince. He is Judge by Divine Right, as from God, Himself, and as the Mediator, appointed by God to judge the quick and the dead!

His mysterious Throne is also said to be “a white cloud.” The word expresses not so much the color of whiteness as the dazzling brilliancy of a white substance—dazzling because of its perfect purity. A Throne as of alabaster shall that white cloud be to Him—a throne as of transparent glass, pure as crystal—a Throne that shall be without spot or blemish—a Throne whose judgment no bribe can ever influence—a Throne concerning which it may be said that the Judge seated there never fears the face of man or devil, nor will He ever do any man or devil an injustice, but will “lay judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet.”

The Judge’s Throne, then, shall be unique for its splendor and unearthly purity. And He will be seated upon a cloud which will be so elevated in the sky that all can see it. If Christ were to be seated upon a throne set up at Jerusalem or at Rome, only a part of the world’s vast population would be able to behold Him, but on that tremendous day there shall be an audience chamber large enough to hold the quick and the dead of all climes and all times! And Christ shall be there, above them all, “and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.” On some calm summer evenings, as the sun has been setting, I have seen a cloud, wafted by the wind in the very face of the sun and the sun has shone upon it, lighting it up with such glory as only Heaven could give! And I have said to myself, “So shall it be in that Day when the Son of Man shall appear, seated upon a white cloud as His last Throne of Judgment.”

Now turn your eyes for a little while from the Judge’s Throne to *His Person*. “Upon the cloud One sat like unto the Son of Man.” And well may John say “like unto the Son of Man,” for it is none but He, “THE Son of Man.” Man has had many sons, but no other like this “Son of Man!” He is the truest Man who ever lived—the most manly of all men—the only One in whom manhood has reached its perfection! And in that day every eye shall see that though He is “very God of very God,” yet is He also just as truly Man. They shall behold the nail-prints in His hands and His feet, and the marks of the spear in His side. And they shall see that it is even He whom they called, “the Nazarene,” and whom wicked men nailed to the Cross of Calvary. It is HE who shall come to judge the quick and the dead—the gentle Jesus, “meek and lowly in heart,” still full of love and abundant in mercy, for those attributes can never depart from our Lord Jesus Christ! Yet they will be consistent with the sternest justice and the most unflinching administration of the Law of God. It will go ill, in that day, with those who have despised the Lamb of Calvary, for they shall find that He is also “the Lion of the tribe of Judah!” None are more terrible in justice than those who are tender in mercy. Bring to me the gentlest spirit that ever lived and begin to tell the tale of the Bulgarian massacres—and I will guarantee you that in proportion to the tenderness will be the indignation! They who have no heart cannot display real indignation—but where there beats a true heart of love, there must be righteous wrath against that which is unloving—holy anger against that which is unjust and true. So shall it be with Him who will sit upon the white cloud. With a perfectly balanced mind, calm and absolutely impartial,

gentle, yet terrible, He will sit upon that Throne of spotless purity, “and every eye shall see Him.” My eyes shall see Him and your eyes shall see Him—and the eyes of everyone who has been born of woman shall see Him on that day!

We have glanced at the Judge’s Throne and at His Person. Now let us note *His adornments*. John mentions that He saw “on His head a golden crown.” That is to signify that He is a Sovereign and, indeed, as I have already reminded you, He is King of kings and Lord of lords—and He is to be the Judge of All by virtue of His Divine Authority and Power. How different it will be to see Him with a crown of gold upon His head from what it was to see Him wearing that terrible crown of thorns which the cruel soldiers plaited and thrust upon His brow! The word used here does not usually refer to the diadem of power, but to the crown *won in conflict*—and it is very remarkable that it should be said that when Christ comes to judge the world, He will wear the garland of victory—the crown which He has won in the great battle which He has fought. How significant of His final triumph will that crown of gold be about that brow that was once covered with bloody sweat when He was fighting the battle for our salvation! As His saints catch a glimpse of that fillet of gold, they will remember His victorious words, “It is finished!” And the very sight of that golden crown will fill their hearts with ineffable joy and delight, for they will recollect that He triumphed on the Cross for them and that He has vanquished all their foes and now He has come to claim them as the reward of His struggles and the spoils of His victory!

Give one more look at the Judge upon His Throne and you will see that He carries “in His hand a sharp sickle” or reaping-hook. This is His scepter and it signifies that He has come to finish His last great work which will be sharp, swift and decisive. When He came to fight the battle of Truth, “out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword,” but now it is hand-work rather than mouth-work with Him. There will be no ministry of mercy now, no further proclamation of the Gospel, but, with a sharp sickle, Christ will come to reap! The sowing time will be over and the reaping time will have come. What a sight that will be! “For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.” On that last tremendous day when the earth will be rocking and reeling to and fro in terror at His coming, there will be a fulfillment of that verse in the last chapter of this Book—“He who is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he who is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he who is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he who is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.”

I. Now follow me while we look, first, at THE HARVEST and may the Spirit of God render these great Truths of God exceedingly impressive to us! The first thing to be done, at the coming of the Lord, is to gather to Himself His own people—the wheat which He Himself sowed—the precious grain which He watered with His bitter tears and His bloody sweat. “Another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him

that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Your sickle, and reap: for the time is come for You to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.”

Notice that *this reaping comes first* and I think it comes *first in order of time*. If I read the Scriptures aright, there are to be two resurrections and the first will be the resurrection of the righteous, for it is written, “but the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power.” Sometimes, in Scripture, the resurrection of the just and of the unjust is represented as taking place simultaneously and, at other times, they are represented as having an interval of a thousand years between the two. Yet a thousand years are but as one day to God and it may be that the whole period is included in the Day of Judgment. Still, it strikes me that we have sufficient warrant from Scripture to say that in the order of time, the harvest comes before the vintage, as Paul says, “The dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” After that, I gather that He will come to judge and to condemn the wicked.

But, certainly, if not first in order of time, it is here put *first in order of importance*, for it is the gathering in of the wheat to which Christ especially looks forward. It is this on which His soul is set with ardent longing. Judgment is His strange work, His left-handed work, but, “He delights in mercy” and He will put this work first when He comes to “judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His Truth.” He has such regard for His saints that “when He makes inquisition for blood, He remembers them.” His eye is always fixed upon them and even on the Day of Judgment, the great event to Christ shall be the clearing of the righteous from every accusation that may be brought against them—the complete and final justification of as many as have believed in Him!

We can see, from reading this passage, that those to be left after the righteous are gathered in, are very clearly indicated. In this world, in the present state, there is a mixture of good and bad. Here, the tares and the wheat grow close together in the same field and, as a general rule, no man can tell the tares from the wheat. If any of us were to try to root up the tares, we would be almost sure to also root up the wheat. But, in that Day, the righteous and the wicked will be easily distinguished from one another. Nobody ever mistook an ear of wheat for a cluster of grapes and when Christ comes, the distinction between the righteous and the wicked will be as clearly manifested between a field of wheat in the time of harvest and a vineyard when the grapes are ripe. It is plainly declared that in that Day, God’s wheat will be ripe for the heavenly garner—“Thrust in Your sickle, and reap: for the time is come for You to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.” When the Lord Jesus comes, every child of God will be found to be ripe for Heaven. There is a great deal of greenness and sourness in us while we are in the blade and in the ear—but when we are dried—as the word might be translated—when the wheat has become mellowed by the ripening influences of autumn—then shall we be as

sweet, ripe corn for the Lord of the Harvest to gather into His garner! Some of you do not feel very ripe at present, but you may rest assured that you will not be harvested until you are fully ripe. The Lord will not reap one ear of His corn green and He has a secret way of preparing His people for Heaven when He has prepared Heaven for them. The righteous will be perfectly ripe in that day! “The time is come for You to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.”

Notice, also, that they are all to be gathered in and that this great task is to be accomplished by the crowned King, Himself. I want that fact to be specially noted by you, so let me again read the 16th verse. “And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.” With the golden crown upon His brow, He that is like unto the Son of Man will stoop from His Throne of cloud and reap His saints—gathering them all to His bosom in one glorious sweep of His strong right arm! It does not say that Christ will send an angel to do this reaping. His love to His chosen is so great that He will not entrust this task to any angel, but will do it all Himself! He alone knows how much that ripe corn has cost Him. Those precious souls were espoused unto Him from eternity and they were redeemed by Him with His own heart’s blood! They are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones, so He gathers them unto Himself and does not think it beneath His dignity to be the Reaper of this golden grain Himself! Do you not delight in that thought—you who love the Lord? Does not your heart rejoice in knowing that in that Great Day when you stand like ripe corn, Christ shall come, sitting upon a white cloud and having on His head a golden crown and, with the sharp sickle in His hand, He will gather you unto Himself with the glad joy of the reaper?

It is another metaphor that we find in the Book of Malachi, but it has the same meaning—“They shall be Mine, says the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels.” None can tell, not even those who have had the greatest sympathy with Christ in the sowing, what will be His joy in the reaping! Or what shall be our joy, too, when we enter into the joy of our glorified Lord! The harvest, even on earth, is a happy time—hear how the reapers sing and shout as they carry the golden sheaves into the garner! But what rejoicing and what shouting there will be when we, as shocks of corn fully ripe, are taken Home to the heavenly garner! Well did we sing, just now, in anticipation of that last harvest home—

“Hallelujah!

Welcome, welcome, Son of God!”

May you and I, dear Friends, all be garnered among the wheat in that great harvest day!

II. Now, for a little while, we must have the very heavy task of looking at THE VINTAGE.

The vintage represents the destruction of the wicked. “And another angel came out of the temple which is in Heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.” You see, it is not the crowned Christ who comes to do this work of judgment, but an angel. “And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the

sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in your sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.” I want to speak to you very calmly, yet very solemnly, about this last vintage, because it may concern some of you. If you do not escape from the wrath to come, it *will* concern you—awfully and terribly concern you!

Notice, first, that *this vintage comes after the harvest*. As I have told you, I think it will be so in the order of time. After Christ shall have gathered His saints unto Himself, then shall He summon the wicked to appear before His Judgment Seat. Then shall follow their terrible condemnation and even if it is not second in the order of time, it will be second in the order of importance. Dreadful as is their doom, our Lord Jesus Christ does not look upon that as the principal event of that Last Great Day. His own words are, “The Son of Man shall send forth His angels and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous come forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.” As I said before, the wicked will be clearly distinguished from the righteous in that Day. Nobody will mistake them then. They may be mistaken here, for they may go to the same place of worship, they may sing the same hymns and, in many respects, they may be like the children of God. We may easily mistake tares—such tares as Christ mentioned—for blades of wheat, but again I remark that there is no possibility of mistaking a cluster of grapes for an ear of corn! So, in that Day, there will be no way of evading the Judge’s Infallible Judgment—there will be no miscarriage of justice before the bar of God!

Observe, next, that the *condemnation of the ungodly is called for by the angel of fire*. “Another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire.” Ah, me! What does this mean? Has God appointed some holy spirits to watch over the instruments of terror with which He will execute the fierceness of His wrath? Was that the angel, “which had power over fire,” who launched the thunderbolts in Egypt on that dread night when the first-born in all the land were slain unless they were sheltered under the sprinkled blood? Was that the angel, “which had power over fire,” who smote the hosts of Sennacherib? Was that the angel, “which had power over fire,” who opened the furnaces of Hell and caused fire and brimstone to descend on guilty Sodom and Gomorrah? It may be and that this same angel shall come forward, at the last, to demand that justice shall be executed upon those who have despised God and rejected Jesus Christ whom He has sent!

It appears also, from the parable, that *the wicked will be fully ripe for punishment*. That is a very strong expression in the 18th verse—“Gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; *for her grapes are fully ripe*.” The righteous are said to be ripe—some of them, perhaps, only just ripe—but the wicked are fully ripe, for sin has a wonderfully ripening effect upon men. They add iniquity unto iniquity until they have filled up the measure of it. The Greek word used here means that they have reached their *acme*—they have come to the highest point of sin! Are any of you here fully ripe? Why, I think that one sin makes a man ripe for judgment, but

to go on, year after year, despising Christ and rejecting His Gospel must make man what we call “dead ripe.” When a man goes on to profanity, blasphemy and infidelity, surely he must be “fully ripe.” So will all be in that great Day of the gathering of the vintage of woe! And, just as the clusters of the vine cannot resist the force of the hand that plucks them, or the sharp knife that cuts them off, so shall the wicked, in that day, be utterly defenseless, hopeless and helpless! And he that reaps them with his sharp sickle, shall find no difficulty in cutting them all off. Again I remind you that it will not be Christ who will do this work—an angel will do it, not the crowned King seated on the white cloud! They would not have anything to do with Him, so He will have nothing to do with them except to deliver them over to the angel that has power over fire and His brother executioner!

What a terrible sight that judgment will be! As John looked upon it in his vision, I feel sure that his very bones must have trembled and the marrow in them must have melted as he saw that angel with his sharp sickle quickly reap all the clusters of the vine of the earth and cast them into the great winepress of the Wrath of God. O Sinner, this is but a faint picture of the doom of the lost, yet the picture itself is too terrible for me to try to describe or explain! What will happen, in that great Day, when you shall be reaped and cast into the great winepress of the Wrath of God, or, as it may be read, “the great winepress of an angry God”? Ask yourself, my Hearer, this solemn question, “Shall I ever be cast into that great winepress?” If you continue to reject the mercy of Christ, what else can happen to you?

Note, further, that *this winepress is “outside the city”*—not in the New Jerusalem—not in Heaven—but “outside the city.” That reminds us of another winepress, or olive press, which was “outside the city” and which was called Gethsemane where He who shall, by-and-by, be seated on the white cloud, Himself suffered even unto agony and bloody sweat. These people would not plead His sufferings on their own account—they would not have Him to reign over them and, therefore, they must go into the great winepress of the angry God. Perhaps, in that dread day, if any of you are there—which may God in mercy prevent!—you will remember that wondrous passage in the prophecy of Isaiah in which Christ says, “I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me.” And as you would not have the salvation which He worked out in that winepress, you must be cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God!

“And the winepress was trodden outside the city.” This represents the awful suffering of lost souls, the eternal punishment that will then begin. And, as the red juice spurts from the trodden grapes, so did John, in his terrible vision, see the blood of men come flowing forth, “even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.” That metaphor and measurement are meant to show how terrible is the wrath of God against the ungodly. Perhaps someone here says, “That is too terrible a theme to talk about.” Then, what must it be to *endure* it? Somebody will object to my words upon this awful topic. No, Sir, be criti-

cal of the Scriptures, not of me! I do not explain the idea, but I tell you what John saw in vision. "It was only a vision," someone says. I know it was, but the reality will be far more terrible! There can be no possible exaggeration of the wrath of God! I beseech you, my dear Hearers—though I know not, and never wish to know much about this dreadful subject—remember that what we do know about the doom of the lost is enough to make one's hair stand on end and one's heart almost to cease to beat! So I beseech you, do not risk that doom for yourselves! Escape for your lives! Look not behind you, but flee to the one Refuge which God has provided. Whoever will entrust His soul to Jesus Christ shall be eternally saved! Look to Him who wore the crown of thorns and repose your soul's entire confidence in Him! And then, in that Last Great Day, you shall see Him seated on the white cloud, wearing the golden crown and you shall be gathered, with the wheat, into His garner!

But if you reject Him, do not think it wrong that you should be cast with the grapes into the winepress of the Wrath of God and be trodden with the rest of "the clusters of the vine of the earth." I beg you to take Christ as your Savior this very hour lest this night you should die unsaved! Lay hold of Jesus lest you never hear another Gospel invitation or warning. If I have seemed to speak terribly, God knows that I have done it out of love to your souls and, believe me, that I do not speak as strongly as the Truth of God might well permit me to do, for there is something far more terrible about the doom of the lost than language can ever express or thought conceive!

God save all of you from ever suffering that doom, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: REVELATION 14.

Verse 1. *And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Zion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads.* The great question for us is—shall we be among the number? If we have the Father's name engraved upon our hearts, we may conclude that we shall, one day, have it written on our foreheads, and that we shall be among that chosen company.

2, 3. *And I heard a voice from Heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the Throne of God, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.* Notice how loud their singing was—it was like many waters and great thunder. But notice, also, the sweetness of it, for it was melodious as the music of well-skilled harpers harping with their harps. Note, too, the freshness, the vivacity of it—"they sang as it were a new song." Shall we be there to sing that new song? If so, we must be "redeemed from the earth," not with a general, but with a *particular redemption*, which lifts us up from the rest of our fellow creatures. And

we must also have attended the saved rehearsals, for none can sing in Heaven but those who have learned the song and none can learn it but those who are “redeemed from the earth.”

4, 5. *These are they which were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb wherever He goes, these were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the Throne of God.* Now we have another vision.

6, 7. *And I saw another angel fly in the midst of Heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made Heaven, and earth, and the sea and the fountains of waters.* This vision represents the spread of the Gospel. It is generally referred to the Reformation period, when, all of a sudden, the Truth of God, which had so long lain hidden in old musty books, was proclaimed in every marketplace. Beneath many a “Gospel oak” the good news was told out—the good news concerning Christ—as if an angel were flying through the midst of Heaven. This preaching of the Truth of God led to the commencement of the downfall of Rome, which is here called, Babylon, and which is ultimately to fall to utter and everlasting ruin.

8. *And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.* That is spiritual fornication, as we understand it in the Old Testament—man’s idolatry—the setting up of visible objects of worship instead of the invisible God. And what is there, in all the world, that is so idolatrous as the so-called “religion” of Rome? She multiplies her idol gods to great excess—her crosses and her crucifixes, her saints and her “sacraments” and her relics—her “old cast clouts” and her “old rotten rags.” The Papacy is the most pagan of all the paganisms that have ever existed on the face of the earth—but it is to come to an end, for the mouth of the Lord has said so.

9, 10. *And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead, or on his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation, and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.* How clear, therefore, we ought to keep out of this idolatrous system! For even if we have not the mark of the beast on our foreheads by an open profession of loyalty to it, yet if we have the mark on our hands by being the partakers of Rome’s sins, we shall also be partakers of her plagues concerning Romanism in all its forms! The great message to be proclaimed today is, “Come out of her, my people—come away from her, as far as the poles are asunder—that you be not partakers of her sins and that you receive not of her plagues.”

11, 12. *And the smoke of their torment ascends up forever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his im-*

age, and whoever receives the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. Truly Rome has tried “the patience of the saints.” What country is there in Europe which has not been dyed crimson with the blood of the martyrs? The rack, the stake, the brook, the dungeon, the fires—all sorts of cruelties have been practiced upon those who “keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Let the valleys of Piedmont speak! Do they not cry aloud to our God for vengeance? Let the St. Bartholomew massacre bear witness before the living God! Let the stakes of Smithfield say, “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

13. *And I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.* It matters not where they die, or under what ignominy they die—whether branded with the name of heretic, or cast out as the offscouring of all things, yet blessed are they and their works follow them to Heaven to bear witness to their faith! And they spiritually continue to live on earth to propagate the gracious Seed for which they, by His Grace, laid down their lives!

14-18. *And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud One sat like unto the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Your sickle, and reap: for the time is come for You to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in Heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in your sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. After the glad harvest comes the sad vintage. After the gathering in of the righteous, there will be the gathering in of the wicked.*

19, 20. *And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the Wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.*

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—364, 345, 363.

—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.**

ISRAEL IN EGYPT

NO. 136

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JUNE 14, 1857,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Your ways, You King of saints.”
Revelation 15:3.***

AT the outset, let us remark the carefulness of the Holy Spirit in guarding the honor of our blessed Lord. This verse is often quoted as if it run thus—“They sing the song of Moses and the Lamb.” This mistake has led many weak minds to wonder at the expression, for they have imagined that it divided the honor of the song of Heaven between Moses and the Redeemer. The clause—“the servant of God”—is doubtless inserted by the Holy Spirit to prevent any error upon this point and, therefore, it should be carefully included in the quotation. I take it that the song of Moses is here united with the song of the Lamb because the one was a type and picture of the other. The glorious overthrow of Pharaoh in the Red Sea shadowed forth the total destruction of Satan and all his host in the day of the great battle of the Lord. And there was in the song of Moses the expression of the same feelings of triumph which will pervade the breasts of the redeemed when they shall triumph with their Captain!

May God the Holy Spirit enable me to exhibit *the parallel which exists between the condition of Israel when passing through the sea and the position of the Church of Christ at the present day.* Next, we shall compare *the triumph of the Lord at the Red Sea with the victory of the Lamb in the great and terrible Day of the Lord.* And lastly, I shall point out *certain prominent features of the song of Moses which will doubtless be as prominent in the song of the Lamb.*

I. First, it is our business to regard THE POSITION OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL AS EMBLEMATICAL OF OUR OWN. And here we observe that like the Church of God, the vast host of Israel had been delivered from bondage. We, my Brothers and Sisters, who constitute a part of the Israel of God, were once the slaves of sin and Satan. We served with hard bondage and rigor while in our natural state. No bondage was ever more terrible than ours. We indeed made bricks without straw and

labored in the very fire. But by the strong hand of God we have been delivered! We have come forth from the prison. With joy we behold ourselves emancipated—the Lord’s free men! The iron yoke is taken from our necks. We no longer serve our lusts and pay obedience to the tyrant’s sin. With a high hand and an outstretched arm our God has led us forth from the place of our captivity and joyfully we pursue our way through the wilderness!

But with the children of Israel it was not all joy. They were free, but their master was at their heels. Pharaoh certainly did not want to lose so valuable a nation of servants! Therefore with his chosen captains, his horsemen and his chariots, he pursued them in angry haste. Frightened Israel beheld her infuriated oppressor close at her rear and trembled—the hearts of the people failed them while they saw their hopes blighted and their joys ended by the approach of the oppressor. Even so it is with some of you. You think you must be driven back again like dumb cattle into Egypt and once more become what you were. “Surely,” you say, “I cannot hold on my way with such a host seeking to drive me back! I must again become the slave of my iniquities.” And thus you are—dreading apostasy and feeling that you would rather die than become what you were. You are filled with trepidation this morning. You are saying, “Alas, for me! Better that I had died in Egypt than that I should have come out into this wilderness to be captured again.” You have tasted, for a moment, the joys of holiness and the sweets of liberty—and now to go back to endure the bondage of a spiritual Egypt would be worse than before! This is the position of the sacramental host of God’s elect. They have come out of Egypt and they are pursuing their way to Canaan. But the world is against them! The kings of the earth stand up and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His people, saying, “Let us scatter them. Let us utterly destroy them.” From the fiery days of the stakes of Smithfield even until now, the world’s black heart has hated the Church and the world’s cruel hands and laughing lips have been forever against us! The host of the mighty are pursuing us and are thirsty for our blood and anxious to cut us off from the earth. Such is our position unto this hour and such must it be until we are landed on the other side of Jordan or until our Maker comes to reign on the earth!

But once more—the children of Israel were in a position more amazing than this. They came to the edge of the Red Sea. They feared their enemies behind them. They could not flee on either hand, for they were flanked by mountains and stupendous rocks. Only one course was open to them and that course was through the sea! God commands them to go forward. The rod of Moses is outstretched and the waters divide. A chan-

nel is left while the floods stand upright and the waters are congealed in the heart of the sea! The priests bearing the Ark , march forward. The whole host of Israel follow. And now behold the wondrous pilgrimage! A wall of alabaster is on either side and myriads are in the pebbly depths. Like a wall of glass, the sea stands on either side of them, frowning with cliffs of foam. But still on they march—and until the last of God’s Israel is safe—the water stands still and firm, frozen by the lips of God! Such, my Hearers, is the position of God’s Church now! You and I are marching through a sea, the floods of which are kept upright only by the Sovereign Power of God. This world is a world which is suddenly to be destroyed. And our position in it is just the position of the children of Israel, for whose sake the floods refused to meet until they were safely landed. O Church of God! You are the salt of the earth—when you are removed, this earth must putrefy and decay! O living army of the living God! You, like Israel, keep the floods of Providence still, standing fast. But when the last of you shall be gone from this stage of action, God’s fiery wrath and tremendous anger shall dash down upon the ground whereon you now are standing and your enemies shall be overwhelmed in the place through which you now walk safely.

Let me put my thoughts as plainly as I can. Naturally, according to the common order, the Red Sea should have flowed on in a level and even manner, constant in its waves and unbroken in its surface. By the might of God, the Red Sea was divided into two parts and the floods stood back. Now mark. Naturally, according to the common course of justice, this world, which groans and travails until now, ought, if we only consider the wicked, to be utterly destroyed! The only reason why the Red Sea afforded a safe passage for the host was this—that Israel marched through it. And the only reason why this world stands and the only reason why it is not destroyed by fire, as it is to be at the last great day, is because God’s Israel are in it! But when once they shall have passed through, the parted floods shall meet their hands and embrace with eager joy to clasp the adverse host within their hands. The day is coming when this world shall reel to and stagger like a drunken man! Every Christian may say, with due reverence to God, “The world is dissolved. I bear up the pillars thereof.” Let all the Christians that are in this world die and the pillars of the earth would fall and like a wreck and a vision, all this universe of ours would pass away, never to be seen again! We are today, I say, passing through the floods with enemies behind, pursuing us who are going out of Egypt up to Canaan!

II. And now the TRIUMPH OF MOSES was a picture of the ultimate triumph of the Lamb. Moses sang a song unto the Lord by the sea of

Egypt. If you will turn to Holy Scripture, you will find that my text was sung by the holy spirits who had been preserved from sin and from the contamination of the beast. And it is said that they sung this song upon “a sea of glass mingled with fire.” Now the Song of Moses was sung by the side of a sea, which was glassy and still. For a little season the floods had been disturbed, divided, separated, congealed—but a few moments afterwards, when Israel had safely passed the flood—they became as glassy as ever, for the enemy had sunk to the bottom like a stone and the sea returned to its strength when the morning appeared. Is there ever a time, then, when this great sea of Providence, which now stands parted to give a passage to God’s saints shall become a level surface? Is there a day when the now divided dispensations of God which are kept from following out their legitimate tendency to do justice upon sin—when the two seas of justice shall commingle and the one sea of God’s Providence shall be “a sea of glass mingled with fire”? Yes, the day is drawing near when God’s enemies shall no longer make it necessary for God’s Providence to be apparently disturbed to save His people—when the great designs of God shall be accomplished and, therefore, when the walls of water shall roll together, while in their inmost depths the everlasting burning fire shall still consume the wicked! Oh, the sea shall be calm upon the surface! The sea upon which God’s people shall walk shall seem to be a sea that is clear, without a wave, without an impurity—while down in its hollow bosom, far beyond all mortal sight shall be the horrid depths where the wicked must forever dwell in the fire which is mingled with the glass!

Well, I now want to show you why it was that Moses triumphed and why it is that, by-and-by, we shall triumph. One reason why Moses sung his song was because all Israel was safe. They were all safely across the sea. Not a drop of spray fell from that solid wall until the last of God’s Israel had safely planted his foot on the other side of the flood. That done, immediately the floods dissolved into their proper place, again, but not till then. Part of that song was, “You have led Your people like a flock through the wilderness.” Now, in the last time, when Christ shall come upon earth, the great song will be—“Lord, You have saved Your people. You have led them all safely through the paths of Providence and not one of them has fallen into the hands of the enemy.” Oh, it is my strong belief that in Heaven there shall not be a vacant throne. I rejoice that all who love the Lord below must at last attain to Heaven. I do not believe, with some, that men may start on the road to Heaven and be saved and yet fall by the hand of the enemy. God forbid, my Friends—

***“All the chosen race
Shall meet around the Throne,
Shall bless the conduct of His Grace,***

And make His glories known.”

Part of the triumph of Heaven will be that there is not one throne that is unoccupied! As many as God has chosen. As many as Christ has redeemed. As many as the Spirit has called—as many as believe shall arrive safely across the stream! We are not all safely landed, yet—

***“Part of the host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing now.”***

The vanguard of the army have already reached the shore. I see them yonder—

***“I greet the blood-sprinkled bands
Upon the eternal shore.”***

And you and I, my Brothers and Sisters, are marching through the depths! We are at this day following hard after Christ and walking through the wilderness! Let us be of good cheer—the rearguard shall soon be where the vanguard already is. The last of the chosen shall soon have landed. The last of God’s elect shall have crossed the sea and then shall be heard the song of triumph, when all are secure! But oh, if *one* were absent—oh, if *one* of His chosen family should be cast away—it would make an everlasting discord in the song of the redeemed and cut the strings of the harps of Paradise! Then music could never be distilled from them again.

But, perhaps, the major part of the joy of Moses lay in the destruction of all the enemies of God. He looked upon his people the day before—

***“He looked upon his people,
And the tear was in his eye.
He looked upon the foeman
And his glance was stern and high.”***

And now today he looks upon his people and he says, “Blessed are you, O Israel, safely landed on the shore.” And he looks not upon the foeman, but upon the foeman’s tomb. He looks where the living were protected by the shield of God from all their enemies. And he sees—what? A mighty sepulcher of water! A mighty tomb in which were engulfed princes, monarchs, potentates. “The horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.” Pharaoh’s chariots are drowned therein. And soon, my Hearers, you and I shall do the same. I say that now we have to look abroad on hosts of enemies. What with the wild beasts of Rome, what with the antichrist of Mahomet, what with the thousands of idolatries and false gods, what with infidelity in all its myriad shapes—many are the enemies of God and mighty are the hosts of Hell. Lo, you see them gathered together this day—horseman upon horseman, chariot upon chariot—gathered together against the Most High. I see the trembling Church, fearing to be overthrown. I mark her leaders bending their knees in solemn prayer and cry-

ing, "Lord, save Your people and bless Your heritage!" But my eye looks through the future with telescopic glance and I see the happy period of the latter days when Christ shall reign triumphant! I shall ask them where is Babel? Where is Rome? Where is Mahomet? And the answer shall come—where? Why, they have sunk into the depths! They have sunk to the bottom as a stone! Down there the horrid fire devours them, for the sea of glass is mingled with the fire of judgment! Today I see a battlefield—the whole earth is torn by the hoofs of horses. There is the rumble of cannon and the roll of drum. "To arms! To arms!" both hosts are shouting. But you wait awhile and you shall walk across this plain of battle and say, "See that colossal system of dead error? There lies another, all frozen in ghastly death, in motionless stupor. There lies infidelity. There sleeps secularism and the secularist. There lie those who defied God. I see all this vast host of rebels lying scattered upon the earth." "Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously! Jehovah has gotten unto Himself the victory and the last of His enemies are destroyed." Then shall be the time when shall be sung "the song of Moses and of the Lamb."

III. Now, turning to the song of Moses, I shall conclude my address to you by noticing some interesting particulars in the song which will doubtless have a place in the everlasting orchestra of the redeemed when they shall praise the Most High. Oh, my Brothers and Sisters! I could but wish that I had stood by the Red Sea to have heard that mighty shout and that tremendous roar of acclamation! I think one might well have borne a servitude in Egypt just to have stood in that mighty host who sung such mighty praise! Music has charms. But never had it such charms as it had that day when fair Miriam led the women and Moses led the men, like some mighty leader, keeping time with his hand. "Sing unto the Lord, for He has done gloriously." I think I see the scene. And I anticipate the greater day, when the song shall be sung again, "as the song of Moses and of the Lamb."

Now, just notice this song. In the 15th chapter of Exodus you find it and in many of the Psalms you will see it amplified. The first thing I would have you notice in it is that from beginning to end, it is *a praise of God* and of nobody else but God! Moses, you have said nothing of yourself! O great Law-giver, mightiest of men, did not your hand grasp the mighty rod that split the sea—that burned its fair breast and left a scar for a while upon its bosom? Did not *you* lead the hosts of Israel? Did not *you* marshal their thousands for battle and like a mighty commander lead them through the depths? Is there not a word for *you*? Not one! The whole strain of the song is, "I will sing unto the Lord," from beginning to

end! It is all praise of Jehovah. There is not one word about Moses, nor a single word in praise of the children of Israel. Dear Friends, the last song in this world, the song of triumph, shall be full of God and of no one else!. Here you praise the *instrument*. Today you look on this man and on that and you say, "Thank God for this minister and for this man." Today you say, "Blessed be God for Luther who shook the Vatican. Thank God for Whitefield who stirred up a slumbering Church." But in *that* day you shall not sing of Luther, nor of Whitefield, nor of any of the mighty ones of God's hosts. Forgotten shall their names be for a season, even as the stars refuse to be seen when the sun appears. The song shall be unto Jehovah and Jehovah only! We shall not have a word to say for preachers nor bishops—not a syllable to say for good men and true! The *whole song* from first to last shall be, "Unto Him who loved us and has washed us from our sins in His own blood, unto Him be glory forever and ever. Amen."

And next will you please note that this song celebrated something of the fierceness of the enemy? Do you observe how, when the songster describes the attack of Pharaoh, he says, "The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil. My lust shall be satisfied upon them. I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them." A *song* is made out of the *wrath* of Pharaoh—and it shall be so at the last—the wrath of a man shall praise God! I believe the last song of the redeemed, when they shall ultimately triumph, will celebrate in Heavenly stanzas the wrath of man overcome by God. Sometimes after great battles, monuments are raised to the memory of the fight—of what are they composed? They are composed of weapons of death and of instruments of war which have been taken from the enemy. Now to use that illustration as I think it may be properly used, the day is coming when fury and wrath and hatred and strife shall all be woven into a *song*. And the weapons of our enemies, when taken from them, shall serve to make monuments to the praise of God! Rail on, rail on, blasphemer! Smite on, smite on, tyrant! Lift your heavy hand, O despot—crush the Truth of God, which yet you cannot crush! Knock from His head the crown—the crown that is far above your reach—poor puny impotent mortal as you are! Go on, go on! But all you do shall but increase His glories, for anything we care, we bid you still proceed with all your wrath and malice—though it shall be worse for you, it shall be more glorious for our Master! The greater your preparations for war, the more splendid shall be His triumphal chariot when He shall ride through the streets of Heaven in pompous array. The more mighty your preparations for battle, the more rich the spoil which He shall divide with the strong. Oh, Christian, fear not the foe! Remember the harder his

blows, the sweeter your song! The greater his wrath, the more splendid your triumph! The more he rages, the more shall Christ be honored in the day of His appearing! “They sung the song of Moses and the Lamb.”

And then will you note, in the next place, how they sang *the total overthrow* of the enemy. There is one expression in this song which ought to be and I believe is, when set to music, very frequently repeated. It is that part of the song, as recorded in the Psalms, where it is declared that the whole host of Pharaoh were utterly destroyed and there was not one of them left. When that great song was sung by the side of the Red Sea, there was, no doubt, a special emphasis laid upon that expression, “not one.” I think I hear the hosts of Israel. When the words were known by them, they began and they proceeded thus—“There is *not one* of them left.” And then in various parts the words were repeated, “Not one, not one.” And then the women with their sweet voices sang, “Not one, not one.” I believe that at the last, a part of our triumph will be the fact that there is not one left. We shall look abroad throughout the earth and see it all a level sea. And not one foeman pursuing us—“not one, not one!” Raise yourself ever so high, O you deceiver, you cannot live, for not one shall escape! Lift your head ever so proudly, O despot, you cannot live, for not one shall escape! O heir of Heaven, not one sin shall cross the Jordan after you! Not one shall pass the Red Sea to overtake you! And this shall be the summit of your triumph—“Not one, not one! Not one of them is left.”

Just let us note again and I will not detain you too long, lest I weary you. One part of the song of Moses consisted in praising the ease with which God destroyed His enemies. “You did blow with Your wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters.” If *we* had gone to work to destroy the hosts of Pharaoh, what a multitude of engines of death should we have required! If the work had been committed to us, to cut off the hosts, what marvelous preparations, what thunder, what noise, what great activity there would have been! But mark the grandeur of the expression. God did not even lift Himself from His Throne to do it—He saw Pharaoh coming. He seemed to look upon him with a placid smile. He just blew with His lips and the sea covered them! You and I will marvel at the last how easy it has been to overthrow the enemies of the Lord. We have been tugging and toiling all our lifetime to be the means of overthrowing systems of error—it will astonish the Church when her Master shall come—to see how, as the grass dissolves before the fire, all error and sin shall be utterly destroyed in the coming of the Most High! We must have our societies and our machinery, our preachers and our gatherings and rightly, too, but God will not require them at the last. The

destruction of His enemies shall be as easy to Him as the making of a world! In passive silence He sat unmoved. And He did but break the silence with, "Let there be light; and light was." So shall He at the last, when His enemies are raging furiously, blow with His winds and they shall be scattered! They shall melt even as wax and shall be burned like grass. They shall be as the fat of rams—into smoke shall they consume, yes, into smoke shall they consume away.

Furthermore, in this song of Moses you will notice there is one peculiar beauty. Moses not only rejoiced for what had been done, but for the future consequences of it. He says—"The people of Canaan, whom we are about to attack, will now be seized with sudden fear. By the greatness of Your arm they shall be as still as a stone." Oh, I think I hear them singing that, too, sweetly and softly—"as still as a stone." How would the words come full, like gentle thunder heard in the distance—"as still as a stone!" And when we shall get on the other side the flood, see the triumph over our enemies and behold our Master reigning, this will form a part of *our* song—that they must henceforth be "as still as a stone." There will be a Hell but it will not be a Hell of roaring devils, as it now is. They shall be "as still as a stone." There will be legions of fallen angels, but they shall no longer have courage to attack us or to defy God—they shall be "as still as a stone." Oh, how grand will that sound be when the hosts of God's redeemed, looking down on the chained demons, bound, silenced, struck dumb with terror, shall sing exultingly over them! They must be as still as a stone. And there they must lie and bite their iron bands. The fierce despiser of Christ can no more spit in His face. The proud tyrant can no more lift his hands to oppress the saints. Even Satan can no more attempt to destroy. They shall be "as still as a stone."

And last of all, the song concludes by noticing *the eternity of God's reign*—and this will always make a part of the triumphant song. They sang—"The Lord shall reign forever and ever." Then I can suppose the whole band broke out into their loudest strains of music. "The Lord shall reign forever and ever." Part of the melody of Heaven will be, "The Lord shall reign forever and ever." That song has cheered us here—"The Lord reigns! Blessed be my Rock!" And that song shall be our exultation there. "The Lord reigns forever and ever." When we shall see the placid sea of Providence; when we shall behold the world all fair and lovely; when we shall mark our enemies destroyed and God Almighty triumphant, then we shall shout the song—

**"Hallelujah! For the Lord
God Omnipotent shall reign!
Hallelujah! Let the word
Echo round the earth and main!"**

Oh, may *we* all be there to sing it!

I have one remark to make and I have done. You know, my Friends, that as there is something in the song of Moses which is typical of the song of the Lamb, there was another song sung by the waters of the Red Sea which is typical of the song of Hell. “What do you mean, Sir, by that dread thought?” Oh, shall I use the word, music? Shall I profane the Heavenly word so much as to say, ‘twas doleful music which came from the lips of Pharaoh and his host? Boldly and pompously, with a roll of drum and a blast of trumpet they had entered into the sea. Suddenly their martial music ceased. And ah, you Heavens and you floods, what was it? The sea was coming down upon them, utterly to devour them. Oh, may we never hear that shriek, that awful yell of hideous agony that seemed to rend the sky and then was hushed again when Pharaoh and his mighty men were swallowed up and went down quick into Hell! Ah, stars, if you had heard it, if the black pall of waters had not shut out the sound from you, you might have continued trembling to this hour and maybe you are trembling now! Maybe your twinkling by night is on account of that terrible shriek you heard, for surely it were enough to make your tremble on forever! That dreadful shriek, that hideous moan, that horrible howl when a whole army sank into Hell at once—when the waters swallowed them up!

Take heed, my Friends! Take heed lest you should have to join in that terrible *Miserere*. Take heed lest that horrible howl should be yours, instead of the song of the redeemed. And remember, so must it be unless you are born-again, unless you believe in Christ, unless you repent of your sin and renounce it wholly and with trembling hearts put your confidence in the Man of Sorrows who is soon to be crowned the King of kings and Lord of lords! May God bless you and give you all to taste of His salvation that you may stand upon the sea of glass and not have to feel the terrors of the mingled fire in the lower depths thereof! God Almighty bless this vast assembly, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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

JUDGMENTS AND NO REPENTANCE— REPENTANCE AND NO SALVATION NO. 2054

**PREACHED AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 25, 1887.**

*“They repented not to give Him glory.”
Revelation 16:9.*

IN reading this chapter, dear Friends—this very terrible chapter—you must have been struck, I think, with the forces of God. How great are the armies of the Lord of Hosts! As the mighty Jehovah smote Pharaoh with overwhelming plagues, so does the Lord in this awful portion of the Apocalypse deal with the ungodly. Seven angels stood forth, each one with his vial full of the wrath of God, to be poured out upon the earth. Seven executioners were needed and seven were present—a perfect number for the accomplishment of the Divine purpose.

Behold, the angels of God are innumerable! “The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.” Our Lord Jesus Christ, even in His humiliation, said, “Think you that I cannot now pray to My Father and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?” The shining ones march in great armies and God accomplishes many of His purposes by them, without our observing it. Are not their great doings all written in the book of the wars of the Lord, which as yet no man has read? If there were no other powers at His disposal, Jehovah, as the Lord of all angels, would still be fitly called the Lord of Hosts.

What power resides in these mysterious beings! With what energy does the Lord clothe them! They are made to fly swiftly on the errands of His wisdom. “He makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire.” Here we find one of these angels pouring his bowl upon the earth and causing a noisome and grievous sore upon men. Another empties his vial on the sea and it becomes as the blood of a dead man. A third angel pours out his bowl upon the rivers and the fountains of waters are stained as with blood.

Here one ventures to pour his bowl upon the golden sun—that orb which is of this great world both eye and soul—and the sun, as though its flame were re-fed with the most brilliant oil, burns with greater fury than ever. And we read, “Men were scorched with great heat and blasphemed the name of God, which has power over these plagues.” What power, then, has God to accomplish His purposes when a single angel can do as much as this—and the Lord has myriads of them waiting to do His bidding?

Note yet again, how all men are within the reach of the Divine judgments. They proudly fancy that they can escape from God. Many a little

Pharaoh says, in the hardness of his heart, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?” Boastful worldlings dream that they, at any rate, are beyond punishment. They reason their careful forethought will secure them against the calamities which others bring upon themselves. They are ungodly but still they take good care of themselves and keep clear of vice and extravagant wastefulness.

They are far too prudent to involve themselves in the perils of the gamester or the profligate. They prefer safer sins and so they fancy that they are out of harm’s reach—though they do not acknowledge God. Poverty cannot reach them, for they have filled their houses with hidden treasure. Sickness cannot hurt them, for they have a vigorous constitution. They defy dangers which have thrown down others. They boast themselves in the glory of their strength and in the hardness of their hearts. These are the men who sit aloft, beyond the reach of the arrows of Jehovah.

What folly! No man is at any moment beyond the reach of vengeance. The Lord has but to remember the callous and secure, and immediately the joints of their loins shall be loosed and fearfulness shall take hold upon them—their proud hearts can fail them in a moment, even though no outward sorrow afflict them. In Providence the detectives of God never fail to find out the guilty. This angel, you perceive, poured his vial on the sun and by way of the sun, with his scorching heat, the proudest sons of men were visited. The noble and the great, the rich and the healthy, could not bear the increased solar heat—for the day burned as an oven.

We know not by how many doors God can come at the guilty, but come at them He will when once His arm is bared for war. When He says, “Ah, I will ease Me of My adversaries,” who shall withstand Him? This land is exceedingly haughty and some of its inhabitants talk as if they were demi-gods. Our insular pride makes us fancy that we shall prosper, come what may. But it is not so—we are great debtors to Divine favor and if we cease to acknowledge the Lord’s hand in our prosperity He may teach us humility by sharp methods. God’s right hand can find out His adversaries.

And He will punish sin in Britain as surely as He punished sin in Rome, or in Nineveh. If Jerusalem did not escape, shall London last forever? No country, no city, and no man, however rich, or strong, or great, can climb beyond the reach of the Divine hand. In the height or in the depth, God is equally present in power—in this state or in the next—He is equally able to dispense justice. No ivory throne can lift a monarch above Jehovah’s rod. No pillar of fame can place a mortal beyond His sword. Oh that all of you would have the sense to see this! And as you cannot fly from God, fly to Him. As you cannot resist the power of His *justice*, flee to the power of His *mercy*.

When He stretches out His arms and invites you to come, turn not your backs. Come, like the prodigal, saying, “Father, I have sinned,” and He will graciously receive you. This terrible chapter takes away all hope from men as to their escaping from God when once He girds Himself with vengeance and sits down upon His Throne of Justice, to execute punish-

ment. Then shall His right hand find out His enemies and overturn them with swift destruction.

One Truth of God, however, comes out of this passage more plainly than any other, to my mind. And that is, that judgments, even the most terrible of them, do not, in themselves, produce a satisfactory repentance in the minds of men. Let me read you two or three verses and you will see how clearly this is the case. The punishment drove men into still more furious rebellion. In none did it subdue and sanctify them. “And men were scorched with great heat and blasphemed the name of God, which has power over these plagues: and they repented not to give Him glory.

“And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast. And his kingdom was full of darkness. And they gnawed their tongues for pain and blasphemed the God of Heaven because of their pains and their sores and repented not of their deeds.” The twenty-first verse is to the same effect—“And there fell upon men a great hail out of Heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail.” The terrors of the Lord produced *blasphemy* but they *did not produce repentance*.

I. In considering this subject, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I would begin by saying that JUDGMENTS, APART FROM DIVINE GRACE, MAY PRODUCE A KIND OF REPENTANCE. It is repentance after a fashion but it is not of that holy, healthy, heavenly sort which is worked in the renewed heart by the Holy Spirit.

Judgment may produce a carnal repentance—a repentance that is of the flesh and after the manner of the sinful nature of men. In this repentance the depravity of the heart remains the same in essence, though it takes another form of showing itself. Though the man changes, he is not savingly changed—he becomes another man but not a new man. The same sin rules in him but it is called by another name and wears another coat. The stone is carved into a more sightly shape but it is not turned into flesh. The iron is cast into another image but it is not transformed into gold.

This carnal repentance is caused by fear. Does not every thief repent of robbery when he is convicted and sent to jail? Does not every murderer repent of his crime when he stands under the fatal tree? This is the kind of repentance which the terrors of the Lord will work in men’s minds unless they are altogether hardened and under the special dominion of the devil. Travelers in great storms will tremble and, trembling, will confess their guilt and begin to pray. But when the tempest is over, their trembling, their confession and their prayers are also, all over. They shake because of their sins but they are not shaken *out* of their sins.

Mariners far out at sea, when the laboring boat threatens to go down to the bottom, will repent. But such repentance is only a few qualms of conscience because they are in dread of death and judgment and Hell. So men that lie upon a bed of sickness—when their bones ache and their hearts melt and the grave yawns beneath their couch—will often repent. And yet, if they could be raised up, they would return to their sins as the

dog returns to his vomit. This is wretched work. This repentance gives no glory to God and leads to no saving and lasting deliverance from sin.

It is fallen nature washed and brushed and rouged—but allowed to remain fallen nature, still. The heart is not renewed, the life is not regenerated, the mind is not changed. And, therefore, little is done that is worth doing. The leopard is caged but there are the spots. The Ethiopian is scrubbed but his skin is as black as ever. This repentance is the outcome of nature under terror and not the fruit of Divine Grace. The thunders and the storms and the hail and the noisome sores can produce in men nothing more than a fleshly repentance. And flesh repenting is still flesh and tends to corruption.

And hence, again, it is but a transient repentance. They repent but for a season. While they see the immediate evil of their sin in its results they cry out as if they really hated sin. But their hatred is only a little tiff, which lasts for a while and then they make friends with their sins, as Pilate made friends with Herod. Their goodness is as the morning cloud. And as the early dew it passes away. Even Ahab once repented. But, oh, what a poor and short-lived repentance it was! We find men turning away from their sin for a time but then going back to it with a greater gusto, as men may abstain from food for some hours in order to increase their appetite for the banquet which is being prepared.

Beware of that repentance which is not better than the vomit of a dog—how can it be acceptable with God? Beware of that repentance which comes of *yourself*—for it comes of the *flesh*. And that which is born of the flesh is flesh and not better. That which is of the flesh is a mere flash—no sooner has it come than it is gone. “All flesh is grass” and the flower of it soon withers away. When the Spirit of the Lord blows upon the fairest flower of our poor nature it immediately withers up—how could it be otherwise with grass?

It is well that it should be withered up by the Spirit of God. For, left to itself, it will wither in a worse style and our destruction will be sure. “The Word of the Lord abides forever,” but all the comeliness of man passes away. Beware, then, of a repentance which springs alone from terror—comes up in a night and withers in a night—appears and promises but promises only to delude.

Such a repentance is superficial. It only affects the surface of the man. It does not go to the heart, it is hardly more than skin deep. How often have we been greatly grieved when we have seen persons in poverty, or in sickness, or in some great fright, or under some other form of excitement who have professed repentance and avowed it very loudly, too? But yet you could see that the repentance did not go deep enough to make them give up their sin! Herod was exceedingly sorry that he had made an oath which bound him to give John’s head in a platter to the daughter of Herodias—but he was not so sorry as to break loose from his wicked pledge. No. He committed the murder—though he said he was exceedingly sorry for it.

How many there are that are hand and glove with Satan yet speak against him, so as to keep up a fair show before others! They take the sweetness and the profit of an evil trade and yet condemn the trade itself. They derive rent from an ill house but, of course, they are grieved that people should use their property for such a purpose! Such repentance as that is, to a large extent, sheer hypocrisy. It gives to men a kind of rest of conscience, which rest of conscience is injurious to them, since it lulls them to sleep and enables them to wake and return to their sin as if nothing had happened.

That repentance which is worth having turns a man inside out and purges the innermost part of the soul—killing the *love* of sin so that even if sin could be made profitable and sweet to the man—he could not abide it. If sin were buttered and sugared on both sides the true penitent would not have it. For he has found that there is a deadly poison in its sweetness and therefore he loathes it and leaves it. The really repentant one hates sin as sin and turns from it with purpose of heart. Beware of a superficial repentance, for the Lord abhors it. God is not mocked. He sees the loathsomeness of the ulcer through the film which seeks to hide it.

Once again—the awful fear of God may produce a despairing repentance. This is deep enough but then it lacks the element of bringing glory to God. It has in it no trace of submission, no touch of faith, no breath of love. There is nothing evangelical about it—it is legal all through—and therefore, worthless for salvation. It is a kind of anticipation of the endless judgment and the wrath to come. But it is not a deliverance from there. Take Judas as an example. “I have sinned,” says he. He flings down the accursed silver for which he had sold his Master and his own soul but he goes out to hang himself.

What an awful thing it is when the Law of God and the terrors of God work upon the conscience and arouse all a man’s fears and yet he will not fly to Christ! The man is so overcome with horror at the prospect of the world to come that, like a fool, he rushes upon his fate, even as the moth dashes into the flame of the candle. To escape from death, he flies to death. To escape from the wrath of God he puts an end to his last hope of mercy and rushes into the presence of an angry God. This is a dreadful repentance, from which I pray God to save you. It works death even in this life and it works the second death in the world to come.

If any of you are under the power of despair at this moment, I pray you, do not rest in it. For it is no more a place to rest in than Hell itself. The satisfaction of despair, grim and dreadful thing as it is, has a sort of fascination for some minds and they begin to be at peace in the midnight of hopelessness. They say there is no hope and therefore they may as well sin up to the full and get some sort of enjoyment out of their rebellion. Under this mad impulse they go from bad to worse and sin more than ever. O my Hearer, may God save you from this and bring you to be touched with a sense of the love and of the Grace of God, wherein there is hope, lest you repent hopelessly and unbelievably and perish in your repentance!

II. So you see, my Brethren, judgments may produce a certain likeness of repentance—but then, secondly, **THEY DO NOT AND THEY CANNOT OF THEMSELVES PRODUCE A REPENTANCE SUCH AS GIVES GOD GLORY.** “They repented not to give Him glory.”

Now, not giving God glory is a very important omission and one which corrupts the whole matter. I would dwell upon it for a minute or two, that you may see how great is the failure. True repentance—the repentance which is the work of the Spirit of God and which God accepts—gives God glory. Here are scales and balances for you wherewith you may weigh your repentance before God. Do so with great care and jealousy. True repentance gives God glory. And it glorifies God in many ways, of which I have not time to tell you in full.

But I can tell you enough to help you in self-examination. Is yours true repentance or not? That is the question. I believe that true repentance has as pure and sincere a worship in it as the anthems of the glorified above. It is a form of adoration as suitable to sinners as the eternal hallelujahs are suitable for perfect beings.

First, it reverences and adores God’s omniscience. It is a confession of the fact of God’s knowledge and the truthfulness of His statements. The man says, “O Lord, I am what Your Word says I am. I am a sinner through and through. And I know while I confess my sin that You know more about my sin than I do. I lay bare my soul but it never was possible for me to hide it from Your inspection. You have seen my thoughts and the secret intents of my heart. Before You have I sinned. In Your sight have I done evil. You know me altogether and I adore Your omniscience.”

Every true penitent is conscious of the Divine eye resting upon him. And he, in lowly manner, acknowledges the piercing and discerning power of that eye. The real penitent asks that the Lord would reveal to him more and more of his true condition—that he may not cloak his sin, nor deceive himself in any way—but may be honest and upright before God. Such repentance gives glory to the omniscience of God.

Next, the truly penitent gives glory to the righteousness of God in His Law. The man that really hates sin says, “Lord, I do not quarrel with Your Law. Your Law is holy and just and good—the fault is with me, for I am carnal, sold under sin. No Law could be more exactly right and just than Your Law is and in having transgressed against it I am deeply guilty and I acknowledge my folly and crime. Whatever becomes of me, I dare not impugn the Law which condemns me. I adore its infinite majesty and purity.” Impenitence rails at the Law as too severe, speaks of transgression as a trifle and of future punishment as cruelty. But the truly repentant soul admires the Law and champions it even against *himself*! Do you know all this in your own heart?

Next, the sincerely penitent also adores and glorifies the justice of God in His punishment of transgression. I know that when I was under a sense of sin I felt that if God did not punish me He ought to do so. I could not see how God could be the Judge of all the earth if He did not visit my transgressions with infinite wrath. I had no quarrel with the most stern

Word either of the Old or of the New Testament. I was bound under my sense of guilt to bare my back to its scourges and to lay my neck upon its block. I said in so many words—“And if my soul were sent to Hell, Your righteous Law approves it well.”

This is real penitence—when the man gives glory to the justice of God—even though it condemns him. O my Hearer, do you thus repent? Is sin really sinful to you? Do you see its desert of Hell? If not, your *repentance* needs to be repented of.

And next, true repentance glorifies the sovereignty of God in His mercy. The man who is deeply conscious of his guilt, says, “Lord, I have no claim on You. I have no rights but the right to be punished. I have forfeited all claim to favor and reward. If You will freely forgive me, if You can justly do so, I will forever adore You for so doing. But I cannot say that I have any right thereto. If You will pardon me, it must be Your own act and deed, performed on grounds within Yourself. I know that You have a sovereign right, as King of kings, to execute the sentence of the Law, or to condone my offense, if you can do it in consistency with justice. I must leave myself absolutely in Your hands.”

That man truly, deeply, sincerely, repents who perceives that there is justice in the declaration of God, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” How some people bite their lips when they hear this sentence! And yet they are the very voice of Jehovah, the God whom I adore. He claims to be absolute in the realm of Grace, doing as He pleases with His own. Let Him do as He wills, for His will is holy love. We can trust absolute authority with Him who is the infinitely good and just. In the absolute sovereignty of God there is hope for the most guilty of men. We do not fully repent of sin until we feel that it is so and confess that the Lord has a right to do as He pleases in this matter, whether He justly destroys us or graciously saves us.

Further, I believe that the man has repented to the glory of God when he spies out that there is a way by which God can be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly—when he sees the Lord Jesus Christ, the adorable Son of God coming in our human nature and becoming the Substitute for sinners and the Sacrifice for sin. That is true repentance which washes the Redeemer’s feet with her tears and wipes them with the hairs of her head. Those dear feet had not been pierced when the woman thus washed them—but they have been pierced now. Let us wash the nail-prints with the tears of our repentance at this hour!

Do you rejoice in Jesus crucified? Do you love Christ? Do you trust Him? Do you leap for joy at the very thought that God has set Him forth to be a propitiation for sin? This is repentance after a godly sort. This is repentance that needs not to be repented of. Repentance makes a rainbow with her tears of grief for sin and her glances of hope at the love of Christ and His great finished work. Repentance stands at the Cross and sees sin forgiven and then repents more than she ever did when she could not spy out forgiveness. She says of her sins—

“I know they are forgiven,

***But now their pain to me
Is all the grief and anguish
They laid, my Lord, on You.”***

Sin in the anguish of conviction does not so effectually break a heart as sin forgiven. A sense of blood-bought pardon soon dissolves a heart of stone. Hannibal, it is said, dissolved the rocks of the Alps with vinegar. But Christ dissolves our hearts with love. He tells us, “I have blotted out your sins. I bore on the Tree the ransom for you. I have poured out My heart’s blood that you might live.” And then it is that we hate sin with a perfect hatred and are full of mourning because we pierced the Lord. Because evil is so hateful to the heart of Jesus we loathe it intensely. This is the repentance which glorifies God. The Lord grant such repentance to every one of us!

Mark you, it glorifies God in one other way—by setting the sinner ever afterwards craving after holiness. “The burnt child dreads the fire.” And the sinner dreads sin when he has been delivered from the flame of it by the Lord Jesus. Because Jesus suffered so bitterly, he feels that he himself suffered and so feels as much dread of sin as if he had himself been made to die through it. The man who knows that his sins have been forgiven will never be satisfied with any degree of sanctification short of being made like unto Him who took his sin away. “He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him,” and to this result we press forward.

While that passage relates mainly to our justification, yet the Lord Jesus Christ has also an eye to our sanctification. He has redeemed us that we may be a people zealous for good works and may in all things serve Him who has redeemed us—not with corruptible things, as silver and gold—but with His own precious blood. Perfect holiness is our aspiration. Oh that it were our attainment! But the very aspiration gives glory to the thrice holy God whom we desire to imitate.

Now, beloved Friends, the judgments of God in and of themselves can never work evangelical repentance in a single human heart—

***“Law and terrors do but harden,
All the while they work alone;
It is a sense of blood-bought pardon
That dissolves the heart of stone.”***

You see, then, how a gracious repentance glorifies God—do you know anything of such a repentance? Answer, I pray you, as before the Lord, whom no man can deceive.

III. But now, thirdly, I go a step further—THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD APART FROM DIVINE GRACE, MAY, THROUGH OUR HARDNESS OF HEART, INVOLVE US IN GREATER SIN.

Listen to me, any of you that have been much tried and afflicted and yet have never come to Jesus. I tell you, if God has chastened you very much until He is saying tonight, “O Ephraim, what shall I do unto you?” then all this chastening which you have despised involves you in deeper sin—because you now sin with a clearer knowledge of what sin really is.

A young man came to London and he fell into vice. He has had to suffer very grievously for it and if he has not heartily repented—if he goes back again to his folly—there will be sevenfold damnation about his evil way in the future. Let him remember this. He cannot sin cheaply now. He knows what he is doing and his offense will be distinctly willful and therefore rankly offensive. You scarcely knew that it was fire at first but you know now—if you go and put your finger into the fire again you deserve to be burned.

A man that has suffered Divine judgment and yet goes back to sin increases his guilt because there is the element of defiance in his obstinacy. He has come to be like Pharaoh who stoutly resisted Jehovah and His Commands. Let the Lord send His plagues—Pharaoh will brazen it out with Him. O dear Friend, I hope that you have not yet reached such a fearful state of mind. I hope you are not bent on war with the Almighty! I trust you will not dash upon the bosses of His shield. Do not say, “Sickness may follow sickness but I shall not yield. Loss may follow loss but I will not turn from my ways. I am of too tough metal to care for such things.”

If so, you have deliberately thrown down the glove of battle to the Lord of all the earth. Think of the conflict—do no more. Shall the string contend with the fire? Yet such is your ignorant pride in thus defying God. This must be the case when judgments do not bring repentance for they introduce the element of defiance into the man’s impenitent perseverance in evil and so make him doubly guilty.

Moreover, to many lives judgments also introduce the element of falsehood. The man vowed that if he recovered from sickness he would fear God. He was sick and a saint he would be. But when he got well, ah, how much of a saint was he? You know the old Proverb. I need not quote it further. Yes, many have lied unto God. Hear it. They have not lied unto men but lied unto God in this matter till now their life is a continued provoking of God by broken promises and disregarded covenants. Ah me, this blackens a life. What? Has your whole life become an elaborate lie? Are you every moment acting falsely? Are you every hour violating vows and promises made to your God? O Man, what will become of you when the God of Ananias and Sapphira comes to deal with you?

I do fear that there are some whose conduct has in it the element of deliberate hatred of God. For these have had time now to see which way evil goes and yet they follow it. They love sin as sin. They have been losers by their misconduct and yet they pursue it. We have often seen persons reduced to rags and beggary by their folly and vice and we have helped them to begin life again. But in a few days they have been in the same destitution through the same drunkenness, or vice, or idleness which brought them to the dogs before. They seem incorrigible, obstinately set on their iniquities. And all that can be done for them by the scourges of God’s hand does not affect them in the least for the better.

In this there is an aversion to goodness, a love of evil and a hatred of God. “They say unto God, Depart from us. For we desire not the knowl-

edge of Your ways.” This introduces the element of presumption, of deliberation, of resolve. And when man sin so, there is a talent of lead in the measure of their iniquity and it weighs exceeding heavily. Sins of impetuous passion and of wild juvenile haste are bad enough. But there is not in them the element of intense wickedness which is evidently present in the deliberate pursuit of sin in the teeth of suffering, or in the continuance in evil when its results are daily felt.

On such evenings as these it is strange what sorts of people make up the congregation at the Tabernacle. I may be speaking tonight—I do not doubt I am—to some that, year after year, against a mother’s tears and the importunities of friends and the advice of those who have wished them well—have still kept on and on in a sinful course which they themselves condemn. Knowing better, they persist in wrong. Knowing what the end will be, they are madly set upon their own ruin. O Sirs, if you choose your own delusions, if you will ride steeplechase to Hell over hedge and ditch, if you will be damned—who is to stand in your way and what shall be said by way of pity for you?

O God, have mercy upon such! Many in this city are breaking a father’s heart and bringing a mother’s gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. After all they have endured they still cling to their filthy idols and go after their impure lusts. And they will do so until God shall end their days in His wrath and summon them to His bar. My heart breaks at the thought of some of you! Will you never repent and give God glory? Will you pursue your follies even into the unquenchable fires? Now this is a dreadful thing—that the judgments of God should, through the wickedness of men—even lead them to still greater sin.

IV. Therefore, in the last place—and with this I finish—THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD ARE TO BE VIEWED WITH GREAT DISCRETION. He who studies them must do it with solemn care.

Judgments tend to good. Do not forget that. They ought to tend to good to you who are exercised by them. How many are aroused to think of better things by sickness in their own persons, or sudden death in others! National judgments are frequently a ministry of Divine Grace. The first year in which I came to London I was greatly struck with the access that one had at all hours of day and night to people’s houses, into which no ministers of Christ had never been welcomed before. I remember, at two o’clock one Monday morning, I was in a house, now pulled down, close to London Bridge, to see a man who had spent the Sunday at Brighton and had come home to die with the cholera.

Yes, they sent for me at the dead of night often, then. And rich and poor—it mattered not, if they found someone willing to come and visit them—were eager for you to read and pray with them. Death was all around us, making havoc in these streets. Thus did cholera arouse our neighbors that they flocked to hear the Word out of very fear, but they are not so eager for a visit now. Thus, much benefit may there be in the plagues which are shot from the quiver of Providence.

And judgments do impress some men. Many will come to hear a sermon just after a dear baby has died, or a brother, or father has been taken away. Death whips the careless into thought. Then there is an impression. So far so good, if God makes use of it by His Spirit. Judgments may be black horses upon which Christ rides triumphantly to the doors of men's minds. Some, no doubt, are sweetly subdued by judgments when these are qualified with Grace. The Grace of God working with their afflictions, they bow themselves beneath the chastening hand. And when they do this, it is good for them that they are afflicted. God has sent the black dog to fetch the wandering sheep into the fold and it runs to the shepherd through fear of the dog. Thus, judgments may do great good by humbling, softening and bringing down. O Lord, use them to this end among the afflicted ones around us!

But still, let it be remembered that these things will not work good of *themselves*. I want you to remember this, because I have known people say, "Well, if I were afflicted I might be converted. If I lay sick I might be saved." Oh, do not think so! Sickness and sorrow of themselves are no helps to salvation. Pain and poverty are not Evangelists. Disease and despair are not Apostles. Look at the lost in Hell. Suffering has effected no good in them. He that was filthy here is filthy there. He that was unjust in this life is unjust in the life to come. There is nothing in pain and suffering that, by their own natural operation, will tend to purification.

Place no hope in *that* direction. If there were a "purgatory" of years of pain, it would be only purgative in name, for suffering cannot cleanse from sin. Think of the many who are every day suffering as the result of their sinful conduct. And yet the more they suffer the more they sin. We know many such. You need not take your walks far abroad before you will find men plunged in poverty, whose poverty is traceable distinctly to their own fault. And in that fault they still continue and even grow worse and worse for all they suffer.

So it is with men that lie dying. You must not suppose that their pain is any help to them towards repentance. Poor souls, their anguish drives good thoughts out of their minds. Deathbed repentances are hard to estimate—we must leave them with God. But it is a sorrowful fact that those which seemed to be deathbed repentances have seldom turned out to be worth anything when the men have recovered. In fact, I do not remember a case in which the person who recovered has been at all what he said he would be when he thought that he was on the borders of the grave. So you see, suffering is no help to repentance and it may be a hindrance.

Now, what I have to say to you is this—oh, that God would lead you to repent now—before any of His judgments fall upon you! Why should we not repent at once? Surely we ought to repent of doing wrong when we perceive that we are wronging so good a God. He has not cut you down—He has not taken away your wife—is this a reason for being hard-hearted? It ought to be the other way. He has spared that fair-haired child of yours. He has not allowed your business to be ruined by your neglect. He has

helped you although you have been hurting yourself. Well, then, turn to Him.

Drawn by His love, turn to Him. Say in your heart, “I cannot offend any more. I cannot sin against so good, so kind a God as this.” Permit me also to say to you how much nobler and sweeter a thing it is to be drawn than to be driven. How much better to come cheerfully and willingly, led by motives of love to God, than to be like the bullock that is forced to bear the yoke, or the “horse, or the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle.” Must you be beaten to Christ? How much more honorable to turn to God in the cheerful bright days that are now yours. Oh, that I could persuade you! If there is any right principle in you, you will yield and glorify God by hearty repentance.

And then, again—remember you can repent now so much more clearly than in the hour of sickness. God helping you, this is a very good hour for repenting. I find that when I am in great pain, I cannot work out a case, I say to people, “Oh, don’t come to me with your questions. There, go and do whatever you like. I shall be sure to say the wrong thing—my judgment is not clear—I am in too much pain.” How will you acceptably repent when you can hardly keep from crying out with agony? How will you rightly repent when the head is aching, when the heart is palpitating, when you are gasping for breath, when the death-sweat beads your brow? Oh, that you would think of these things now, while your intellect is clear and your body is not racked and tortured! God help you to do so!

And do you not see how much more likely it is to be *genuine* repentance—if it is rendered freely? You are not frightened now, and are more likely to be your honest self. You are not under terror now, and therefore you are not so likely to play the hypocrite. Tonight you have come into this place in good health. Happy and cheerful—and God has made everything bright about you. What can I better commend to you than immediately to seek the Lord? Does not wisdom, herself, speak and cry aloud to you now? Forsake sin and turn with purpose of heart to Jesus Christ the Savior, whose Spirit is even now working with you while these words are being spoken.

Yield to the sacred pressure of the Spirit of God. That which now inclines you to relent is the good Spirit of love and mercy. Bow yourself before it, as the wheat ripened for the sickle bows before the wind. Give glory to God by yielding to the movements of His Spirit. Cry out, I pray, “Lord, I believe. Help You mine unbelief. I would quit my sin. Help me to quit it now for Jesus’ sake and to give You glory.” Amen.

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THE RIDER ON THE WHITE HORSE AND THE ARMIES WITH HIM NO. 1452B

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

“And I saw Heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He does judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in Heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”
Revelation 19:11-16.

THE beloved John was, above all other men, familiar with the humble Savior. He had leaned his head upon His bosom and knew better than any other of the Apostles the painful beatings of His Lord's sorrowful heart. Never from his mind could be effaced the likeness of Christ, the visage more marred than that of any man. He had seen the dear Sufferer on that dreadful night when He was covered with gory sweat in Gethsemane. He had seen Him after He had been buffeted and scourged in Herod's palace and Pilate's Hall. He had even stood at the foot of the Cross and seen his Divine Master in the extreme agonies of death! And, therefore, the tender, affectionate heart of John would never permit his Master's suffering image to fade from his memory.

Truly, if he had spoken to us in vision—in symbolic terms—concerning what he had seen of his Lord and Master here below, he would have described Him as a footman going forth alone to the fight with no armies following Him, for all His disciples forsook Him and fled, Himself wearing no glittering armor, but with His garments dipped in blood and with His face smeared with shame. He would have told us how the solitary Champion fought alone amid the dust and smoke of the battle and how He fell and bit the dust, so that His foe set his foot upon Him and for a moment rejoiced over Him. He would have told us how He leaped, again, from the grave and trod down His adversaries and led captivity captive. Such would

have been, only in far nobler terms, John's description of his first sight of his wrestling warrior Lord.

But now, in the passage before us, a door was opened in Heaven and the disciple whom Jesus loved saw what else he had never seen—what else he had never imagined! He saw the same warrior Lord, but after quite another fashion. If John had continued to look with the eyes of sense at Christ and His followers even to this day and had viewed the battle as it is to be seen in history upon earth, he would have said that he saw the same despised and rejected One at the head of a band of equally despised and rejected, leading them to prison and to death. He would have told you how to this very day the banner of the Gospel is borne aloft amid smoke and dust and Christ crucified is proclaimed amid contention and ridicule. He would have drawn in black colors the scene of the battle, the great battle which is raging among the sons of men at this very hour.

But now a door was opened in Heaven and John saw the scene as God sees it. He looked upon it from *Heaven's* point of view and saw the conflict between good and evil, between Christ and Satan, between the Truth of God and error! He saw it in Heaven's own clear view and he then wrote the vision that we, also, might see it. Oh, if we are sharers in this conflict; if we are following the Lamb wherever He goes; if we are pledged to the Truth of God and to the right; if we are sworn to the precious blood of Atonement and to the grand doctrines of the Gospel, it will do us good and stir our blood to stand on one of the serene hilltops of Heaven, above the mists of earth and look upon the battle which rages still upon the earth and *will* rage on till Armageddon shall conclude the war!

If we can behold the scene, God strengthening our eyes, it may strengthen our hands for the conflict, our hearts for the fray. When the door was opened in Heaven, the first thing that the Seer of Patmos noticed was our Captain! Let us look at Him, first. Afterwards he saw His followers. And then he marked the mode of warfare and caught a glimpse of the great defeat of the foe.

I. First, then, JOHN SAW OUR CAPTAIN, the King of kings! Let us notice His glorious state. He says, "I saw and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him." While Jesus was here, as we have already said, He was a foot soldier. He had to plunge knee-deep through mire and dirt and walk as wearily as any of the rest of the warrior company. But now that He has ascended, though He continues to fight, it is in another fashion. Of course the terms are *symbolical* and none will take them literally, but our Lord is here described as sitting upon a gallant steed, charging His foes upon a snow-white horse. This means that Christ is honored. He is no weary, dusty, fainting foot soldier now, I guarantee you!

Time was when Solomon said that he saw servants upon horses and princes walking in the dust—and so it was with Christ—Pilate and Herod rode the high horse and Jesus walked in pain and dishonor. But now, like a greater Mordecai, He rides on the King's horse, for this is the Man whom the King delights to honor! In royal state our Jesus goes forth to war, not as a common soldier, but as a glorious Prince, royally mounted! By a horse is denoted not only honor, but power. To the Jews the employment of the horse in warfare was unusual, so that when it was used by their adversaries they imputed to it great force.

Jesus Christ has a mighty power today—a power which none can measure. He was crucified in weakness, but where is the weakness now? He gave His hands to the nails and His feet to be fastened to the wood but He does so no longer. Now He has mounted on the horse of His exceeding great power and He rules in Heaven and in earth and none can stay His hand, or put Him to dishonor, or dispute His will! O you that love Him, feast your eyes upon Him this day! It is not for me to speak—to do so were but to hold a candle to the sun—but gaze upon Him for yourselves and let your eyes be satiated with the image, as you see Him, once despised and rejected, now taking to Himself His great power!

Here is symbolized swiftness, too. Christ had to walk when He was here and go from city to city, scarcely getting through them all till His time was accomplished. But now His Word runs very swiftly. He has but to will it and the voice of His Gospel is heard to the utmost ends of the earth! Their line is gone out through all the earth and their Words to the end of the world! Everywhere is the Gospel preached, if it is but for a testimony against them, and today is fulfilled before your eyes the Words of the Prophet Zechariah, “The Lord of Hosts has visited His flock, the house of Judah, and has made them as His goodly horse in the battle, and they shall fight because the Lord is with them.”

The color of the horse is meant to denote victory. The Roman conqueror, when he enjoyed a triumph, on returning from a campaign, rode up the Via Sacra on a white horse and the Romans crowded to the housetops to gaze upon the hero as he exhibited his spoils. Now Jesus Christ is admired of angels and elect spirits who throng the windows of Heaven to gaze upon Him who is glorified by His Father! There is a pale horse and his name that sits on him is Death, and there is a horse red with blood, and yet another black with judgment. But *His* is a *white* horse significant of comfort and of joy to all that know and love Him!

He comes to fight, but the fight is for peace. He comes to destroy, but it is to destroy His people's enemies! He comes as a conqueror, but it is as a delivering conqueror who scatters flowers and roses where He rides, breaking only the oppressor, but blessing the citizens whom He emanci-

pates. Again, I say, I scarcely like to speak upon this theme—it seems too great for me—but I would bid the saints of God who have wept at Gethsemane now lift up their eyes and smile as they see that same Redeemer who once lay groveling beneath the olive trees now riding on the white horse! Your Lord at this moment is no more despised, but all the Glory that Heaven itself can devise is lavished upon Him!

John looked into the open vault of Heaven and he had time not only to see the horse, but to mark the Character of Him that sat upon it. He says that He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True. By this you may know your Lord. He has been a faithful and true Friend to you. O soldiers of the Cross, when has He ever deceived you? When has He failed you, or forgotten you? Faithful? Ah, that He is, faithful to every Word that He has spoken. And true? Do you not recognize Him, for is He not the Truth—the very Truth of God? Has He not kept every promise that He has made you and have you not found His teachings to be everlastingly settled upon Divine veracity?

And faithful and true has He been to the great Father. The work He undertook to do He has accomplished! He has in nothing drawn back from the Covenant engagements under which He laid Himself of old. He stood as the Surety of His people and He has been faithful and true to that smarting Suretyship. He came to be the Deliverer of His elect and He has worked the deliverance. He has not turned either to the right hand or to the left, but He has been faithful and true to every pledge which He gave to His Father for the deliverance of His chosen.

Yes, and even His enemies, though they give Him many a black word, cannot say that He is not faithful and true! He has not played false, even to the basest devil in Hell, nor has He deceived, in any respect, the basest man that lives. Nor will He, for when the day comes to keep His Word of terror, He will make the penalty tally to every syllable of the threat and mete out vengeance with a line and judgment with a plummet—and even His adversaries, though they shall forever rue the fact—shall confess that His name is Faithful and True! They called Him many ill names when He was here. They said He had a devil and was mad. But now it is acknowledged that His name is Faithful and True. We acknowledge it with intense delight and are glad to think that He leads the troops of Heaven to the fight.

John still looked and, as he gazed with opened eyes, he marked the mode of action and of warfare which the Champion employed, for he says, “In righteousness He does judge and make war.” Jesus is the only king who always wars in this fashion. There have been brilliant exceptions to the general rule, but war is usually as deceitful as it is bloody and the words of diplomatists are a mass of lies. It seems impossible that men

should deliberate about peace and war without straightway forgetting the meaning of words and the bonds of honesty! War still seems to be a piece of business in which truth would be out of place—it is a matter so accursed that falsehood is most at home there—and righteousness quits the plain.

But as for our King, it is in righteousness that He does judge and make war. Christ's Kingdom needs no deception—the most plain speech and the clearest truth—these are the weapons of our warfare! The Jesuitical craft which speaks not what it means; the priestcraft which undermines the faith of men in God to teach them faith in their fellow men; the falsehood which does not teach a doctrine at the first but gradually insinuates it into feeble minds; the craft which creeps into houses and leads astray silly women who are in bondage to their lusts—this has nothing to do with the kingdom of Christ. “In righteousness does He judge and make war.” He bids His champions come forth with nothing but His Word and speak that Word faithfully, as they receive it, whether men will hear or whether they will not.

He tells His people, wherever they are, to live righteously, soberly and in all integrity. And He Himself shakes off, as a man shakes off a viper from His hand, anything that is unrighteous, everything that is contrary to the Truth of God and holiness. This is our Champion and I guarantee you are right glad that He sits on the white horse and has the upper hand. Since He fights after this fashion, the more of such warfare the better for mankind! John, still gazing into the open door, saw a little—not much—of the Person of His blessed Master.

And, of course, he looked, first, into those eyes, those dear eyes which had so often been filled with tears and that, at the last, were even red with weeping. John gazed into them, or wished to do so, but he had to cover his own eyes, for they were dazzled. He says, “His eyes were as a flame of fire.” Think tonight of your Master on the white horse with such eyes as these. Why are they like flames of fire? Why, first, to discern the secrets of all hearts! There are no secrets here that Christ does not see. There is no lewd thought, there is no unbelieving skepticism that Christ does not read. There is no hypocrisy, no formalism, no deceit that He does not scan as easily as a man reads a page in a book. His eyes are like a flame of fire to read us through and through and know us to our inmost soul!

Oh, think of this and if you have any deceit, tremble before Him in whose spirit there is no guile! Those eyes, like a flame of fire, belong to our Champion that He may understand all the plots and crafts of all our foes. We are sometimes alarmed—we say that the machinations of Rome are very deep and that the plots of infidelity dive very low. But what does it matter? His eyes are like a flame of fire—He knows what they are doing!

He will confound their politics; He will expose their knavish tricks and still lead on His host conquering and to conquer! Let us never fear while He is on the white horse with such eyes as His!

It was natural that John should carry his glance from the eyes to the brow and as he looked at our Champion on the white horse he saw that on His head were many crowns. The last he had seen there was a crown of thorns—but that was gone and in the place of the one crown of the thorns of the earth he saw many crowns of the jewels of Heaven! There rests the crown of creation, for this Word made Heaven and earth! There is the crown of Providence, for this Man now rules the nations with a rod of iron! There is the crown of Grace, for it is from His royal hand that blessings are bestowed! There is the crown of the Church, for be it known to all men that there is no Head of the Church but Christ, and woe unto those who steal the title!

He is head over all things to His Church and King in the midst of her. Yes, on His head are many crowns, placed there by individual souls that He has saved. We have each one tried to crown Him in our poor way and we will do so as long as we live. All power is given unto Him in Heaven and in earth and, therefore, well may multitudes of diadems fill that august brow which once was belted with thorns! Glory be unto You, O Son of God! Our hearts adore You tonight as we contemplate You on Your white horse!

Still looking at Him, John saw one thing more, namely, His vesture. He says that His vesture was dipped in blood. Oh, but this is the grandest thought about our Master, wherever He may be, that He is always a real Man wearing the bloody garment! As the atoning Sacrifice, He is at His best! We love Him as we see the white lily of His perfect Nature, but the rose of Sharon is the flower for us, for its sweet perfume breathes life to our fainting souls! Yes, He bled and this is the greatest thing we can say of Him. His life was glorious, but His death transcends it! A living Christ, a reigning Christ—we are charmed as we think of this—but oh, the bleeding Christ, the *bleeding* Christ for *me*!

As the blood is the life, so is His blood life to us—the life of the Gospel, the life of our hopes—and one delights to think of Him that, though He rides the white horse, He has never taken off the bloody shirt in which He won our redemption! He looks like a Lamb that has been slain and still wears His priesthood! Whenever He goes out to conquer, it is with this harness on, this vesture dipped in blood! Oh, preach Him, you, His servants! Preach Him in His blood-red vesture! You shall never see souls saved if you portray Him in any other kind of coat! You take His own garment from Him and put on that of another—and you pretend that you are making Him more illustrious as you put on Him a scarlet robe! But His

own blood is His beauty and His triumph! Let Him come before us in that and our hearts shall crown Him with loudest acclaim.

One other thing John saw and that was His name. But here he seems to contradict himself. He says that He had a name which no man knows, yet he says that His name was the Word of God. Oh, but it is all true, for in such a One as our Master there must be paradoxes. No man knows His name! None of you know all His Nature. His love passes your knowledge. His goodness, His majesty, His humiliation, His Glory—all these transcend your mind! You cannot know Him. Oh, the depths! If you plunge deepest into the mystery of the Incarnate God you can never reach the bottom of it. “No man knows the Son but the Father.” And yet you do know His name, for you know that He is “the Word of God.”

And what does that mean? Why, when a man would show himself, he speaks. “Speak,” said the philosopher, “that I may see you.” A man’s speech is the embodiment of his thought. You know his thought when you hear his word, if he is a truth-speaking man. Now, Christ is God’s Word. That is His heart, spoken out to you. His inmost thoughts of love are printed in great capital letters and set before you in the living, loving, bleeding, dying Person of the Incarnate Son of God! Thus is He called the Word of God and, in that capacity, it becomes us to delight ourselves exceedingly in Him and to exalt because He is now riding triumphantly upon His white horse.

II. Thus have I bid you gaze at what John saw. Time chides me, however, and I can only ask you next, if you have seen the brightest One of all upon the white horse, just to look at HIS FOLLOWERS. “The armies which were in Heaven followed Him upon white horses. See, then, that Christ has a great following—not one army, but, “armies”—whole hosts of them—numbers that cannot be counted! My Lord is not the chief of a small band, but He has a great host. There are some who think that all Christ’s followers go to their little Bethel and so they all sit down on the top of their own Mount Zion and sweetly bless the Lord who shuts out the rest of mankind. But I tell you, your little Bethel would not make a stable for the horses of His lieutenants!

He has great armies following Him, for a countless number out of every people and nation and tongue has He redeemed with His most precious blood. And these that follow Him, you notice, are all mounted. They followed Him on white horses. They are mounted on the same sort of horses as Himself, for they fare as He fares. When He walks, they must walk. When He bears a Cross, they must carry crosses, too. But if ever He gets a crown, He cries, “They shall be crowned, too.” If ever He gets on horseback, He will have His saints on horseback with Him, for it is not like He that He should ride and they should walk.

Remember Alexander and how he kept up the spirit of his soldiers? Whenever the troops were thirsty, Alexander would not drink. And when they marched on foot, Alexander footed it with them. So is it with our Master—He has been marching here in the rough ways with us and He will let us ride in the Glory ways with Him when the time shall come. The armies of Christ followed Him on white horses. Look steadily at these white horses, for I want you to observe the armor of their riders. Cromwell's men wore at their sides long iron scabbards in which they carried swords which oftentimes they wiped across the manes of their horses when they were red with blood.

A dreadful story that is to read, brave as were those Ironsides. But if you look at *these* troops there is not a sword among them! Not a scabbard dangles! Not a piece of metal flashes back the sunlight! Neither helmet nor breastplate is there, nor does there seem to be a pistol at the holster. They are not armed with lance or pike and yet they are riding forth to war! Do you want to know the armor of that war? I will tell you. They are clothed in white linen—white and clean! Strange battle array this! And yet this is how they conquer and how *you* must conquer, too. This is both armor and weapon. *Holiness* is our sword and our shield! This is pike and gun.

If we but live as Christ lives and follow Him, we shall conquer, for no sword can come at him that lives to God—since should it slay his body, it cannot touch his *soul*, he lives and conquers still! Think of this, and never ask for any other weapon but this in the day of battle. Yet I have said they were all on horses which shows you that the saints of God have a strength that they sometimes forget. You know not that you ride on a horse, O child of God! But there is a supreme invisible power which helps you in contending for Christ and for His Truth. You are mightier than you know and you are riding more swiftly to the battle and more rapidly over the heads of your foes than you ever dreamed!

When a door shall be opened in Heaven to you and you get to the battle's end, you will say, "Bless the Lord, I, too, rode on a white horse. I, too, conquered when I thought I was defeated. I, too, by simple obedience to His will and keeping the faith and walking in His Truth, have been more than conqueror through Him that loved me." And is not this a grand sight, this Man—this "bonny Man," as Rutherford calls Him—on His white horse and all these bright ones following after Him in all their glorious array?!

III. And now we must close, for the bell has tolled just now to show that the hour is up, but we cannot end till we have spoken of THE WARFARE. What is this warfare? There cannot be war without a sword, yet if you look all along the ranks of the white-robed armies there is not a sword among them! Who carries the sword? There is One who bears it for them all! It is He, the King, who comes to marshal us! He bears a sword. But

where? It is in His mouth! Strange place! A sword in His mouth! Yet this is the only sword my Lord and Master wields. Mohammed subdued men with the scimitar, but Christ subdues men with the *Gospel!*

We have but to tell out the glad tidings of the love of God, for this is the sword of Christ with which He smites the nations! Be His mouths, my Brothers! Be His mouths, my Sisters! Tell the children in your Sunday school classes! Tell the poor in the corners of the streets! Tell by your little printed pamphlets if you cannot by your voices, all the story of how He loved us and gave Himself for us—for this is the sword of our warfare—it goes forth from the mouth of Christ! Let us be content to fight with this and nothing else! And for those who will not yield to it, our Leader has a hand as well as a tongue and He says that He will rule the nations with a rod of iron!

And if you will read history through, you will find that all nations that reject the Gospel have to suffer for it. I select one instance. The Gospel came to Spain years ago and multitudes of the nobility were converted. But they had their public executions and burnt the saints and the accursed Inquisition stamped out the Gospel in Spain. And to this day the nation cannot rise. It will, I trust, by God's forgiving mercy, but for *centuries* she that ruled the nations and covered the deep with her armadas has been sitting groveling in her poverty and sloth, for Christ has ruled her with a rod of iron and so will He rule all nations that reject the testimony of His mouth.

If the sword of His mouth is not heeded, then comes the last of this dread warfare—and may God grant that we may never know it—when His foot shall do it, for He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God! Ah, what a crush must that be which will come upon the clusters of Gomorrah from the foot which once was nailed to the tree! Who stomped that sinner's soul and crushed it down? Was he an angry angel with a sword of fire? No, it was the Christ of God, the Man of Love rejected and despised! Fiercer than a lion on prey is Love when once provoked! When Love turns to Jealousy, its fires are like coals of juniper which have a violent flame.

Beware, you despisers, lest you continue to despise. Submit to the sword of His mouth, lest you be destroyed by His hands! Be wise, when once His hands begin to smite, lest you have to feel His foot, for it is all over then! May you and I each have a white horse with which to follow Christ. But we never shall unless we are His followers here. We must put on the snow-white garments now! Here they are, ready for you—the righteousness of Christ will be given to any man who accepts Him and believes on Him! And when your snow-white garments are once on, He will give you the horse of His sacred strength and you, even you, following in the

tracks of your gallant Leader, shall ride on, shouting, "Victory, victory, victory, through the blood of the Lamb." The Lord bless you, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—
Revelation 18:21-24; Revelation 19.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—45, 324, 851.**

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“THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB”

NO. 2096

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JULY 21, 1889,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

“Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife has made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”
Revelation 19:7, 8.

LAST LORD’S Day we saw clearly from God’s Word that our Lord is worshipped in Heaven under the Character of a Lamb. Now, by a Lamb was meant sacrifice, sacrifice for the putting away of sin—according to the text, “Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.” It is against the great doctrine of atonement and substitutionary death that the attacks of the present unbelieving age are constantly being made. And therefore I set before you the Truth of God that substitution and sacrifice were not a temporary expedient but that they continue all through the whole history of salvation and remain in the very highest place, even in Heaven itself and will continue evermore.

Do not forget that whenever we read of Christ as a Lamb, it is to remind us of His sufferings and death in our place, for the putting away of our sin. Under that Character we looked to Him, some of us, years ago and found peace at the first. We are still looking to Him under that same Character. And when we attain to Heaven, we shall not have to change our thought of Him but we shall still see Him as a Lamb that has been slain. In our lowest place, when we came out of the Egypt of our bondage, He was the Lamb of God’s Passover. And in our highest place, in the heavenly temple, we shall still regard Him as “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

This morning my principal aim shall be to show you that the blessed and glorious union, which is to be celebrated between the Church and her Lord, will be the marriage “of the Lamb.” The ever blessed and eternal union of hearts with Christ will be in reference to His *sacrifice*, especially and emphatically. The perfected union of the entire Church of God with her Divine Husband is here described by the beloved Apostle, who laid his head upon his Master’s bosom and knew most about Him and who was under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in these words—“The marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife has made herself ready.”

Whatever else we think of at this time, my discourse will aim at this as the white of the target—namely, that Jesus Christ as the Lamb, the Sacrifice, is not only the beginning but the end. Not only the foundation but the topstone of the whole sacred edifice of the Temple of Grace. The consummation of the whole work of redemption is the marriage of the Church to Christ. And, according to “the true sayings of God,” this is “the marriage of the Lamb.”

I will set forth this marriage as best I am able. It is divinely veiled as well as revealed in this Revelation. God forbid we should intrude where the Holy Spirit shuts us out. But still, what we do know of it, let us now think upon—and may the sacred Spirit make it profitable to us!

I. First, I invite your attention to THE ANTECEDENTS OF THIS MARRIAGE. What will happen before the public marriage is celebrated? One great event will be the destruction of the harlot Church. I have just read, in your hearing, the previous chapter, which declares the overwhelming destruction which will fall upon that evil system. Any Church which puts in the place of justification by faith in Christ another method of salvation, is a harlot Church. The doctrine of justification by faith in Christ is the article of a standing or a falling Church.

Where the blood is precious, there is life. Where atonement by the sacrifice is preached and loved, there will the Spirit of God bear effectual testimony. But where human priests are put in the place of Jesus, where pardons can be purchased, where there is an unbloody sacrifice instead of the great propitiation, and sacraments are exalted as the means of regeneration—there the Church is no longer a chaste virgin unto Christ—she has turned aside from her purity.

The Antichristian system is to be utterly extirpated and burnt with fire. For you will perceive, in the fourteenth verse of the seventeenth chapter, that those who were associated with this false Church, “shall make war with the Lamb and the Lamb shall overcome them—for He is Lord of lords and King of kings.” And there has been no more wicked nor more determined war with the Lamb than that which has been waged by superstition supported by unbelief. The harlot Church and the beast of infidelity are in real league against the simple faith of Christ.

If you point men, no matter where—if you point them away from Christ, you point them to Antichrist. If you teach them what you may, no matter how philosophical it may seem—if in any way it takes them off from building upon the one foundation of Christ’s glorious and finished work, you have laid an Antichristian foundation and all that is built thereon will be *destroyed*. Everything which sets up itself in opposition to the sacrifice of Christ is to be hurled down and made to sink like a millstone in the flood. I would God the hour were come! Oh, that the Lord’s own right arm were bare and that we heard the cry, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen.”

It is ours to expect the speedy coming of our Lord. Yet, if He tarries, it may be many a day before “her plagues come in one day.” But, wait as we may, so it shall be. The day must come when the true Church shall be honored and the harlot Church shall be abhorred. The Bride of Christ is a sort of Cinderella now, sitting among the ashes. She is like her Lord, “despised and rejected of men.” The watchmen smite her and take away her veil from her. For they know her not, even as they knew not her Lord. But when He shall appear, then shall she appear, also—and in His glorious manifestation, she also shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of the Father.

Furthermore, in the immediate connection, we note that before the marriage of the Lamb, there was a peculiar voice. Read the fifth verse—“And a voice came.” Where from? “A voice came out of the Throne.” Whose

voice was that? It was not the voice of the Eternal God. For it said, “Praise our God, all you His servants.” Whose voice, then, could it be? No one but God could be upon the Throne save *the Lamb*, who is God. Surely, it was He who said, “Praise our God.” The Mediator, God and Man in one Person, was on the Throne as a Lamb and He announced the day of His own marriage.

Who should do it but He? “A voice came out of the Throne, saying, Praise our God, all you His servants and you that fear Him, both small and great.” He speaks the word which calls on all the servants of God to praise Him, because His complete victory had come. Longing to see of the travail of His soul, earnest to gather in all His elect, He speaks. For the fullness of time has come—when His joy shall be full and He shall rejoice over the whole company of His redeemed as forever one with Himself.

The voice from the Throne is a very remarkable one. It shows how near akin the exalted Christ is to His people. He says to all the redeemed, “Praise our God, all you His servants.” It reminds me of His memorable words, “I ascend unto My Father and your Father. And to My God and your God.” He was not then ashamed to associate His people with Him in the high possession of His Father and His God. And up there upon the Throne, He says, “Praise *our* God.” I do not know how this language strikes you. But to me it forcibly sets forth His love, His condescension, His fraternization, His union with His people.

Since I know not how to set it out to you, I must leave you to think over it. He who has gone triumphantly up to the Throne, the Savior whose conflicts are all over, who has gained the everlasting reward of sitting with the Father upon His Throne, still joins with us in praise and says, “Praise our God, all you His servants.” He is not even ashamed to have fellowship with the least of His people. For He adds, “And you that fear Him, both small and great.” Truly “the man is near of kin to us, He is our next kinsman”—

**“In ties of blood, with sinners one,
Our Jesus has to Glory gone.”**

In that Glory He still owns His dear relationship and in the midst of the Church He sings praise unto God (Heb. 2:11, 12).

Next, notice the response to this voice. For this also precedes the marriage. No sooner did that one august voice summon them to praise, than immediately, “I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude.” He heard the mingled sound as of an innumerable host all joining in the song. For the redeemed of the Lord are not a few. No man can count them. “Out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation,” they respond in that day to the voice of the Lamb, saying, “Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigns.”

So loud was the sound of all those commingled voices, that it sounded like “many waters.” Like cataracts in their roar, or like oceans in their fullness. It was as though all the billows of the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Northern and Southern oceans lifted up their voices and deep answered unto deep. Nor was the figure too strong. For John heaps upon it another comparison and says, “As the voice of mighty thunders.” We have lately heard the thunder above the deafening din of our streets and we have trembled at the dread artillery of Heaven. Such was the sound of

the mingled voices of the redeemed when they all united to give honor to God, because the marriage of the Lamb had come.

Who can imagine the acclamations of that glorious day? We now preach the Gospel, as it were, in a corner and few there are that will applaud the King of kings. Still, the Christ wends His way through the world as an unknown or forgotten man. And His Church, following behind Him, seems as a forlorn and forsaken woman—few there are that care for her. But in that day when her Lord is seen as the King of kings and she is openly acknowledged as His spouse, what welcomes will be heard, what bursts of adoring praise unto the Lord God omnipotent!

Observe that this tremendous volume of sound will be full of rejoicing and of devout homage. “Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to Him.” Double joy will be there and its expression will be homage to the Lord God. The joy of joys will be the delight of Christ in His perfectly gathered Church. There is joy in Heaven in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents. But when all these repenting sinners are gathered into one perfected body and married to the Lamb, what will be the infinite gladness?

Heaven is always Heaven and unspeakably full of blessedness—but even Heaven has its holidays, even bliss has its overflowing. And on that day when the springtide of the infinite ocean of joy shall have come, what a measureless flood of delight shall overflow the souls of all glorified spirits as they perceive that the consummation of love’s great design is come—“The marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife has made herself ready”! We do not know yet, Beloved, of what happiness we are capable. We have sometimes wished that we could—

**“Sit and sing ourselves away
To everlasting bliss.”**

But then we were only feeling the spray of the ocean of blessedness. What must it be to *bathe* in it? Here we drink from cups of consolation. But what draughts we shall have when we lie down at the wellhead and drink in our joy immediately from God! If you and I enter glory soon without our bodies, we shall not even then know to the utmost degree what will be the bliss of our perfected manhood—when the body shall be raised incorruptible from among the dead and joined to the sinless soul. Nor would this give us more than a bare idea of the infinite blessedness of myriads of such perfected manhood united in a perfected Church—from which no one single member shall be missing, nor one member maimed, or sick, or stained.

Praise the Lord Jesus as you sing—

**“You the whole body shall present
Before Your Father’s face.
Nor shall a wrinkle, or a spot,
The beauteous form deface.”**

Oh, what joy! I feel as if I could not preach to you—I want to get away to think it over and chew the cud of meditation for myself. You must just sit where you are and muse. Here we have the essence of heavenly music in a few plain words. “The marriage of the Lamb is come.” Oh, may I be there! May I be a part of the perfected body of the Church of God! Oh, that I might be but part of the soles of her feet, or the least hair of her head! If I

may but see the King in His beauty, in the fullness of His joy—when He shall take by the right hand her for whom He shed His precious blood and shall know the joy which was set before Him, for which He endured the Cross, despising the shame—I shall be blest indeed!

Thus, I have given you a hint of what will precede the marriage of the Lamb, in all of which you may observe that Jesus wears His Character of the Lamb. The harlot Church has fought against the Lamb and the Lamb has overcome her forces. He it is that, on the Throne, speaks to His people as His Brethren. It is to Him that the response is given. For the joy and the delight all spring from the fact that the marriage is that of the Lamb whom the Father glorifies and who glorifies the Father. The voice said, “Let us rejoice and give honor to Him.” Was not that His prayer of old, “Father, glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You”? To glorify the Father, Jesus died as a sacrifice. And to glorify Jesus, the Father gives Him His Church, which is redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

II. Now may I be helped by the Spirit of God, while I lead you on to THE MARRIAGE ITSELF. “The marriage of the Lamb is come.” Often as you hear about this marriage of the Lamb, I greatly question whether any here have any precise idea what it means. Dean Alford says, “This figure of a marriage between the Lord and His people is too frequent and familiar to need explanation.”

With all deference to the excellent Divine, that was a very sufficient reason why he should have carefully explained it, since that which is often noted in Holy Scripture must be of first importance and should be well understood. I do not wonder that many are shy of such a theme, for it is a difficult one. Alas, how little do I, personally, know of such a matter!

The marriage of the Lamb is the result of the eternal gift of the Father. Our Lord says, “Yours they were and you gave them to Me.” His prayer was, “Father, I will that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am. That they may behold My glory, which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.” The Father made a choice, and the chosen He gave to His Son to be His portion. For them He entered into a Covenant of Redemption, whereby He was pledged in due time to take upon Himself their nature, pay the penalty of their offenses and set them free to be His own.

Beloved, that which was arranged in the councils of eternity and settled there between the high contracting Parties, is brought to its ultimate end in that day when the Lamb takes unto Himself in everlasting union the whole of those whom His Father gave Him from of old.

Next—this is the completion of the betrothal, which took place with each of them in time. I shall not attempt elaborate distinctions. But as far as you and I were concerned, the Lord Jesus betrothed each one of us unto Himself in righteousness when first we believed on Him. Then He took us to be His and gave Himself to be ours, so that we could sing—“My beloved is mine and I am His.” This was the essence of the marriage. Paul, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, represents our Lord as already married to the Church.

This may be illustrated by the Oriental custom, by which, when the bride is betrothed, all the sanctities of marriage are involved in those es-

pousals. But yet there may be a considerable interval before the bride is taken to her husband’s house. She dwells with her former household and has not yet forgotten her kindred and her father’s house, though still she is espoused in truth and righteousness. Afterwards, she is brought home on an appointed day, the day which we should call the actual marriage. But yet the betrothal is, to Orientals, of the very essence of the marriage.

Well, then, you and I are betrothed to our Lord today and He is joined to us by inseparable bonds. He does not wish to part with us, nor could we part from Him. He is the delight of our souls and He rejoices over us with singing. Rejoice that He has chosen you and called you and through the betrothal look forward to the marriage. Feel even now, that though in the world, you are not of it—your destiny does not lie here among these frivolous sons of men. Our home is from now on High—

***“My heart is with Him on His Throne,
And ill can bear delay.
Each moment listening for the voice,
‘Rise up and come away.’ ”***

The marriage day indicates the perfecting of the Body of the Church. I have already told you that the Church will then be completed and it is not so now. Adam lay asleep and the Lord took out of his side a rib and fashioned thereof a helpmeet for him. Adam saw her not when she was in the forming but he opened his eyes and before him was the perfect form of his helpmeet. Beloved, the true Church is now in the forming and is therefore not visible. There are many Churches. But as to the one Church of Christ, we see it neither here nor there.

We speak of the visible Church. But the term is not correct. The thing which we see is a mixture of Believers and mere *pretenders* to faith. The Church which is affianced unto the heavenly Bridegroom is not visible as yet. For she is in the process of formation. The Lord will not allow such simpletons as we are to see His half-finished work. But the day will come when He shall have completed His new creation and then will He bring her forth whom He has made for the second Adam to be His delight to all eternity.

The Church is not perfected as yet. We read of that part of it which is in Heaven, that, “They without us should not be made perfect.” Unless you and I get there, if we are true Believers, there cannot be a perfect Church in Glory. The music of the heavenly harmonies as yet lacks certain voices. Some of its needful notes are too bass for those already and others are too high for them. It will not be complete till the singers come who are ordained to give the choir its fullest range.

At the Crystal Palace you have seen the singers come trooping in. The conductor is all anxiety if they seem to linger. Still, some are away. The time is nearly up and you see seats up there on the right and a vacant block down there on the left. Even so with the heavenly choir—they are streaming in—the orchestra is filling up but yet there is room and yet there is demand for other voices to complete the heavenly harmony. Beloved, in the day of the marriage of the Lamb, the chosen shall *all* be there—the great and the small—even all the Believers who are wrestling hard this day with sins and doubts and fears. Every living member of the living Church shall be there to be married to the Lamb.

By this marriage is meant more than I have told you. There is the home-bringing. You are not to live here forever in these tents of Kedar, among a people of a strange tongue. But the blessed Bridegroom comes to take you to the happy country, where you shall no longer say, “My soul is among lions.” All the faithful shall soon be away to Your land, O Emmanuel! We shall dwell in the land that flows with milk and honey, the land of the unclouded and unsetting sun, the home of the blessed of the Lord. Happy, indeed, will be the home-bringing of the perfect Church!

The marriage is the coronal-avowal. The Church is the Bride of the great King and He will set the crown upon her head and make her to be known as His true spouse forever. Oh, what a day that will be, when every member of Christ shall be crowned in Him, and with Him, and every member of the mystical body shall be glorified in the glory of the Bridegroom! Oh, may I be there in that day! Brethren, we must be with our Lord in the fight if we would be with Him in the victory. We must be with Him in wearing the crown of thorns, if we are to be with Him in wearing the crown of glory. We must be faithful, by His Grace, even unto death, if we are to share the glory of His endless life.

I cannot tell you all it means but certainly this marriage signifies that all who have believed in Him shall then enter into a bliss which shall never end—a bliss which no fear approaches, or doubt beclouds. They shall be forever with the Lord, forever glorified with Him. Expect not lips of clay fitly to speak on such a theme. Tongues of fire are needed and words that fall like fire-flakes on the soul.

A day will come, the day of days, time’s crown and glory—when all conflict, risk and judgment is ended forever—the saints, arrayed in the righteousness of Christ shall be eternally one with Him in a living, loving, lasting union, partaking together of the same glory, the glory of the Most High. What must it be to be there! My dear Hearers, will you be there? Make your calling and election sure. If you are not trusting in the Lamb on earth, you will not reign with the Lamb in His Glory. He that does not love the Lamb, as the atoning sacrifice, shall never be the bride of the Lamb.

How can you hope to be glorified with Him if you neglect Him in the day of His scorning? O Lamb of God, my Sacrifice, I must be one with You, for this is my very life! I could not live apart from You. If, my Hearer, you can thus speak, there is good hope that you shall be a participator in the marriage of the Lamb.

III. But we pass on now to dwell emphatically upon the fact that THE CHARACTER UNDER WHICH THE BRIDEGROOM APPEARS IS THAT OF THE LAMB. “The marriage of the Lamb is come.”

It must be so, because first of all, our Savior was the Lamb in the Everlasting Covenant, when this whole matter was planned, arranged, and settled by the foresight and decree of eternity. He is “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,” and the Covenant was with Him, as One who was to be the Surety, the Substitute, the Sacrifice for guilty men. So and not otherwise, was it of old.

It was next as the Lamb that He loved us and proved His love. Beloved, He did not give us words of love merely when He came from Heaven to

earth, and dwelt among us "a lowly man before His foes." But He proceeded to deeds of truest affection. The supreme proof of His love was that He was led as a lamb to the slaughter. When He poured out His blood as a sacrifice, it might have been said, "Behold, how He loved them!" If you would prove the love of Jesus, you would not mention the transfiguration but the crucifixion. Gethsemane and Golgotha would rise to your lips. Here to demonstration, beyond all possibility of doubt by any true heart, the Well-Beloved proved His love to us.

See how it runs—"He loved me and gave Himself for me," as if that giving of Himself for me was the clear proof that He loved me. Read again—"Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it." The proof of His love to the Church was the giving up of Himself for it. "Being found in fashion as a man He humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the Cross." "Herein is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us." So, you see, as a Lamb He proved His love, and as a Lamb He celebrated His marriage with us.

Go a step further. Love in marriage must be on both sides and it is as the Lamb that we first came to love Him. I had no love to Christ—how could I have—till I saw His wounds and blood? "We love Him, because He first loved us." His perfect life was a condemnation to me, much as I was compelled to admire it. But the love that drew me to Him was shown in His substitutionary Character, when He bore my sins in His own body on the tree. Is it not so with you, Beloved?

I have heard a great deal about conversions through admiration of the Character of Christ but I have never met with one—all I have ever met with have been conversions through a sense of need of salvation and a consciousness of guilt—which could never be satisfied except by His agony and death, through which sin is justly pardoned and evil is subdued. This is the great heart-winning doctrine. Christ loves us as the Lamb and we love Him as the Lamb.

Further, marriage is the most perfect union. Surely, it is as the Lamb that Jesus is most closely joined to His people. Our Lord came very close to us when He took our nature, for thus He became bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. He came very near to us when, for this cause, He left His Father and became one flesh with His Church. He could not be sinful as she was. But He did take her sins upon Himself and bear them all away, as it is written, "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." When "He was numbered with the transgressors," and when the sword of vengeance smote Him in our place, then He came nearer to us than ever He could do in the perfection of His Incarnation.

I cannot conceive of closer union than that of Christ and souls redeemed by blood. As I look at Him in death, I feel forced to cry, "Surely a husband by blood are You to me, O Jesus! You are joined to me by something closer than the one fact that You are of my nature. For that nature of Yours has borne my sin and suffered the penalty of wrath on my behalf. Now are You one with me in all things, by a union like that which links You with the Father." A wonderful union is thus effected by our Lord's wearing the Character of the Lamb.

Once more—we never feel so one with Jesus as when we see Him as the Lamb. I shall again appeal to your experience. When have you had the sweetest fellowship with Christ in all your lives? I answer on my own account—it has been when I have sung—

***"Oh, how sweet to view the flowing
Of His soul-redeeming blood,
With Divine assurance knowing
He has made my peace with God!"***

If I had my choice today, while abiding in this present state, to see my Lord in His Glory, or on His Cross, I should choose the latter. Of course, I would prefer to see His Glory and be away with Him. But, while dwelling here, surrounded with sin and sorrow, a sight of His griefs has the most effect upon me.

"O sacred head once wounded," I long to behold You! I never feel so close to my Lord as when I survey His wondrous Cross and see Him pouring out His blood for me. I have been melted down when we have sung together those sweet lines—

***"See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did ever such love and sorrow meet?
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?"***

I have almost felt myself in His arms, and like John I have leaned on His bosom when I have beheld His passion. I do not wonder, therefore, that since He comes closest to us as the Lamb and since we come closest to Him when we behold Him in that Character, He is pleased to call His highest eternal union with His Church, "the marriage of the Lamb."

And O, Beloved, when you come to think of it, to be married to Him, to be one with Him, to have no thought, no object, no desire, no glory but that which dwells in Him that lives and was dead—will not this be Heaven, indeed, where the Lamb is the light thereof? Forever to contemplate and adore Him who offered up Himself without spot unto God, as our sacrifice and propitiation! This shall be an endless feast of grateful love. We shall never weary of this subject.

If you see the Lord coming from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, from the winepress wherein He has trampled on His foes—you are overawed and overcome by the terror of that dread display of justice. But when you see Him clad in a vesture dipped in no blood but His own, you will sing aloud evermore, "You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood. To You be glory forever and ever." I could go on singing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain" throughout all eternity. The theme has an inexhaustible interest about it—there is everything in it—justice, mercy, power, patience, love, condescension, grace and glory.

All over glorious is my Lord when I behold Him as a Lamb. And this shall make Heaven seven times Heaven to me to think that even then I shall be joined to Him in everlasting bonds as the Lamb. [Here a voice from the gallery cried, "Praise the Lord!"] Yes, my Friend, we will praise the Lord. "Praise you the Lord" is the command which was heard coming out of the throne—"Praise our God, all you His servants and you that fear Him, both small and great: for the marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife has made herself ready."

IV. Now we come to the last point, THE PREPAREDNESS OF THE BRIDE—"His wife has made herself ready." Up till now the Church has always been spoken of as His *bride*, now she is "His wife"—that is a deeper, dearer, more matured word than "bride"—"His wife has made herself ready." The Church has now come to the fullness of her joy and has taken possession of her status and power as "His wife." What does it mean—

"Has made herself ready"?

It signifies, first, that she willingly and of her own accord comes to her Lord, to be His and to be with Him forever. This she does with all her heart—"she has made herself ready."

She does not enter into this engagement with reluctance. Some unwisely speak of the Grace of God, as though it were a physical force, which sets a constraint upon the will of the quickened man. Beloved, I never preach to you in that fashion. Free Will is an unknown thing, except it is worked in us by Divine Grace. Grace is the great liberating force. The will is a slave to evil, till Divine Grace comes and makes it free to choose that which is good. No action of the soul is more free than that by which it quits sin and closes with Christ.

Then the man comes to himself. The heart is free from compulsion, when its love goes forth towards the Lord Jesus. I ask you that love Him, do you feel that you are going against your will in so doing? Far from it—you wish to love Him more. In the ultimate union of all the chosen with Christ, will you want any forcing to take your part in the marriage of the Lamb? Did not the words I used just now state your longings—"My heart is with Him on His Throne"? Are you not panting to behold His face?

Compulsion to a hungry man to eat would seem more likely than compulsion to be joined unto Christ. His wife has gladly made herself ready—Free Grace has made her freely choose Him. Does it not mean that she has put away from herself all evil, and all connection with the corruptions of the harlot Church have been destroyed? She has struggled against error, she has fought against infidelity and both have been put down by her holy watchfulness and earnest testimony. And so she is ready for her Lord.

Does it not also mean that in the great day of the consummation the Church will be one? Alas, for the divisions among us! You do not know what denomination my Friend belonged to who prayed just now. Well, I shall not tell you. You could not judge from his prayer. "The saints in prayer appear as one." Denomination? A plague upon denominationalism! There should be but one denomination—we should be denominated by the name of Christ, as the wife is named by her husband's name. As long as the Church of Christ has to say, "My right arm is Episcopalian and my left arm is Wesleyan and my right foot is Baptist and my left foot is Presbyterian or Congregational," she is not ready for the marriage.

She will be ready when she has washed out these stains, when all her members have "one Lord, one faith, one Baptism." Unity is a main part of the readiness here spoken of. I beg you to notice what the preparation was. It is described in the eighth verse—"To her was granted." I will go no further. Whatever preparation it was that she made, in whatever apparel she was arrayed, it was granted to her. Observe that the harlot Church

wore fine linen, also, but then she had with it purple and silk and scarlet and precious stones and pearls. I do not know from where the harlot obtained her apparel but I know where the true Church found her wedding dress, for it is written, “to her was granted.”

This was a *gift* of Sovereign Grace, the free gift of her own Beloved—“To her was granted.” She had a grant from the Throne, a royal grant, an indisputable right. We also go to Heaven by royal grant. We have nothing of our own to carry us there by right, nothing of boasted merit. But to us also is granted acceptance in the Beloved. Oh, it is a glorious thing to hold your own by letters patent, under the Great Seal of Heaven! When we shall be united to Jesus, the ever blessed Lamb, in endless wedlock, all our fitness to be there will be ours by free grant.

Look at the apparel of the wife, “To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white.” How simple her raiment! Only fine linen, clean and white! The more simple our worship, the better. The true Church of Christ is content with white linen and no more. She asked not for those fine things we read about in connection with the harlot. She envied not the unchaste one her harpers and musicians and pipers and trumpeters—she was content with her simple harp and joyful song. She did not need all manner of vessels of ivory and precious wood, brass and iron, and marble. She did not seek for cinnamon and odors and ointments, nor anything else of that finery with which people nowadays try to adorn their worship.

The simpler the better. When in worship you cannot hear the voices of the people beyond the noise which might be made by the twitter of half-a-dozen sparrows, because a flood of noise from a huge organ is drowning all the praise—I think we have lost our way. The simpler the worship the better, whether in prayer or praise, or anything else. The harlot Church bedecks herself with her architecture and her millinery and her perfumery and her oratory and her music. But those who would follow the Lamb wherever He goes will keep their worship, their practice, and their doctrine, pure and simple, avoiding all the blandishments of carnal policy and human wisdom—content with the Truth of God as it is in Jesus. What more beautiful than pure white linen?

In the Greek, our text runs thus—“Fine linen, clean and white, for fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints.” Our Revised Version has, in this case, not given us a translation but an explanation and that explanation is a contraction of the sense. The revisers word it, “Fine linen is the righteous acts of saints.” That word “acts” is of their own insertion. The word “righteousnesses” has a fuller meaning—it is exceedingly broad and they have narrowed it and misapplied it. We shall have a complete array of righteousnesses in Christ’s righteousness, active and passive—a garment for the head and a garment for the feet and for the loins.

What righteousnesses we have! Righteousness imparted by the power of the Spirit. Righteousness imputed by the decree of God. Every form of righteousness will go to make up the Believer’s outfit—but remember, all of it is *granted* and none of it is of our own purchasing. We shall not have Christ’s righteousness to cover up our sin, as some blasphemously say—for we shall have *no sin* to cover. We shall not want Christ’s righteousness

to make an evil heart *seem* pure—we shall be as perfect as our Father in Heaven is perfect. Washed in the blood of the Lamb, we shall have no spot upon us or within us. We shall have a complete righteousness. And thus arrayed, we shall be covered with the beauty of holiness. This garment is most befitting, for it is, “The righteousness of saints.” Saints ought to have righteousness. They are themselves made holy and therefore they ought to be adorned in visible holiness. And so they shall be.

Best of all, we shall be arrayed in that day with that which pleases the Bridegroom. Do I not remember how He said, “I counsel you to buy of Me white raiment”? Yes, she has remembered His bidding. She has nothing else but that “fine linen” which is the “The righteousness of saints.” And this He delights in. She comes to the Lamb bearing about her the result of His own passion and of His own Spirit. And she is well pleasing in His eyes. The Lord sees in her of the travail of His soul and He is satisfied.

I have done when I have again put this question—Do you trust the Lamb? I warn you, if you have a religion which has no blood of Christ in it, it is not worth a thought—you had better be rid of it, it will be of no use to you. I warn you, also, that unless you love the Lamb you cannot be married to the Lamb. For He will never be married to those who have no love to Him. You must take Jesus as a Sacrifice, or not at all. It is useless to say, “I will follow Christ’s example.” You will not do anything of the sort. It is idle to say, “He shall be my Teacher.” He will not own you for a disciple unless you will own Him as a Sacrifice.

You must take Him as the Lamb, or have done with Him. If you despise the blood of Christ, you despise the whole Person of Christ. Christ is nothing to you if He is not your atonement. As many of you as hope to be saved by the works of the Law, or by anything else apart from His blood and righteousness, you have un-Christianized yourselves. You have no part in Jesus here and you shall have no part in Him hereafter, when He shall take to Himself His own redeemed Church, to be His spouse forever and ever. God bless you, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB NO. 2428

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S DAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1895.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 21, 1887.

*“And he said unto me, Write, ‘Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.’”
Revelation 19:9.*

You will perceive that there was an exhortation to John to “Write.” Why was he especially to write these words down? I conceive that it was, first, because the information here recorded was valuable—“Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.” It was worth while that this new beatitude should be recorded, so the angel of God said to the Apostle, “Write.” It was also to be written because of its absolute certainty—“These are the true sayings of God.” This blessedness was not a thing to be spoken of once and then to be forgotten, but it was to be recorded so that future ages might see that it is surely so, assuredly so beyond all question! God has bidden this record to be written in black and white, yes, engraved as with an iron pen and lead in the rock, forever—“Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.”

It was to be written, no doubt, to bring it under our consideration as a thing worthy of being weighed, a text to be read, marked, learned and inwardly digested—not merely spoken to John by the angel of God, but written by the Apostle at the express order of the Spirit of God. Lord, did You say to John, “Write it,” and shall I not read it? Did you bid the beloved disciple write it and do You not, thereby, virtually bid me consider it and remember it? Lord, by Your Spirit, write this message on my heart, “Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.”

I find that my text is succeeded, as well as preceded, by something remarkable—“He said unto me, These are the true sayings of God.” Lest any doubt should arise in our minds about the marriage supper of the Lamb, or about the fact that many are called to that supper, or about the blessedness of such as are called, the angel says, “These are the true sayings of God.” Some things appear to be too good to be true. We frequently meet with sinners, under a sense of guilt, who are staggered by the greatness of God’s mercy. The Light of the Gospel has been too bright for them! They “could not see for the glory of that Light,” as Paul said in describing the appearance of Christ to him when on the road to Damascus. So, “to make assurance doubly sure,” that we may not question its truth because of its greatness, we have this solemn declaration especially certified by order of the Lord, under the hand and seal of the Spirit of

God—“These are the true sayings of God.” O Sirs, the Lord Christ will come again! He will come to gather together His people and to make them forever blessed! And happy will you be if you are among that chosen company! If you shall meet the King of Kings with joyful confidence, you shall be blessed, indeed!

You noticed that I read parts of two chapters before I came to my text and I did it for this purpose. The false harlot-church is to be judged and then the true Church of Christ is to be acknowledged and honored with what is called a marriage supper. The false must be put away before the true can shine out in all its luster! Oh, that Christ would soon appear to drive falsehood from off the face of the earth! At present it seems to gather strength, and to spread till it darkens the sky and turns the sun into darkness, and the moon into blood. Oh, that the Lord would arise and sweep away the deadly errors which now pollute the very air! We long for the time when the powers of darkness shall be baffled and the pure Everlasting Light shall triumph over all! We do not know when it shall be—

**“But, come what may to stand in the way,
That day the world shall see,”**

when the Truth of God shall vanquish error and when the true Church shall be revealed in all her purity and beauty as the Bride of Christ—and the apostate church shall be put away once and for all and forever!

Time rolls wearily along just now, apparently, and some hearts grow heavy and sad, but let us take courage. The morning comes as well as the night and there are good days, not so far off as we have sometimes fancied—and some of us may yet live to see times which shall make us cry, “Lord, now let Your servants depart in peace, for our eyes have seen Your salvation.” Whether we live till Christ comes again, or whether we fall asleep in Him, many of us know that we shall sit down at the great wedding feast in the end of the days and we shall partake of the supper of the Lamb in the day of His joy and Glory! We are looking across the blackness and darkness of the centuries into that promised millennial age wherein we shall rejoice with our Lord with joy unspeakable and full of glory!

I. I will no longer delay you from the text. And in meditating upon this august marriage festival, I want you to notice, first of all, THE DESCRIPTION OF THE BRIDEGROOM.

There is no marriage without a bridegroom. There is no marriage of the Church without the appearance of Christ and, therefore, He must be manifested. He must come out of the ivory palaces wherein He hides Himself, today, and He must appear in His Glory! And when He shall appear, what shall be His title? Notice it— “Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.”

This term— *“the Lamb”*—seems to be the special name of Christ which John was accustomed to use. I suppose he heard it, first, from that other John called the Baptist, when he said, “Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.” Isaiah had compared the Christ to a lamb brought to the slaughter, but he had not really called Him “the Lamb of God.” This beloved John, who knew the Master better than any-

one else, seemed to love constantly to call Him by this most expressive name.

Now, if in any Book of the Bible we might have expected that our Lord would *not* have been called the Lamb, it would have been the Book of the Revelation. It might seem as if the name, “the Lion of the tribe of Judah” might appropriately have been used every time, and the name of, “the Lamb,” have been dropped. The name, “the Lamb,” seemed suitable for Jesus here below, despised and rejected of men, led to the slaughter, dumb and patient beneath the hands of cruel men. The name, “the Lamb,” seemed suitable for Gethsemane, Gabbatha and Golgotha—but John calls the Savior by this name many times all through this Book of the Revelation! He writes constantly about the Lamb, the Lamb in the midst of the Throne, the Lamb leading His people to living fountains of water. And now the angel tells him to write about the marriage supper of the Lamb!

This is the more remarkable because, at first sight, it may seem incongruous to blend these two things together—the Lamb and a marriage supper. But the incongruity of figures must sometimes be allowed in order to make more apparent some master Truth of God which must not and cannot be veiled for the sake of correct rhetoric! It sometimes happens that language becomes a burden to thought—great thoughts will break the backs of words and crush them into the dust. So it happens that comparisons and metaphors crack and break, like rotten wood in the wind, under the stress of some great master thought which rules the writer’s mind. It matters not whether it is congruous in *figure*, it is suitable enough in *fact* that the wedding at the last should be the marriage of the Lamb!

What do I infer from this? I gather, in a word, just this, that Christ *anywhere*, even in His highest Glory, still wishes us to regard Him as the Sacrifice for sin. He desires to be viewed by us in His Character as the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. This is a Character which He never lays aside and it is as the Lamb that He will manifest Himself in the consummation of all things when His Church is perfected!

First, *as the Lamb, He is the one everlasting Sacrifice for sin.* Where is the lamb that God has provided for a burnt offering? It is Jesus! Where is the morning and evening lamb to take away Israel’s guilt? It is Jesus! Where is the lamb that bleeds and dies, that with its blood the lintel and the two side posts may be smeared to secure the inmates of the house from the destroying angel in Egypt? It is Jesus! All His life, and in His death, He was no lion, no beast of prey—He was the gentle, suffering, sacrificial Victim, dying that we may not die, presenting Himself a Sacrifice acceptable unto God!

Now, because Christ was the Lamb, suffering for sin, and because He delights to remember that He was our Sacrifice, therefore *He is seen in that capacity in the day of the gladness of His heart.* He links the memory of His grief with the manifestation of His Glory—and as He was a Lamb to redeem His Church, so does He appear as a Lamb in the marriage supper of His Glory! One reason why He does this is because He is espe-

cially glorious in the Character of the Lamb of God. I cannot conceive of our Lord Jesus Christ as ever being less than infinitely glorious, but, dear Friends, if there is ever a time when we can appreciate the splendor of His Character more fully than at other times, it is when He is on the Cross—when He dies, “the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.”

Tell me not of all the Glory which surrounds Him now in the midst of the Throne—I cannot conceive any Glory exceeding in brightness the Glory of His self-denial, the Glory of His taking upon Himself the form of a Servant and, being found in fashion as a Man, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. The glory of men consists in what they are prepared to suffer for others. The glory of a king must lie, not in the crowns he wears, but in what he does for his subjects—and Christ’s Glory is most seen in His sacrifice for sinners! “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” But Christ laid down His life for His *enemies*. When the Lord Jesus Christ put on the bloody shirt in Gethsemane. When He bedecked Himself with the five bright rubies of His wounds. When He was adorned with the crown of thorns and, last of all, when He was decorated with that robe of blood as the soldier pierced His side, then it was that He was more illustrious than at any time before or since in the eyes of those who think aright! This is the star in His sky, no, the *sun* that eclipses all the stars—that Jesus loved, pitied and had compassion even to the death upon the sons of men! So, in the day of His marriage, He comes out, again, in this highest and noblest of Characters—especially glorious as a Lamb! It is as a Lamb that He celebrates the marriage supper with His Bride, the Church.

Brothers and Sisters, I think that it is very appropriate for Christ to appear in Glory as a Lamb, because *it is as the Lamb that He has most fully displayed His love to His Church*, to which He is espoused, and to which He is to be married at that Last Great Day. Beloved, the marriage supper is a feast of *love*—there, love is at home. So Jesus, that He may reveal Himself in His love best of all, appears as a bleeding Sacrifice on the day of His love’s triumph. I do not know how to talk about this great theme, but this Truth of God rests in my heart and makes me feel more glad than I can tell. It lies like a cake of sweet perfume upon the altar of my soul and burns there with the soft bright flame of love. And I rejoice to know that in the day when Jesus takes His Church by the hand and leads her Home to His Father’s house, He will appear in that Character in which He most of all has shown His love to His beloved. You see most of His love when you see most of His griefs and most of His condescension—and, therefore, in that Character does He appear at His marriage supper.

There is one other thought before I leave this first point. *It is as the Lamb that Christ is best loved of our souls*. At any rate, you feel your affections most drawn out toward Him who suffered in your place. Tell me, you who know Him most, you who love Him best, is it not so? You have seen Him on His Throne, but you have fallen at His feet as dead, for the

sight has been too much for you! But when you have seen Him on the Cross, oh, then your heart has melted while your Beloved has spoken to you and you have said, "He has won my heart. Now He has completely mastered me—I must love Him now." So then, you see, on the day of His marriage, when He would be best loved, Christ comes unto His Church robed in that garment in which He appears most lovely in her sight, and He draws out at that marriage supper, more fully than ever He did, all the love of all His redeemed for whom He laid down His life!

Now, you who care not for my Lord as a Substitute and a Sacrifice, will you be at the marriage supper when He appears as the Lamb? It is as the Lamb of God that you reject Him! You are willing to take Him, you say, as a Teacher, or as an Exemplar, but as the Sacrifice for sin you will not have Him. Then, neither will He have you! In that great day, as you have disowned the vicarious Sacrifice, He who was that Sacrifice will disown you! There will be no marriage between your soul and Christ if you will not have Him as the Lamb, for that marriage feast is to be the marriage of the Lamb, and of none else. As long as this tongue can move and these lips can speak, I will preach nothing to you but Jesus Christ and Him Crucified—that He, who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him! I know no Savior but that Christ, "who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree," and who, "when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high," and now in Glory bears the marks of the great Propitiation by which His people are saved!

II. But now, secondly, I have to speak a little upon THE MEANING OF THE MARRIAGE SUPPER—"Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." What will that marriage supper be? There will come a time when all God's redeemed shall be saved.

There will come a day when all who have died shall have been raised, again, from the tomb, and those who remain alive shall have been changed, so that their corruption shall have put on incorruption, and mortality shall have put on immortality. *Then will the Church be perfect and complete.* No one member will be missing. There will be no spot or wrinkle remaining in her. Then it shall come to pass that Christ will celebrate this marriage supper, which will be *the bringing of the people of God into the closest and happiest union with Christ their Lord in Glory.*

Even now the Lord Jesus Christ is no stranger to some of us, and we are not strangers to Him. Yet there shall come a day when we shall see Him face to face and then we shall know Him with a clearer and fuller knowledge than is possible for us today. What that bliss will be, I cannot tell. Oh, the ineffable brightness when we shall see the face of Jesus! Oh, the unspeakable sweetness when we shall hear His voice! Oh, the amazing bliss when He shall manifest Himself to us in all His Glory! And there will come such a day for all whom He has redeemed, for all who trust Him and rest in His atoning Sacrifice. That will be the marriage supper of the Lamb!

That feast will be, like most other marriage suppers, *the fulfillment of long expectation.* Our Lord has waited long for His perfected Church. He

espoused Himself to her before ever the earth was, but there was much to be done before she was prepared for the marriage. The Bridegroom, too, had to leave His Father and become one with His Bride by taking upon Himself our humanity. For our sake He quit the thrones and royalties of Heaven that He might be bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh—and here He was born, and here He lived, and here He died! But still, the Bride was not ready—and it is not till you come to this chapter that you read, “The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife has made herself ready.” Souls have to be saved—new-created, blood-washed, sanctified, perfected—and the whole of them must be gathered to make up the body of Christ’s Spouse. And when that is done, and she is all complete, the expectations of the Christ will be fulfilled at that marriage supper. O Beloved, you do not know the longings of the heart of Christ for that day of glory! For this He lived! For this He died! For this He continually pleads that all for whom He shed His precious blood might be His in that day! That day is fast coming and when it arrives, then will be the wedding feast above.

Then will be, also, the day of *the open publication of the great fact of mutual love and union*. At this moment Christ loves His Church and He is one with her, but the world, as a whole, does not know it. It does not know either Him or her, nor does it care about them. But the day shall come when Christ will bring His hidden people into the light of day! “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.” And then shall the Christ, Himself, also be manifested, though long hidden! Oh, what a day that will be when the eyes of the entire universe shall be turned in one direction and the glorious Christ, in the splendor of His Manhood and of His Godhead, shall take the hand of His redeemed Church and, before men and angels and devils, declare Himself to be one with her forever and forever! That will be the beginning of the marriage supper of the Lamb—it will be the publication to all of the great fact of mutual love and union!

Moreover, the picture of a marriage supper is intended to set forth *the overflowing of mutual delight and joy*. There is too much joy for two! They are so happy that they invite others to come in and share the banquet. So, in those days, how delighted this blessed Christ and His Church will be with one another! How the Church will rejoice in Him! How He will rejoice in the Church! What hallelujahs will they raise to Him and oh, with what delight will He look upon all His people and see in them neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing—because His blood has cleansed them and His Spirit has perfectly sanctified them! Of old it was written, “The Lord your God in the midst of you is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over you with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over you with singing.” But what will that rest of love be and that singing of the Christ over His blood-bought ones when they are all before Him, and all made like unto Himself to reflect the Glory of God!

Brethren, to add just one other thought, that marriage feast will be *the grandest display of Christ’s magnificent generosity in a banquet*. If people ever make a little more show than on other occasions, it is usually at a

marriage feast. And oh, what a show Christ will make that day! Depend upon it, there will be no little show when He shall come in the Glory of His Father, with all the holy angels with Him, and with the very clouds of Heaven to be the dust of His feet! Then shall His Church come before Him in all the glory He has given to her. Her raiment shall be of worked gold. There is no luster, no beauty, no excellence that can be compared with that which Christ will put upon His Church! She will admire Him and He will admire her. She will bless Him and He will bless her. Oh, I talk but feebly about lofty things that need a poet's eye and a poet's tongue! No, put away your poetry—the most sober language that can be uttered might better fit a theme in which the highest sublimities must be simplicities! I want you all to believe that there is to be a day when all the chosen seed, blood-bought and saved, will make one body—and Christ shall come and glorify them with Himself in a union that shall never know an end, though the ages roll along forever and for ever!

III. Now, thirdly, I must speak a little about THE PERSONS WHO ARE CALLED TO THIS SUPPER. Who are the people who are called to this great marriage feast?

In one sense, you are all called to it. O my Hearers, there is a call of the Gospel to each of you! We are bid to preach it to every creature under Heaven and we do preach it, leaving none of you out. "Whoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely." "Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." The call, "Behold, the Bridegroom comes," is to the foolish virgins as well as to the wise, and if you do not come, it is not because you were never invited and never entreated to come to Christ! By the Spirit of the living God, I implore you men and women to seek the Savior's face! I may never address you all again, as perhaps I have never addressed some of you before, but by Him that comes in the clouds of Heaven I entreat you to fly to Jesus, the great and only Savior! Seek His Grace, now, that you may see His face with joy in the great day of His appearing!

But this is not exactly what the text means, for, although there is a blessedness in being called, it curdles into a curse if, being called, sinners refuse to come to the Savior. Who, then, are they who are specially called to this marriage feast? Well, first, they are *those who are so called as to accept the invitation*. Have you come to Jesus? Are you trusting Him? Will you have Him? Does your heart say, "Yes"? Then, He is yours! There was never any unwillingness in Christ to receive the guilty. The unwillingness is in you—and if the unwillingness has gone from you, since it never was in Him, take Him and have Him forever! Take Him and have Him tonight! When Abraham's servant wanted to take Rebekah to Isaac, her mother and brother said to her, "Will you go with this man?" So would I say to any young man or woman I may be addressing, "Will you go with Christ? Will you have Christ?" If so, He will have you! If you are willing to have Him, you are among those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!

To help you to judge yourself, here is another test. *Those who are called to that marriage supper love the Bridegroom*. He will have no ene-

mies at His banquet! Do you love Jesus? Does your heart leap at the sound of His name? Timid trembling woman, do you love Him? You cannot speak for Him, but you could die for Him? Ah, well, if your heart goes after Him, His heart has long ago gone after you and you shall be at the marriage supper! I tell you more—you shall be a part and parcel of His Bride in the day of His appearing!

Again, *those who are called to this supper are made ready*. Are you made ready? You remember that the man who came to the wedding feast was bid to put on a wedding garment—have you put on the righteousness of Christ? Has Christ put on you His sanctification? Are you changed in heart? Without holiness no man shall see the Lord! Has the Grace of God renewed you? Then you are one of those who shall come to the wedding—among the blessed who are called to that great marriage feast!

You may help to judge yourself by answering one more question. *Have you any desire to go to that marriage feast?* Do you look for Christ's coming? There are some who are altogether unconcerned about it—they do not care about Christ or His coming—it is all nothing to them, an airy nothing! O my Hearer, I trust that you are not of that opinion! But if you are looking for and hastening unto the coming of the Son of God. If your faith is resting on His first coming and your hope is in His second coming—if you see your sin put away by His coming as a Sin-Offering—and then your sorrow put away by His coming as your Bridegroom, then, dear Heart, be sure that you would not have these drawings towards Him unless He had drawn you to Himself! He is drawing you—therefore, run after Him!

IV. Now, lastly, let us think of THE BLESSEDNESS WHICH IS ASCRIBED TO THOSE WHO ARE CALLED TO THIS MARRIAGE SUPPER.

I know that I am speaking to many who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb and I want you, my dear Hearers, to enjoy yourselves, for *you have a prospect which blesses you even now*. If you are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb, the text says that you are blessed and truly blessed you are! “Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.” If you had an invitation to see the Queen, tomorrow, some of you who are wonderfully loyal would think a great deal of it, and you would be saying to yourselves, “Well, we are going home tonight to a very narrow room in a very poor cottage, but we have something great in prospect tomorrow! And oh, think of this, you who are poor, you who are pained, you who are very weak, you who are cast down—within a short time your eyes “shall see the King in His beauty and the land that is very far off.”

It may be only a few days, or weeks, or months—certainly only a few years at most—and we shall all share the Glory that awaits the Church. And the Glory of our dear Lord who loved us, and gave Himself for us, will be ours, and ours forever. I know that you put this great event far away and say that it is a long way off. But it is not, it is close at hand! Suppose it were not to come for a thousand years? Yet what is that but the twinkling of an eye, very soon over? The older men get, the shorter

time seems to be! When I was a child, a week seemed to be a very long time. You who have grown old know that a year seems to come and go before you are aware of it. You can say with Job, "My days are swifter than a runner: they flee away." Yet what matters it if we have to wait 50,000 years for our bliss? We who have believed in Christ have the absolute certainty that we shall, one day, stand in the midst of the splendor of Christ's wedding feast! The nuptials of a king are usually something very grand, but what will the marriage supper of the King of Kings and Lord of lords be—when He who is the Son of the Highest shall take to Himself His fit companion—when it shall no more be said of the Man, Christ Jesus, that there was found no help meet for Him, but when He shall take His Church, made out of His own flesh and shall welcome her unto Himself to go from Him no more forever?

I shall be a part of that Church and you who believe will be a part of that Church—and *we shall all have great honor in being called to such a future*. What bliss to be there! What joy to be there, not as spectators, but as part of the Bride that shall then be taken by her Husband! My Soul, you shall swim in happiness, you shall dive in seas of inconceivable delight by reason of your union with Christ and your delight in Him and His delight in you! I know no better idea of Heaven than to be eternally content with Christ and Christ to be eternally content with me! And all this will happen within a very little time. Therefore, lay aside your cares, dismiss your fears, murmur no more. Such a destiny awaits you that you may well be content.

I have heard that when Queen Elizabeth once carried the crown, while she was a young princess, she found it heavy as she bore it before her sister, but one said to her, "You will like it better when you wear it, yourself." So, we have to carry, every day, a weight for Christ, but oh, when the crown is put upon our own heads and we are in Paradise with Him, we shall forget the light afflictions which were but for a moment, as we enter into the enjoyment of the far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory! I want you, if you can, to enjoy yourselves while you think of the honor which is to be put upon all Christ's people in being married to Him—

***"One with Jesus,
By eternal union, one,"***

partakers of His name, His estate, His Glory, Himself! He shall make us to sit with Him upon His Throne, even as He has overcome and sits down with His Father upon His Throne.

Remember, too, we shall be blessed at the marriage supper because *no fear will mingle with our enjoyment*. It has been well observed that if men and women could know all that will happen to them in the course of their married life, they might, perhaps, not think a wedding day such a happy day, after all. So soon may love grow cold, so often may promises be broken and unkindness take the place of affection, that it is but a dubious joy that surrounds the wedding feast. But once with Jesus at the banquet above, there will be no such fear! Here, I may have a fear lest my love to Him should not be true, lest, after all, my following of Him should be but temporary and not the consequence of the new life within. But

once up there, we shall raise no more questions! We shall be exposed to no more dangers, we shall no more dread backsliding and apostasy. Once there, we shall be—

***“Far from a world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in.”***

Once there, every pain and tear and fear will have gone forever—that will be a glorious wedding feast, indeed!

My beloved Hearer, *will you be there?* If there were no Hell, the loss of Heaven would be Hell. If there were no Tophet, to have missed Christ’s wedding feast were a Gehenna, black enough. If there were no worm that dies not and no fire that never can be quenched, this were damnation deep enough—to have missed the kisses of Christ’s mouth and the joy of the everlasting oneness in His Glory. Do not miss it! I charge you, do not miss it. When some of us shall be flying through the gates of the New Jerusalem, I trust that we shall hear you as we pass by and, pausing for a moment to ask, “Who is there?” you will answer, “I am here, brought to know Christ by your ministry.” That shall make another Heaven to add to our own Heaven! Everyone that we shall see there, converted by the preaching of the Cross by our lips, or through the printed sermons, shall multiply our bliss and make us yet happier—and forever and ever happier, still, in your happiness and joy!

I have finished my discourse, but I do not like, somehow, to go home with this thought in my mind—*perhaps some of you will miss this bliss!* The muster roll will be read, but your name will not be there! Can you bear that thought? Remember that if you are not blessed, you are *cursed!* If you find not Heaven, you are lost forever! You have often joined with God’s people in singing—

***“I love to meet among them now,
Before Your gracious feet to bow,
Though vilest of them all!
But can I bear the piercing thought—
What if my name should be left out,
When You, for them, shall call?”***

You cannot be left outside the wedding feast if you have trusted in Jesus! Then trust Him at once! Rest in that Lamb who will be your Bridegroom and at whose marriage supper you shall be present to praise the Glory of His Grace forever and ever! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
REVELATION 18:20-24; 19:1-18.**

May the Spirit of God take away the veil from our eyes while we read what was revealed to the beloved Apostle John! Here we have the prophecy of the destruction of the great anti-Christian system of Babylon, which, being interpreted, is and can be none other than the apostate Church of Rome!

Revelation 18:20-24. *Rejoice over her, you Heaven, and you holy Apostles and Prophets; for God has avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and*

shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters shall be heard no more at all in you; and no craftsman, of whatever craft he is, shall be found any more in you; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in you; and the light of a candle shall shine no more shine in you; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in you: for your merchants were the great men of the earth; for by your sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of Prophets, and of saints, and of all who were slain upon the earth. Now, after the false church is put away, the true Church of Christ shines out in all her glory and purity!

Revelation 19:1-4. *And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in Heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and Glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are His judgments for He has judged the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and has avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up forever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. Heaven and earth are equally glad and they unite to adore the living God when the great apostasy—that has so long cursed the nations—is hurled into the sea!*

5, 6. *And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all you His servants, and you that fear Him, both small and great. And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunder, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigns. And His great power is never better seen than in crushing the powers of darkness and putting the hosts of evil to the rout.*

7-10. *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he said unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said unto me, These are the true sayings of God. And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See you do it not: I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God; for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. All worship, therefore, of saints and angels is a gross error, not to be tolerated for a moment! John was mistaken in falling down to worship the angel and he was speedily rebuked. And his mistake was quickly corrected. There is no doctrine that needs more to be preached, just now, than this message of the angel, "Worship God." Neither crosses, nor crucifixes, nor holy wafers, nor anything that can be seen or handled must be worshipped—"Worship God." We still need to hear God's mighty voice proclaiming from Mount Sinai the great Law. "You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make unto you any engraved image, or any likeness of anything that is in Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: you shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them: for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous*

God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My Commandments.”

11. *And I saw Heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon Him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He does judge and make war.* Behold your Savior, the Champion of the cause of truth! His war is not that of the carnal weapon and of garments rolled in blood. It is a *spiritual* warfare, but He wins a more glorious victory than ever sword or gun could gain.

12-14. *His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in Heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.* All His true ones, all His faithful ones, all His saints, whether ministers or not—the heavenly armies—“followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.” Holiness is their armor, light is the panoply that they wear as they go forward to this holy war.

15. *And out of His mouth goes a sharp sword,* He puts down vice and evil of every kind, not with the sword of steel, but with His Word—“Out of His mouth goes a sharp sword”—

15, 16. *That with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.* For this Son of God whom we worship, this Jesus of Nazareth, is Master of all! All power is in His hand. He is, “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

17, 18. *And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of Heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that you may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.* By this highly figurative language, we are to understand that when Christ goes forth to war in battling for the truth, and His true followers come after Him, their victory will be certain—and the slain of the Lord will be many! We look not for carnage and bloodshed to establish the Kingdom of Christ in the earth, but this Revelation gives us a picture of the utter overthrow and destruction of all forms of error through the power of the everlasting Gospel of Jesus Christ! Amen, so let it be!

Would God that the King of Kings would mount His white horse at once and that all His people would follow Him! He will do so at the right time and then the victory shall be unto God, and to the Truth of God, and to love, and to peace and holiness forevermore.

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

“THE TRUE SAYINGS OF GOD”

NO. 3144

**A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 13, 1909.**

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 23, 1873

“These are the true sayings of God.”
Revelation 19:9.

BEFORE I use our text in a larger sense, it is due to our reverence for the Word of God to expound this short sentence in its immediate connection, for the angel here declared that certain things which had been spoken in John’s hearing were “the true sayings of God.” You will observe that he bade the Apostle “write” what he had heard. It was so weighty that John was not to trust it simply to his memory. It was so necessary that it should be remembered that he had to record it so that it might be handed down to future generations. “Write,” said the angel, and then, as if to give John reasons for writing—reasons why these Truths of God should be permanently recorded—he added, “These are the true sayings of God.”

What were those true sayings? I shall not dwell long upon them, but just hastily allude to them. The first which appears in this Chapter is the great fact that God will judge and condemn the harlot church. There are two churches in the world today. The one is the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ composed of Believers in Him who worship God in spirit and in truth, whose creed is the Word of God and whose power for life and service is the indwelling Spirit of God. There is another church—you know what a shameful name is applied to her in this Chapter—and you also know that she deserves to be called by that name for she has, indeed, corrupted the earth with her fornication. In the old Jewish time, idolatry was called spiritual harlotry—and there are millions of idolaters daily bowing down before images, rags and bones that ought long ago to have been buried in the earth. The Church of Rome seems to have gathered up all the relics of the idolatries of other ages and then to have capped them by saying that a substance which is only bread before the “priest” consecrates it, becomes God afterwards and then the idolater eats his god—a monstrous piece of blasphemy and superstition unworthy of Dahomey itself! That is the harlot church which God will surely judge. And when He does, terrible will be that judgment! Among the tremendous things of the Last Day will be the total overthrow and utter destruction of this “mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.” Come you out from her, O you people, lest you be partakers of her plagues, for terrible will her plagues be in the day when the Lord shall avenge upon

her the blood of all His saints and martyrs whom she has slain. This, then, is one of “the true sayings of God.”

The next true saying is concerning the glorious and universal reign of the great God. For John “heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigns.” There has been a long war between God and idols of various names. Among the ancient idols were Baal and Ashtaroth, and Dagon—but all had to bow down before Jehovah. Then Jupiter, and Saturn, and Venus and Mars were worshipped as deities by the heathen. And now many gods and lords still dominate a large part of the human intellect. But they are all doomed to fall and the one invisible Creator of Heaven and earth, almighty and eternal, will yet reign throughout the whole universe without a rival! And then shall be heard again that great shout that John heard during the wondrous Revelation in the Isle of Patmos. “Alleluia: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigns.” Let us never imagine that God’s Throne is in peril! Let us never fancy that the Truth of God can be defeated. Truth is God’s daughter and He covers her with His great shield and fights for her with His invincible Omnipotence! Do not tremble for the Ark of God—do not despair, or even despond—the Lord will win the victory over all the powers of evil! This, also, is one of “the true sayings of God.”

The next true saying was this, that Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God—so called because of the atoning Sacrifice which He presented on Calvary—will have a full reward for all His sufferings—“For the marriage of the Lamb [See Sermon #2096, Volume 35—“THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] is come, and His wife has made herself ready...Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper [See Sermon #2428, Volume 41—“THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Jesus Christ came into this world to find His beloved ones. And He found them in bondage—and having taken upon Himself their nature, He became their next of kin—and then, according to the ancient Law, He redeemed them and bought them unto Himself—and He has espoused unto Himself all those that trust in Him. All who believe in Him, in whatever visible Church they may be, make up the one Church of Jesus Christ which He has redeemed from among men with His precious blood. And in the latter days He will have that Church to be His reward. At present, Christ has but a poor reward for all His sufferings. Comparatively few reverence Him. His people are a feeble and scattered folk, but there are days coming in which the Lord Jesus Christ shall have all whom He bought with His blood. He shall have for Himself all whom He came to save. He shall not be disappointed—“He shall not fail, nor be discouraged.” The Lord shall abundantly reward Him for all His agonies. “He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.” This also is one of “the true sayings of God.”

This true saying also declares that in the latter days, when Christ comes again to this earth, He will find His Church here. He will bring

with Him a part of that Church and He will find here part of that Church which shall be His bride forever and forever. A description of the purity which is her glory is given in the verse which precedes our text—“And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.” So that the Church of Christ will be arrayed as brides should be in the garments of light and purity. She will also be chastely arrayed—not like the harlot church, in purple and scarlet—but “in fine linen clean and white.” Christ’s Church shall be a pure Church, a simple Church, a humble Church and yes, for all that, a beautiful Church in the eyes of Jesus Christ! She shall be a perfect Church and her beauty shall be her righteousness. And where shall she obtain that righteousness? It is said that it shall be *given* to her. It will not be any righteousness which she has manufactured, for each of her members has the same desire as Paul had when he wrote, “That I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” The Church of God, then, when Christ receives her as His bride, will be dressed in the imputed righteousness which comes to her by faith! It is the righteousness which Jesus Christ spent His life to work out, the righteousness which never had a stain upon it, for Jesus Christ is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Oh, blessed be God for this glorious fact that Jesus Christ will have a Church of this kind forever! This also is one of “the true sayings of God.”

The practical point for us to remember is this—let us endeavor to get as far as we can from the meretricious church described in the 18th Chapter. If you read that Chapter through, you cannot mistake the church to which it refers, for the portrait is a photograph! Get as far as you can away from that mystery of iniquity! Shun Sacramentarianism as you would shun the plague! Abhor the priesthood as you would the archfiend himself! Turn away from all idolatry and worship God alone. Keep to the Bible and forsake everything that is of man’s invention. Cleave to the simple teaching of God’s Word in Doctrine, in practice, in the ordinances and in everything. Cling, in fact, to the pure Church of Jesus Christ. If you ask me where you can find that Church, I may tell you that you can find part of it here and parts of it scattered all over the land, and over a great part of the world. Believers in Christ are known to the Lord, for He knows them that are His. They are not as others are, for they have received an inner spiritual light and life. They no longer care for the world, nor for the world’s religion. They seek to walk where Jesus Christ marked the way with His own pierced feet—“These are they who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.” This is the Church that loves the righteousness of Christ, the Church that preaches up Christ, her great Husband and Lord, the Church that magnifies His atoning Sacrifice, the Church that believes in His merits—not in human merits—and that trusts in His death and not in anything that men can do to save themselves! Cling to that Church, Beloved! Be numbered with it, give no sleep

to your eyes, no slumber to your eyelids till you know that you are among those people to whom is granted the privilege of wearing the righteousness of Christ as “fine linen, clean and white.” The Lord grant that in that dividing day, not one member of this assembly may be driven away with the beast and the false prophet, but may we all be found with the bride, the true, chosen, chaste, pure Church of Jesus Christ that has endeavored to follow Him through evil report and good report, never bowing at the feet of kings, never accepting their proffered gifts, but remaining true to God and Christ all her days!

Having spoken thus upon the context of this passage, I desire now to address you, for a short time, upon these words as they refer to the entire canon of Scripture. I may take this blessed Book, this whole Inspired Bible, and say of its contents, “These are the true sayings of God.” I want to make two remarks. The first is *that some of these sayings have already been proven to be true*. And the second is that *the rest of them we are fully assured are true*.

I. First, then, SOME OF THE GREAT SAYINGS IN THIS BOOK WE HAVE PROVEN TO BE TRUE. There is nothing like tasting, and handling, and trying, and proving for ourselves what we find in the Scriptures!

Among other things, this Book says that *sin is an evil and a bitter thing*. Some of us have proven that to be true, for sin became, when we were awakened by God’s Spirit, our plague, our torment, our curse—and to this hour, though God has forgiven the sins of as many of us as have believed in Jesus Christ, we never sin without suffering injury as the result of it. I ask any child of God here whether he ever was a real gainer by sin. Was sin ever anything to you, Beloved, but a loss—an evil through and through? Have you not had to smart for it many and many a time? And do you not say, “Of all the evil things that ever came from Hell, there is none that can match sin”? Yes, we have proven that this saying of God is true.

But more pleasant to talk of is another true saying of God which tells us that *the blood of Jesus Christ speaks peace to the conscience*. This Book tells us that the blood of Jesus speaks better things than that of Abel. It tells us that, “being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” I put the question to those who have been justified by faith—those who have tested the power of the precious blood of Christ—has it not given you peace with God? My witness is that I never knew what peace of conscience meant until I learned what the Savior’s blood had done for me. There is no peace like the peace that comes from trusting in Jesus! It is “the peace of God, which passes all understanding,” which keeps our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. No, more—the precious blood of Jesus, when it is applied to the heart by the Holy Spirit, not only gives peace, but it gives a Divine exhilaration and sacred joy, as the Word says, “We also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the Atonement.” I appeal to your experience—is it not so? Have you not proven that saying of

God to be a true saying? Oh, yes! There are scores and hundreds, and even thousands here who can repeat this saying and add, “Verily, we know it to be true in our own souls!”

Further, God has told us in His Word that *there is a cleansing power in faith, and hope, and love, and all the other Christian Graces*. “This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.” “Every man that has this hope in him purifies himself.” I put it to you who have faith and hope—have you not always found that in proportion as you have these Graces in active exercise, you can conquer sin? Perhaps you have some besetting sin. If so, have you not always been able to tread it under your feet when you have stood at the foot of the Cross? When you have been full of love to Jesus, have you not also been most victorious over your inward corruptions, and most steadfast in resisting outward temptations? I know it is so! And there are some of us in whom the Grace of God has worked such great wonders—changing us from what we once were, turning us inside out, making us such new creatures—that if we were to meet our old selves tomorrow we would not know ourselves! When men tell us that the Gospel is not the power of God unto salvation, we ask them how it is that, every day in the week we hear of drunkards reclaimed, the unchaste made pure, thieves made honest and persons of detestable temper made gentle and amiable? And how it is that we so often hear of the conversion of a husband and father—and that the wife and children at home bear witness that the conversion is no sham but has made the cottage to be no longer a little Hell, but more like a Heaven upon earth? We say that the Doctrine which can make such changes in men cannot be an untrue Doctrine!

When I have been troubled with skepticism, I have had to cure myself in this way. I have stood and looked up to the starry vault of Heaven and I have said, “Well, one thing I am clear about and cannot doubt, namely, that there is a God. All these wondrous worlds did not grow—somebody made them. And there is another thing about which I am clear—and that is that I love this God, whoever He is, and that I believe Him to be a pure and holy Being! And I want to be the same as He is and whatever side He is on, I am on His side! I feel an honor and reverence for Him and desire to follow Him in that which is good and that which is true.” Then I say to myself, “Did I always feel like that?” And I answer, “No, I did not. Now that which makes me range myself side by side with God for that which is good and true—hat which makes me love God cannot be a lie—it must be true! And as it was the Gospel of Jesus Christ that worked that change in my soul, that Gospel is true!” And so I get back again on firm rocky ground for my own soul to rest upon. And what I have said about myself is the witness of all who know the Lord. Their faith in God has had a sanctifying influence upon them and so they know, in their own experience, that this saying of God is indeed true!

Another of “the true sayings of God” is this. He has said, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” We have done as He bade us and so *we have proved*

the efficacy of prayer. It is all very well to sneer at answers to prayer, as some have done, and to propose various tests which none could accept unless they were idiots—but the question cannot be disposed of in that way. There are honest people about by the thousands who swear that God does hear their prayers. Not hear prayer? If any man were to say to me, “You have no eyes, you have no head, you have no arms, you have no legs,” I would say to him, “I don’t know how I can convince you that I have all these parts of the human body if you look at me, and then repeat your assertion, but I am absolutely certain that I have all these things. And if anyone says to me, “God has not heard your prayers,” I answer, “Why, He hears them every day! I receive answers to prayer so constantly that I cannot doubt the fact any more than I can doubt my own existence.” And I am not a solitary one in this matter. I am less than the least of all God’s servants—and there are many men who are mighty in prayer, men who have their will of God, who go to Him in secret and ask what they will—and it is given to them. I could mention their names, but I will not. But even we who are among the feeblest of the Lord’s people can tell of many answers to prayer that we have received. Many persons write to ask me to pray for certain special cases. I do not know why they do so, for my prayers can have no more effect than their own. And I often receive letters containing grateful thanks for answers that have been given to prayers that I have thus put up for others—and all these people are not fools! Some of them are such intelligent persons that they are regarded as leaders in their various circles! And others of them have, at any rate, managed to lead honest, sober, consistent Christian lives. And they believe that if they can join their prayers with those of another Brother in Christ, the Lord will grant their requests—and He does so constantly! They are not deceived by their own fancies or imaginations. Some people say, “They are mere coincidences which you call answers to prayer.” Well, call them coincidences if you like, but to us they are no such thing whatever they may be to you! And while we pray and the answer comes—whether by a coincidence or not, it will not matter much to us—as long as we do really receive the answer and are made to rejoice in our souls, and to bless God for hearing our supplications! We have again and again proved that there is a God that hears prayer—and the promise to hear and answer prayer is among “the true sayings of God.”

Once again, we know that it is according to the teaching of God’s Word that *faith will sustain His people in the time of trouble and trial.* This Truth we have, ourselves, proven and we have seen it illustrated in other Christians. That same sustaining power is promised to us in the hour of death. “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you.” David said, “Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for You are with me.” Now, if there is ever a time when a man is honest, one would think it is when he lies face to face with death! People cannot usually play the hypocrite then, though there have been some daring

enough to do even that, but, for the most part, men are startled out of mere fancies when they come to the reality of departure out of this world. How fares it with Christians when they are about to die? Why, Beloved, we are not speaking about dreams, but of solid facts that we daily verify in our visitations of our flock when we say that they die joyfully! One of our dear Sisters who was known to some of you, has just been called Home. Through a long period of acute pain which rendered her condition unusually distressing, her joy and peace were almost too seraphic to be talked about! When I met some of her friends in the house, they said to me, “Well, Sir, we have derived more spiritual benefit in sitting here talking with our friend than we have got from any sort of religious exercise.” Words have fallen from that humble woman’s lips that would read like poetry—joyous words between the gasps for breath! And wonderful anticipations of the Glory-Land have been given to her in the midst of much physical weakness. And when we speak thus of one of our members, we may say the same of hundreds of them, for it is the usual experience with them on their deathbeds. I wish more of you could see them die and learn the way in which a Christian can expire. I always think, when I come away from the deathbed of a child of God, that I have added to my previous stack of facts proving the faithfulness of my God! I would believe the Bible without a single fact to back it up, but there is a vast quantity of external as well as internal evidences of the truth of the Scriptures. I would believe my God if He never gave me anything to see with my eyes or to hear with my ears. His own Word should be enough for me, but these blessed sounds and scenes, these cheering sights and holy triumphs make it not merely a matter of faith to believe the Gospel, but also a matter of common sense! It seems impossible to doubt when you see the evident power there is about true godliness and the majestic might that dwells in faith to strengthen the weak against the last grim foe. Yes, we have proven many of these things to be “the true sayings of God.”

Before I leave this point, I want to urge all Believers always to treat the Bible as if it were all true. Do not let any of it seem to be a romance to you, but regard it all as real and true. I wish people were more business-like in dealing with the Bible and that they would use more common sense with regard to it. We sometimes fail to use it as if we really believed it. Some persons appear to imagine that the excellence of their prayer consists in its length—but if they had more real belief in prayer, it would probably not be so long. Whenever I go to a bank with a check, I pass it to the clerk at the counter, take up the cash he gives me and go about my business. That is how I like to pray. I take to the Lord one of His promises and I say to Him, “Lord, I believe Your promise and I believe that You will fulfill it to me.” And then I go my way knowing that I have the answer to my petition, or that it will come in due time. To kneel down for a certain specified period and pour out a long string of selected sentences would seem to me a mere *performance*—and I would get nothing by it. “He that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” Do not let your praying be a

mere ecclesiastical or religious engagement! Go to God as your Father and your Friend, fully convinced that your prayer will be answered. Thousands of prayers are never answered because those who present them do not expect that they will be answered. If a man prays to God and does not believe that God will answer him, He will not answer him. We must, without wavering, believe that God will hear us—and then He must hear us. Note that I say “must.” But “must” is for the King! Yes, but He has bound Himself by His own Word—“What things soever you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them and you shall have them.” These are Christ’s own words, not mine! And their meaning lies upon the very surface. Let the Christian pray in faith and then he will find that God will never run back from His Word, but will keep His promise to all His believing people!

II. My second point was to be that THERE ARE SOME THINGS WHICH WE CANNOT PROVE JUST YET, BUT THEY ARE TRUE, FOR ALL THAT.

Now let me tell you what will come true one of these days. *Jesus Christ will come back to this earth.* That same Jesus who went up from the top of Mount Olivet, will so come in like manner as He was seen to go up into Heaven. He will come with a mighty blast of the archangel’s trumpet and in amazing pomp and splendor, attended by myriads of angels and vast hosts of the redeemed! But He will surely come! It may not be today. It may not be for many an age. But in such an hour as men think not, the Son of Man will come! When He does come, remember that if you are alive, you will have to stand before His judgment seat. But if you die before that time, your body shall rise again and your soul shall return to it—and there in your flesh shall you see the Son of God! That very Savior whom tonight I preach to you, who will save you if you believe in Him, will then come to sit upon His Throne. And if you have lived and died without believing in Him, He will come to judge you and to pronounce upon you that dreadful sentence, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” Christ will come and you will all rise and either be accepted or condemned by Him! “These are the true sayings of God.”

Further, *there will be a Heaven for all those who are found believing in Jesus.* Christ will take them there to be with Him where He is, that they may behold His Glory. They shall enter into most blessed fellowship with Him in all His joys and glories—and that, world without end. If you do not believe in Jesus, you will miss all that—and where He is you will never come! The door will be shut against you and the outer darkness where there shall be weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth will be your portion forever, for this is another true saying of God, that *there is a Hell for all who do not believe in Jesus.* As surely as there was a place of bliss for Lazarus, so surely was there a place of woe for Dives. As certainly as there is a heavenly fold for the sheep of Christ, so is there a Hell for the goats. “These are the true sayings of God.” Do not despise them! Do not doubt them! Some of you who are unconverted may be within a few mi-

nutes of death. I was struck, the other Monday night, when I was coming to the Prayer Meeting here, by the appearance of a poor man, one of our Church Members, who was sitting by the fire in the room behind looking very sickly. It was bitterly cold, but I soon saw that death was making him still colder. I felt that in a short time he would die, however much care we might take of him.

We took him home in a cab and in a few hours he was gone. He was an old disciple so he had entered into his rest, but I thought, “It is strange that there should so often be deaths in this Tabernacle.” Every now and then, while I am preaching the Word here, there comes to me a message, “There is a person dying here.” Besides that, death makes havoc continually among our thousands of members—sometimes three or four die in one week. And out of this vast congregation, I do not know how many will die this week. Probably we shall not all of us see next Sabbath, but certainly we shall soon depart out of this world. We shall fly away, and where, where, where shall we go? I do not want to seem to be fanatical, but I will solemnly put this question to everyone here—as you do not believe that you will die like a dog, and as you do believe that you will live in another state—are you prepared for it? And as most of you, at any rate, believe that faith in Jesus is the only preparation for the future state—have you believed in Him? Have you sought God by prayer? Is Jesus Christ your Lord and Savior?

If you are obliged to say, “No”—I cannot hold your hand, (there are too many for me to do that), nor can I take you by the buttonhole and detain you for a while, but I would gladly detain you as that ancient mariner detained the wedding guest, and say to you, “Are you wise to live in danger, every day, of death and judgment and yet to remain unprepared? Ought it not to be the first business of your life, by faith and prayer, to make your calling and election sure?” If you are wise men and wise women, surely a word will be enough for you. But if you are not wise, may God make you so! May He lead you, this very hour, to confess your sins and seek His mercy! And may every one of us be found in Christ in that great day! Then shall we rejoice forever in “the true sayings of God.” The Lord grant it, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
PSALM 119:89-104.**

Verse 89. *Forever, O LORD, Your Word is settled in Heaven.* It is not a changeable or vanishing thing—“Your Word is settled.” Settled forever, settled “forever in Heaven.” As God changes not, so the Word which He has spoken to His servants changes not. If the foundations of the faith could be removed, what would the righteous do? What would any of us do? But, with an eternally fixed Word of God, we have something solid to build upon, a foundation on which we may confidently rest our everlasting hopes.

90. *Your faithfulness is unto all generations.* God, who kept His promise to Abraham, keeps it also to us though we are far down the ages. And He will keep it to our children and our children’s children as long as the world endures, and then forever and ever! We need not be afraid to leave the generations to come in His hands. “Your faithfulness is unto all generations.”

90, 91. *You have established the earth, and it abides. They continue this day according to Your ordinances: for all are Your servants.* This material world whose laws appear to be so fixed, abides only because God has established it. But a day will come in which He will roll these things up like a worn-out vesture and He that sits upon the Throne of God shall make all things new. But at present we have, in the fixity of the laws of Nature, a type of the fixity of the promises and purposes of God.

92. *Unless Your Law had been my delights, I should then have perished in my affliction.* Notice the love of God’s servant to God’s Word. “Unless Your Law had been my delights.” The word is in the plural, for the Psalmist not only took a delight in it, but all his delights were there! It was the sea of happiness wherein he bathed his entire soul. “Unless it had been so,” he says, “I should then have perished in my affliction.” One of the best preservatives for the heart in times of trouble is an intense delight in the Word of God. Oh, to get away from this noisy world, from the turmoil of life and its endless discussions and controversies—and to sit down and quietly listen to what that Word has to say to us! This is the best way to recuperate drooping and fainting spirits.

93. *I will never forget Your precepts: for with them You have quickened me.* Nothing makes a man remember the Word so well as the fact that it has quickened him. If you owe your spiritual life and the support of it to the Word of God, you will not forget that Word! If you feel that every time you come into contact with it, it inspires you with fresh life, you will be anxious to be often diligently reading it!

94. *I am Yours.* That is a grand thing for anyone to be able to say! What a Heaven of bliss lies slumbering in these three words, “I am Yours.”

94. *Save me.* That is a good argument. “I am Yours by redemption, so do not lose me. I am Yours by a new creation, so let not the enemy steal me away from You. I am Your servant, so exercise a master’s rights over me and protect me from all my foes. I am Yours, save me.”

94. *For I have sought Your precepts.* Notice how the Psalmist here twice singles out the precepts rather than the promises—even hypocrites may love the promises, but only sincere Believers love the precepts. The true servant of God loves the burdens which his Lord and Master lays upon him and he only wishes that he had more strength to bear still more of them.

95. *The wicked have waited for me to destroy me.* “They have lain in ambush, they have waited to catch me tripping, to ruin my character if possible, so what shall I do? Counterplot them? No. Watch them night and day? No. The wicked have waited for me to destroy me.”

96. *But I will consider Your testimonies.* There is something that seems to me calmly defiant about the Psalmist’s resolve. He does not say, “The wicked are waiting to destroy me, but I will fight them.” No, but he says, “I shall read my Bible and I shall follow its directions. I shall act in obedience to my God—and in that way I shall baffle them.” To be obedient to God is the surest way to be victorious over wicked men! Keep God’s Word and God will guard your head in the day of danger.

96. *I have seen an end of all perfection: but Your commandment.* Ah, there I find perfection—“Your commandment.”

96. *Is exceedingly broad.* It is so broad that there is no limit to it! One of the early fathers used to say, “I delight in the infinity of Scripture,” and well he might, for there is no limit to it. Even one single text might suffice for a man’s meditation for a whole year! If it did not, it would be because of the scantiness of the man’s meditative power—not because of the exhaustion of the meaning of the verse.

97. *O how love I Your Law!* The Psalmist breaks out into a transport of delight. He does not say how much he loved God’s Law for the simple reason that he could not tell us that. But he says, “O how love I Your Law!”

97. *It is my meditation all the day.* That is the best proof of the Psalmist’s love of God’s Law, for love shows itself by its constant familiarity with its chosen object. “It is my meditation all the day.’ Every day, wherever I may be, I turn my daily experience into instructive meditation upon Your Word.” One of the best commentaries on God’s written Book is God’s Book of Providence when it is explained to us by His Holy Spirit.

98. *You, through Your commandments, have made me wiser than my enemies: for they are ever with me.* David knew how well God’s Word had instructed him, so first he declared that he was wiser than his enemies—and next, that he was wiser than his former instructors.

99. *I have more understanding than all my teachers: for Your testimonies are my meditation.* The man who rightly meditates upon this wondrous Book is, after all, the truly wise man. His wisdom is that of the heart, received by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and it has a power of understanding in it that will make him wiser than those who are merely book-learned or man-taught.

100. *I understand more than the ancients because I keep Your precepts.* First his enemies, then his teachers—and now his elders, the ancients—he could excel them all and he gave the reason for it! “Because I keep Your precepts.” Take this Book away and give the man all the human learning that he could ever acquire, and how little he would know, after all! But let him study the Book—and even in the absence of other books, (though that need not be the case with him), such a man will still be wise—wise for eternity!

101. *I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep Your Word.* The Bible is a very sanctifying Book. If we keep its precepts, it holds us back from many things into which we might otherwise have run. “I have refrained my feet from every evil way.” Notice the universality

of the obedience of a true saint. He does not say, “I will avoid all sin except a certain one for which I have a great liking.” Oh, no! “I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep Your Word.”

102. *I have not departed from Your judgments: for You have taught me.* Those who are taught of God are always well taught. They never unlearn what they have learned at the feet of Jesus. Those who backslide and apostatize were never truly taught of the Spirit of God.

103. *How sweet are Your Words unto my taste!* Have you a spiritual taste, dear Hearer? It is one thing to hear the Word. It is another thing to *taste* it. Hearing the Word is often blessed, but tasting it is a more inward and spiritual thing—it is the enjoyment of the Truth in the innermost parts of our being! Oh, that we were all as fond of the Word as were the old mystics who chewed the cud of meditation till they were fattened upon the Word of the Lord and their souls grew strong in the Divine Love! I am sure of this—the more you know of God’s Word, the more you will love it! It is ignorance that misses the sweetness of it.

103. *Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!* There is an indescribable sweetness in it. It is sweet to my heart and when I utter it, how sweet it is to my mouth! I heard one observe, the other day, that he noted a great difference between the preachers of his youth and many of those of the present day. He said, “the old men used to enjoy the Word so much while they were preaching it—they preached it with their eyes beaming with delight in it! You could see that if there was no savor in it for other people, there was a Divine Savor about it for the preachers themselves.” This is the mark of the man who is taught of God—that the Word is sweet to his mouth when he preaches it to others as well as sweet to his taste when he meditates upon it himself!

104. *Through Your precepts I get understanding.* The practical parts of God’s Word not only appeal to our understanding but they give us understanding. That is a marvelous thing, but it is true. Sometimes when you are arguing with a man who is dull of comprehension, you are apt to say, “Well, I can give you arguments, but I cannot give you an understanding with which to appreciate them.” But this Word can give us understanding—“Through Your precepts I get understanding.”

104. *Therefore I hate every false way.* The best test of a true spiritual understanding is an intense and vigorous hatred of everything that is false. The lover of the Truth of God is a follower of the Truth of God! He is not a man of craft and guile. He keeps to the straight line and in the long run it shall be proved that he is the man who is, indeed, taught of God.

—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.**

THE SAVIOR'S MANY CROWNS

NO. 281

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, OCTOBER 30, 1859,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“On His head were many crowns.”
Revelation 19:12.***

AH, well you know what head this was and you have not forgotten its marvelous history. A head which once in infancy reclined upon the bosom of a woman! A head which was meekly bowed in obedience to a carpenter! A head which became in after years a fountain of water and a reservoir of tears. A head which “sweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground”! A head which was spit upon, whose hair was plucked. A head which at last, in the grim agony of death, crowned with thorns, gave utterance to the terrible death-shriek—*lama Sabachthani!* A head which afterwards slept in the grave. And—glory be unto Him that lives and was dead, but is alive forever more—a head which afterwards rose again from the tomb and looked with radiant eyes of love upon the holy women waiting at the sepulcher.

This is the head whereof John speaks in the words of the text. Who would have thought that a head, the visage of which was more marred than that of any other man—a head which suffered more from the tempests of heavenward and of earth than ever mortal brow before, should now be surrounded with these many diadems, these star-studded crowns!

My Brethren, it needs John himself to expound this glorious vision to you. Alas my eyes have not yet seen the heavenly glory, nor have my ears heard the celestial song, I am therefore but as a little child among topless mountains, overawed with grandeur and speechless with awe. Pray for me that I may utter a few words which the Holy Spirit may comfortably apply to your souls, for if He helps me not, I am helpless, indeed. With His Divine aid, I dare to look upon the glorious diadems of our Lord and King. The crowns upon the head of Christ are of three sorts. First, there are the crowns of dominion, many of which are on His head. Next, there are the crowns of victory, which He has won in many a terrible battle. Then there are the crowns of thanksgiving with which His Church and all His people have delighted to crown His wondrous head.

I. First, then, let every believing eye look through the thick darkness and behold Jesus as He sits this day upon the Throne of His Father and

let every heart rejoice while it sees the many CROWNS OF DOMINION upon His head. First and foremost, there sparkles about His brow the everlasting diadem of the King of Heaven. His are the angels. The cherubim and seraphim continually bound forth His praise. At His behest the mightiest spirit delights to fly and carry His commands to the most distant world.

He has but to speak and it is done. Cheerfully is He obeyed and majestically does He reign. His high courts are thronged with holy spirits who live upon His smile, who drink light from His eyes, who borrow glory from His majesty. There is no spirit in Heaven so pure that it does not bow before Him, no angel so bright that it does not veil its face with its wings, when it draws near to Him. Yes, moreover, the many redeemed spirits delight to bow before Him. Day without night they circle His throne, singing—"Worthy is He that was slain and has redeemed us from our sins by His blood. Honor and glory and majesty and power and dominion and might be unto Him that sits upon the Throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

To be King of Heaven were surely enough! The ancients were accustomed to divide Heaven and earth and Hell into many monarchies and allot each of them to distinct kings. And surely Heaven were an empire large enough even for an infinite Spirit. Christ is Lord of all its boundless plains. He laid the precious stones upon which was built that city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. He is the light of that city, He is the joy of its inhabitants and it is their loving life evermore to pay Him honor.

Side by side with this bright crown behold another. It is the iron crown of Hell, for Christ reigns there supreme, too. Not only in the dazzling brightness of Heaven, but in the black impenetrable darkness of Hell is His Omnipotence felt and His sovereignty acknowledged. The chains which bind damned spirits are the chains of His strength. The fires which burn are the fires of His vengeance—the burning rays that scorch through their eyeballs and melt their very hearts, are flashed from His vindictive eyes. There is no power in Hell besides His. The very devils know His might. He chains the great dragon. If He gives him a temporary liberty, yet is the chain in His hand and He can draw him back lest he go beyond his limit. Hell trembles at Him. The very howling of lost spirits are but deep bass notes of His praise.

While in Heaven the glorious notes shout forth His goodness—in Hell the deep growling resound His justice and His certain victory over all His foes. Thus His empire is higher than the highest Heaven and deeper than the lowest Hell. This earth also is a province of His wide domains. Though small the empire compared with others, yet from this world has He per-

haps derived more glory than from any other part of His dominions. He reigns on earth. On His head is the crown of creation, "All things were made by Him. And without Him was not anything made that was made." His voice said, "Let there be light," and there was light. It was His strength that piled the mountains and His wisdom balances the clouds. He is Creator.

If you lift your eyes to the upper spheres and behold yon starry worlds—Jesus Christ made them. They are not self-created. He struck them off like sparks from the anvil of His Omnipotence. And there they glitter, upheld and supported by His might. He made the earth and all men that are upon it, the cattle on a thousand hills and the birds that make glad the air. The sea is His and He made it, also. Leviathan He has formed and though that monster makes the deep to be hoary, yet is he but a creature of His power.

Together with this crown of creation there is yet another—the crown of Providence, for He administers all things by the word of His power. Everything must cease to be, if it were not for the continual out-going of His strength. The earth must die, the sun must grow dim with age and nature sink in years, if Christ supplied it not with perpetual strength. He sends the howling blasts of winter. He, now and then, restrains them and breathes the breath of spring. He ripens the fruits of summer and He makes glad the autumn with His harvest. All things know His will. The heart of the great universe beats by His power. The very sea derives its tide from Him. Let Him once withdraw His hands and the pillars of earth must tremble. The stars must fall like fig leaves from the tree and all things must be quenched in the blackness of annihilation.

On His head is the crown of Providence. And next to this there glitters also the thrice-glorious crown of grace. He is the King of grace—He gives, or He withholds. The river of God's mercy flows from underneath His throne. He sits as Sovereign in the dispensation of mercy. He has the key of Heaven—He opens and no man shuts. He shuts and no man opens—He calls and the stubborn heart obeys. He wills and the rebellious spirit bends its knee. For He is Master of men and when He wills to bless, none can refuse the benediction. He reigns in His Church amidst willing spirits—and He reigns for His Church over all the nations of the world, that He may gather unto Himself a people that no man can number who shall bow before the scepter of His love.

I pause here, overcome by the majesty of the subject and instead of attempting to describe that brow and those glittering crowns, I shall act the part of a seraph and bow before that well-crowned head and cry, "Holy, holy, holy, are You, Lord God of hosts! The keys of Heaven and death and

Hell, hang at Your girdle. You are supreme and unto You be glory forever and ever.”

And now, my Brothers and Sisters, what do you say to this? Do not sundry thoughts at once stir in your hearts? Methinks I hear one say, “If this is so, if Christ has these many crowns of dominion, how vain it is for me to rebel against Him.” My Hearers, it may be some of you are striving against Christ. Like Saul of Tarsus, you have become “exceeding mad” against Him. Your wife frequents the House of God and you forbid her. You persecute your child because she follows Jesus. You hate the very name of Christ. You curse His servants. You despise His Word. You would, if you could, spit upon His ministers. And, perhaps, burn His people. Know this, that you have undertaken a battle in which you are certain of defeat. Who ever stove against Him and prospered?

Go, O man and do battle against the lightning and hold the thunderbolt in your hand. Go and restrain the sea and hush the billows and hold the winds in the hollow of your hand. And when you have done this, *then* lift your puny hand against the King of kings. For He that was crucified is your Master and though you oppose Him you shall not succeed. In your utmost malice you shall be defeated and the vehemence of your wrath shall but return upon your own head. Methinks I see this day the multitudes of Christ's enemies. They stand up. They take counsel together—“Let us break His bands in sunder. Let us cast away His cords from us.”

Hear you, O rebels, yonder deep-sounding laugh? Out of the thick darkness of His tabernacle, Jehovah laughs at you. He has you in derision. He says, “I have set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.” Come on, you enemies of Christ, and be dashed in pieces! Come on in your most vehement force and fall like the waves that are broken against the immovable rock. He rules and He will rule. And you one day shall be made to feel His power. For, “at the name of Jesus every knee must bow, of things in Heaven and things on earth and things under the earth.”

Another thought, right full of comfort, springs up to my mind. Believer, look to Christ's thrice-crowned head this day and be comforted. Is Providence against you? Correct your speech. You have erred, God has not become your enemy. Providence is not against you, for Jesus is its King—He weighs its trials and counts its storms. Your enemies may strive, but they shall not prevail against you—He shall smite them upon the cheek. Are you passing through the fire? The fire is Christ's dominion. Are you going through the floods? They shall not drown you—even the floods obey the voice of the Omnipotent Messiah.

Wherever you are called, you cannot go where Jesus' love reigns not. Commit yourself into His hands. However dark your circumstance, He can make your pathway clear. Though night surrounds you, He shall surely

bring the day. Only trust in Him—leave your concerns both little and great in His Almighty hands and you shall yet see how kind His heart, how strong His hands to bring you out and glorify you. Repose your confidence in Him who is the King of kings.

Come, bring your burdens, each one of you, to His feet and take a song away. If your hearts are heavy bring them here. The golden scepter can lighten them. If your griefs are many, whisper them into His ears. His loving eyes can scatter them, and through the thick darkness shall there be a bright light shining and you shall see His face and know that all is well. I am sure there is no more delightful doctrine to a Christian than that of Christ's absolute Sovereignty. I am glad there is no such thing as chance—that nothing is left to itself—but rather Christ everywhere has sway. If I thought that there was a devil in Hell that Christ did not govern, I should be afraid that devil would destroy me. If I thought there was a circumstance on earth which Christ did not rule, I should fear that that circumstance would ruin me. No, if there were an angel in Heaven that was not one of Jehovah's subjects, I should tremble even at him. But since Christ is King of kings and I am His poor Brother, one whom He loves, I give all my cares to Him, for He cares for me. And leaning on His breast, my soul has full repose, confidence and security.

II. And now, in the second place, Christ has many CROWNS OF VICTORY. The first diadems which I have mentioned are His by right. He is God's only begotten and well-beloved Son and therefore He inherits unlimited dominions. But viewed as the Son of Man, conquest has made Him great and His own right hand and His holy arm have won for Him the triumph. In the first place, Christ has a crown which I pray that every one of you may wear.

He has a crown of victory over the world. For thus said He Himself, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Did you ever think of what a stern battle that was which Christ had to fight with the world? The world first said, "I will extinguish Him, He shall not be known." And it threw on Christ heaps of poverty that there He might be smothered. But He shone in His poverty and the seamless coat shone with greater light than the robe of the rabbi. Then the world attacked Him with its threats. Sometimes they dragged Him to the brow of a hill to cast Him down headlong—at another time they took up stones to stone Him. But He who was not to be hid by poverty, was not to be quenched by threats.

And then the world tried its blandishments. It came with a fair face and presented to Him a crown. They would have taken Christ and would have made Him a king. But He who cared not for their frowns regarded not their smiles. He put away the crown from Him. He came not to be a king but to suffer and to die. "My kingdom is not of this world," He said, "else

would My servants fight.” Have you ever thought how through thirty years the *world* tempted Christ? That temptation of the devil in the wilderness was not the only one which He had to endure. Trials of every shape and size surrounded Him—the world emptied its quiver and shot all its arrows against the breast of the spotless Redeemer. But all holy, all unharmed was He. Still separate from sinners, He walked among them without defilement—feasted among them and yet did not sanction their gluttony. Drank with them and yet was not a drunkard, acted as they acted in all innocent things and was the world’s man and yet not a man of the world.

He was in the world, but He was not of it. Separate and yet one of themselves. United to our race by closest ties and yet evermore separate and distinguished from all mankind. I would, my Brethren, that we could imitate Christ in our battle with the world. But alas, the world oftentimes gets the upper hand of us. Sometimes we yield to its smiles and often do we tremble before its frowns. Have hope and courage, Believer, be like your Master. Be the world’s foe and overcome it—yield not—suffer it never to entrap your watchful feet. Stand upright amid all its pressure and be not moved by all its enchantments. Christ did this and therefore around His head is that right royal crown of victory—trophy of triumph over the entire forces of the world.

Furthermore, the next crown He wears is the crown by which He has overcome sin. Sin has been more than a match for creatures of every kind. Sin fought the angels and a third part of the stars of Heaven fell. Sin defied the perfect Adam and soon overcame him, for even at the first blow he fell. Sin had a stern contest with Jesus, our Lord, but in Him it found its master. Sin came with all its temptations, but Christ resisted and overcame. It came with its horror and with its curse—Christ suffered, Christ endured and so destroyed its power. He took the poisoned darts of the curse into His own heart and there quenched its poison fires by shedding His own blood. By suffering, Christ has become master over sin. The dragon’s neck is now beneath His feet.

There is not a temptation which He has not known and therefore not a sin which He has not overcome. He has cast down every shape and form of evil and now forever stands He more than a conqueror through His glorious sufferings. Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, how bright that crown which He deserves, who has forever put away our sin by the sacrifice of Himself! My soul enraptured restrains my voice and once again I bow before His throne and worship, in spirit, my bleeding Ransomer, my suffering Savior.

And then again—Christ wears about His head the crown of death. He died and in that dreadful hour He overcame death, rifled the sepulcher,

split the stone which guarded the mouth of the grave, hewed death in pieces and destroyed the arch-destroyer. Christ seized the iron limbs of Death and ground them to powder in His hand. Death swayed his scepter over all the bodies of men, but Christ has opened the gate of resurrection for His redeemed and in that day when He shall put the trumpet to His lips and blow the resurrection blast, then shall it be seen how Christ is universal Monarch over all the domains of death—for as the Lord our Savior rose—so all His followers must.

And then again, Christ is not only Lord of the world, King of sin and King of death, but He is King of Satan, too. He met that arch Fiend foot to foot. Fearful was the struggle, for our champion sweat as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground. But He hewed His way to victory through His own body, through the agonies of His own soul. Desperate was the encounter. Head and hands and feet and heart were wounded, but the Savior flinched not from the fight. He rent the lion of the pit as though he were a kid and broke the dragon's head in pieces. Satan was nibbling at Christ's heel, Christ trod on him and smashed his head.

Now has Jesus led captivity captive and is Master over all the hosts of Hell. Glorious is that victory! Angels repeat the triumphant strain—His redeemed take up the song. And you, you blood-bought sons of Adam, praise Him, too, for He has overcome all the evil of Hell itself. And yet, once again, another crown has Christ and that is the crown of victory over man. Would to God, my Hearers, that He wore a crown for each of you. What hard work it is to fight with the evil heart of man. If you wish it to do evil, you can soon overcome it. But if you would overcome it with *good*, how hard the struggle!

Christ would have man's heart, but man would not give it to Him. Christ tried him in many ways. He wooed him, but man's heart was hard and would not melt. Moses came and said, "My Master, let me try and open man's heart." And he used the fire and the whirlwind and the hammer of God. But the heart would not break and the spirit would not open to Christ. Then Christ came and He said, "Hard-Heart, I will win you. O, icy Soul, I will melt you." And the Soul said. "No, Jesus, I defy You." But Christ said, "I will do it." And He came once more time to the poor Hard-Heart and brought His Cross with Him. "See, Hard-Heart," He said, "I love you. Though you love Me not, yet I love you and in proof of this, look here, I will hang upon this Cross."

And as Hard-Heart looked on, suddenly fierce men nailed the Savior to the tree. His hands were pierced. His soul was rent in agony. And looking down on Hard-Heart, Jesus said, "Hard-Heart, will you not love Me? I love you. I have redeemed you from death. Though you hate Me, yet do I die for you. Though you kick against Me yet will I surely carry you to My Throne."

And Hard-Heart said, "Jesus, I can bear it no longer, I yield to You. Your love has overcome me—oh, I would be Your subject forever, only remember me when You come into Your kingdom and let me be numbered with Your subjects both now and forever."

My Hearers, has Christ ever overcome you? Say, has His love been too much for you? Have you been compelled to give up your sins, wooed by His Divine love? Have your eyes been made to run with tears at the thought of His affection for you and of your own ingratitude? Have you ever thought this over?—"I, the blackest of sinners, have despised Him. His Bible I have left unread. His blood I have trampled under foot and yet He died for me and loved me with an everlasting love." Surely, this has made you bow your knee. This has made your spirit cry—

***"Oh, Sovereign Grace my heart subdue,
I will be led in triumph, too,
A willing captive to my Lord
To sing the triumphs of His Word."***

If this is the case with you, then you may yourself recognize one of the many crowns that are on His head.

III. Now, this brings me to the third point and may I very earnestly ask your prayers, that, feeble as I am this morning, I may be helped while I endeavor to dwell upon this sweet subject. I am preaching in my own spirit against wind and tide. There are times when one preaches with pleasure and delight, enjoying the Word, but now I can get nothing for myself, even if I am giving you something. Pray for me, that nevertheless the Word may be blessed, that in my weakness God's strength may appear.

The third head deals with the CROWNS OF THANKSGIVING. Surely, concerning these we may well say, "On His head are many crowns." In the first place, all the mighty doers in Christ's Church ascribe their crown to Him. What a glorious crown is that which Elijah will wear—the man who went to Ahab and when Ahab said, "Have you found me, O my enemy?" reproved him to his very face—the man who took the Prophets of Baal and let not one of them escape, but hewed them in pieces and made them a sacrifice to God. What a crown will he wear who ascended into Heaven in a chariot of fire!

What a crown, again, belongs to Daniel, saved from the lion's den—Daniel, the earnest Prophet of God. What a crown will be that which shall glitter on the head of the weeping Jeremy and the eloquent Isaiah! What crowns are those which shall begirt the heads of the Apostles! What a weighty diadem is that which Paul shall receive for his many years of service! And then, my Friends, how shall the crown of Luther glitter and the crown of Calvin! And what a noble diadem shall that be which Whitfield

shall wear and all those men who have so valiantly served God and who by His might have put to flight the armies of the Aliens and have maintained the Gospel banner erect in troublous times!

No, but let me point to you a scene. Elijah enters Heaven and where goes he with that crown which is instantly put upon his head? See, he flies to the Throne and stooping there, he uncrowns himself—"Not unto me, not unto me but unto Your name be all the glory!" See the Prophets as they steam in one by one—without exception they put their crowns upon the head of Christ! And mark the Apostles and all the mighty teachers of the Church. They all bow there and cast their crowns at His feet, who, by His grace, enabled them to win them—

***"I ask them from where their victory came—
They, with united breath,
Ascribe their triumph to the Lamb,
Their conquest to HIS DEATH."***

Not only the mighty doers but the mighty sufferers do this. How brilliant are the ruby crowns of the martyred saints! From the stake, from the gibbet, from the fire—they ascended up to God. And among the bright ones they are doubly bright, fairest of the mighty host that surrounds the throne of the Blessed One. What crowns they wear! I must confess that I have often envied them. It is a happy thing to live in peaceful days. But while happy, it is not honorable. How much more honorable to have died the death of Lawrence, grilled to death upon that fiery gridiron, or to die pierced with spears, with every bone dislocated on the rack! A noble way of serving Christ, to have stood calmly in the midst of the fires and have clapped one's hands and cried, "I can do all things, even give my body to be burned for His dear names sake!"

What crowns are those which martyr's wear! An angel might blush to think that his dignity was so small compared with that of those riders in chariots of fire. Where are all those crowns? They are on the head of Christ. Not a martyr wears his crown. They all take their blood-red crowns and then they place them on His head—the fire crown, the rack crown—there I see them all glitter. For it was His love that helped them to endure. It was by His blood that they overcame.

And then, Brethren, think of another list of crowns. They who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever. There are a few men whom God has enabled to do much for the Church and much for the world. They spend and are spent. Their bodies know no rest, their souls no ease. Like chariots instinct with life, or dragged by unseen but resistless coursers, they fly from duty to duty, from labor to labor. What crowns shall theirs be when they come before God, when the souls they have saved shall enter Paradise with them and when they shall say, "Here

am I and the children which You have given me!” What shouts of acclamation, what honors, what rewards shall then be given to the winners of souls!

What will they do with their crowns? Why, they will take them from their heads and lay them there where sits the Lamb in the midst of the Throne. There will they bow and cry, “Jesus, we were not saviors, You did it all. We were but Your servants. The victory belongs not to us but to our Master. We did reap, but You did sow. We did cast in the net, but You did fill it full. And our success is accomplished through Your strength and by the power of Your grace.” Well may it be said of Christ, “On His head are many crowns.”

But see, another host approaches. I see a company of cherubic spirits flying upwards to Christ. And who are these? I know them not. They are not numbered among the martyrs. I read not their names among the Apostles. I do not even distinguish them as having been written among the saints of the living God. Who are these? I ask one of them, “Who are you, you bright and sparkling spirit?” The leader replies, “We are the glorious myriad of infants who compose the family above. We from our mother’s breasts fled straight to Heaven, redeemed by the blood of Christ. We were washed from original depravity and we have entered Heaven.

“From every nation of the earth have we come—from the days of the first infant even to the winding up of earth’s history—we in flocks have sped here like doves to their windows.” “How came you here, you little ones?” They reply, “through the blood of Christ and we come to crown Him Lord of all.” I see the countless multitude surround the Savior, and flying to Him, each one puts its crown upon His head and then begins to sing again louder than before.

But yonder I see another company following them. “And who are you?” The reply is, “Our history on earth is the very opposite of the story of those bright spirits that have gone before. We lived on earth for sixty, or seventy, or eighty years—until we tottered into our graves from very weakness. When we died there was no marrow in our bones, our hair had grown gray and we were crisp and dry with age.” “How came you here?” They reply—“After many years of strife with the world, of trials and of troubles, we entered Heaven at last.” “And you have crowns, I see.” “Yes,” they say, “but we intend not to wear them.” “Where are you going, then?” “We are going to yonder Throne—for our crowns have been surely given us by grace—for nothing but grace could have helped us to weather the storm so many, many years.”

I see the grave and reverend sires pass one by one before the Throne and there they lay their crowns at His blessed feet. And then shouting with the infant throng, they cry, “Salvation unto Him that sits on the

Throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever.” And then I see following behind them another class. And who are you? Their answer is, “We are the chief of sinners, saved by grace.” And here they come—Saul of Tarsus and Manasseh and Rahab and many of the same class. And how came you here? They reply, “We have had much forgiven, we were grievous sinners, but the love of Christ reclaimed us, the blood of Christ washed us and whiter than snow are we, though once we were black as Hell.” And where are you going? They reply, “We are going to cast our crowns at His feet and, ‘Crown Him Lord of all.’ ”

Among that throng, my dear Hearers, I hope it may be my lot to stand. Washed from many sins, redeemed by precious blood, happy shall I that moment be, when I shall take my crown from off my head and put it on the head of Him whom having not seen, I love, but in whom believing, I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. And it is a happy thought for me, this morning, that many of you will go with me there. Come Brothers and Sisters, in a few more years, many of us who have met Sunday after Sunday in this Music Hall, will walk up hand in hand. And without exception, you saints of God, I am persuaded we shall be prepared there to lay all our honors down and to ascribe unto Him the glory forever and ever.

“Ah, but” says Little-Faith, “I fear I shall never get into Heaven, and therefore I shall never crown Him.” Yes, but Little-Faith, do you know that one of the richest crowns Christ ever wears and one of the brightest which adorns His brow, is the crown which Little-Faith puts on His head? For Little-Faith, when it gets to Heaven will say, “O what grace has been shown to me, that though the meanest of the family, I have still been kept—though least of all the saints, yet Hell has not prevailed against me—though weaker than the weakest, yet as my days so has my strength been.” Will not your gratitude be great? Will not your song be loud, when approaching His dear feet, you lay your honors there and cry, “Blessed be Jesus who has kept my poor soul in all its dangers and brought me safely at last to Himself”? “On His head were many crowns.”

I cannot preach any longer, but I must ask you this question, my dear Hearers—Have you a crown to put on the head of Jesus Christ today? “Yes,” says one, “I have. I must crown Him for having delivered me out of my last great trouble.” “I must crown Him,” says another, “for He has kept up my spirits when I was well near despairing.” “I must crown Him,” says another, “for He has crowned me with loving kindness and tender mercy.” Methinks I see one standing yonder who says, “Would that I could crown Him. If He would but save me, I would crown Him. Ah, if He would but give Himself to *me*, I would gladly give myself to Him. I am too worthless and too vile.” No, my Brother, but does your heart say, “Lord have mercy upon me?” Does your soul now crave pardon and forgiveness through the

blood of Christ? Then go boldly near Him this day and say to Him, "Jesus, I am the chief of sinners, but by Your grace I rely upon You."

And in so saying you put a crown upon His head which shall make glad His heart, even as in the day

when His Father crowned Him in the day of His espousals. Make this the day of your espousals to Him. Take Him to be your All in All and then may you look at this text with pleasure and say, "Yes, on His head are many crowns and I have put one there and I shall put another there before long." God add His blessing, for Jesus sake! Amen.

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THE FIRST RESURRECTION

NO. 391

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 5, 1861,
BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“And I saw thrones and they sat upon them and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection; on such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”
Revelation 20:4, 5, 6.

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”
Revelation 20:12.

You will bear me witness, my Friends, that it is exceedingly seldom I ever intrude into the mysteries of the future with regard either to the second advent, the millennial reign, or the first and second resurrection. As often as we come across it in our expositions we do not turn aside from the point, but if guilty at all on this point, it is rather in being too silent than saying too much. And now, in bringing forward this question this morning I would say I do not do it to amuse your curiosity by novelty, or that I may pretend to have the true key of the prophecies which are as yet unfulfilled. I scarcely think it would be justifiable for me to spend my time upon prophetic studies for which I have not the necessary talent, nor is it the vocation to which my Master has ordained me.

I think some ministers would do far more for the profit of God's people if they would preach more about the first advent and less about the second. But I have chosen this topic because I believe it has practical bearings and may be made useful, instructive and rousing to us all. I find that the most earnest of the Puritan preachers did not forbear to dwell upon

this mysterious subject. I turn to Charnock and in his disquisition upon the Immutability of God he does not hesitate to speak of the conflagration of the world, of the millennial reign and the new heavens and new earth.

I turn to Richard Baxter, a man who above all other men loved the souls of men. Who more, perhaps, than any man with the exception of the Apostle Paul, travailed in birth for souls—and I find him making a barbed arrow out of the doctrine of the coming of the Lord and thrusting this great Truth into the very heart and conscience of unbelievers—as though it were Heaven’s own sword. And John Bunyan too—plain, honest John—he who preached so simply that a child could comprehend him and was certainly never guilty of having written upon his forehead the word “Mystery”—he, too, speaks of the advent of Christ and of the glories which shall follow and uses this doctrine as a stimulus to the saints and as a warning to the ungodly.

I do not think therefore I need tremble very much if the charge should be brought against me of bringing before you an unprofitable subject. It shall profit if God shall bless the word. And if it is God’s Word we may expect His blessing if we preach it all. But He will withdraw it if we refrain from teaching any part of His counsel because in our pretended wisdom we fancy that it would not have practical effect.

Now, my dear Friends, in introducing again these texts to you I shall just remark that in the first text which relates to the people of God, we have *three great privileges*. And in the second text, which relates to the ungodly who are not in covenant with Christ, we have *three great and terrible things* which may soon be perceived.

I. First of all, we will take the first text with its THREE PRIVILEGES. “Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”

Before I proceed to enter into these privileges I must remark that two modes of understanding this verse have been proposed, both of which I think are untenable. I have been reading carefully through Albert Barnes. In his opinion, the first resurrection here spoken of is a *resurrection of principles*—a resurrection of the patience, the undaunted courage, the holy boldness and constancy of the ancient martyrs. He says these great principles have been forgotten and, as it were, buried and that during the spiritual reign of Christ which is to come these great principles will have a resurrection.

Now, I appeal to you, would you, in reading that passage, think this to be the meaning? Would any man believe that to be its meaning, if he had not some thesis to defend? The fact is we sometimes read Scripture thinking of what it *ought* to say, rather than what it *does* say. I do not hesitate to affirm that any simple-minded person who was intent upon discovering the mind of the Spirit and not upon finding a method by which the words could be compelled to express his own mind would say that the resurrection of principles or the resurrection of doctrines does not give the fair meaning of the words here stated.

Brethren, cannot you perceive at a glance that this is the resurrection of *men*? And is it not a literal resurrection, too? Does it not say, “I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus”? Is it not written, “The rest of the dead lived not?” Does this mean the rest of the dead

principles? The rest of the dead doctrines? You cannot so translate it. It is—we have no doubt whatever—a literal resurrection of the saints of God and not of principles nor of doctrines.

But another interpretation has been proposed. I once had the misfortune to listen to an excellent friend of mine who was preaching upon this very text. And I must confess I did not attend with very great patience to his exposition. He said it meant blessed and holy is he who has been born again, who has been regenerated and so has had a resurrection from dead works by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. All the while he was preaching I could not help but wish that I could propose to him the difficulty to make this metaphorical interpretation agree with the literal fact—that the rest of the dead lived not till the thousand years were finished.

For if the first resurrection here spoken of is a metaphorical, or spiritual, or typical resurrection—why the next where it speaks of the resurrection of the dead must be spiritual and mystical and metaphorical too! Now, no one would agree with this. When you read a chapter you are not to say, “This part is a symbol and is to be read so and the next part is to be read literally.” Brethren, the Holy Spirit does not jumble metaphors and facts together. A typical book has plain indications that it is so intended and when you come upon a literal passage in a typical chapter it is always attached to something else which is distinctly literal so that you cannot, without violence to common sense, make a typical meaning out of it.

The fact is, in reading this passage with an unbiased judgment—having no purpose whatever to serve, having no theory to defend—and I confess I have none, for I know but very little about mysteries to come—I could not help seeing there are *two literal resurrections* here spoken of—one of the spirits of the just and the other of the bodies of the wicked. One of the saints who sleep in Jesus, whom God shall bring with *Him* and another of those who live and die impenitent, who perish in their sins.

But this by way of preface to this first text. Let me now proceed. There are three privileges in the text.

1. Now as to the first privilege, *the priority of resurrection*. I think Scripture is exceedingly plain and explicit upon this point. You have perhaps imagined that all men will rise at the same moment—that the trump of the archangel will break open every grave at the same instant and sound in the ear of every sleeper at the identical moment. Such I do not think is the testimony of the Word of God. I think the Word of God teaches and teaches indisputably, that the saints shall rise first. And be the interval of time whatever it may, whether the thousand years are literal years, or a very long period of time, I am not now about to determine. I have nothing to do except with the fact that there are two resurrections, a resurrection of the just and afterwards of the unjust—a time when the saints of God shall rise—an aftertime when the wicked shall rise to the resurrection of damnation.

I shall now refer you to one or two passages in Scripture and you will use your Bibles and follow me. First, let us look at the words of the Apostle in that chapter which we use generally as a burial service, the First Epistle to the Corinthians, 15:20-24: “But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in

Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power."

There has been an interval of two thousand years between "Christ the first fruits" and the "afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." Why not then a thousand years between that first resurrection and "the end." Here is a resurrection of those who are Christ's and of them only. As for the wicked, one would scarce know that they would rise at all from this passage, if it were not for the general statement, "All shall be made alive." And even this may not be so comprehensive as at first sight it seems. It is enough for me that there is here a particular and exclusive resurrection of those who are Christ's.

Turn to another passage, which is perhaps plainer still, the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, 4:13-17—"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent"—or have a preference beyond—"them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air—and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Here is nothing said whatever about the resurrection of the wicked—it is only stated that the dead in Christ shall rise first. Our Apostle is evidently speaking of a first resurrection. And since we know that a first resurrection implies a second and since we know that the wicked dead are to rise as well as the righteous dead, we draft the inference that the wicked dead shall rise at the second resurrection, after the interval between the two resurrections shall have been accomplished.

Turn to Philippians 3, verses 8 and 10-11 and compare them. "Yes doubtless and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death. If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." What does he mean there? Every one will rise, no orthodox Christian doubts that. The doctrine of a general resurrection is received by all the Christian Church. What, then, is this resurrection after which Paul was exerting himself, if by any means he might attain unto it?

It could not be the general resurrection. He would attain unto that live as he wish. It must have been some superior resurrection of which only those shall be partakers who have known Christ and the power of His resurrection, having been made conformable unto His death. I think you cannot interpret this passage or give it any force of meaning, unless you admit that there is to be a prior resurrection of the just before the resur-

rection of the unjust. If you will turn to a passage in Luke 20:35-36, which probably is fresh upon your memories, you will find there something which I will venture to call a clear proof of a special resurrection.

The Sadducees had proposed a difficulty as to the relationship of men and women in the future state and Jesus here says, "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." Now, brethren, there is some *worthiness* necessary for this resurrection. Do you not perceive it? There is some distinction involved in being called the children of the resurrection. Now, again I say you do not doubt but that all shall rise. In that sense, then, every man would be one of the children of the resurrection. In *that* sense, no worthiness would be required for resurrection at all.

There must be, then, a resurrection for which worthiness is needed, a resurrection which shall be a distinguished privilege, which, being obtained, shall confer upon its possessor the distinguished and honorable title of a "child of the resurrection." It seems to me that this is plain enough and can be put beyond all dispute. In chapter 14 of the same Gospel, in verse 13-14, you have a promise made to those who, when they make a feast, do not do it with the intention of getting anything in return. "When you make a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and you shall be blessed; for they cannot recompense you: for you shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

I would not insist upon it that this would prove that the just rose at a different time. But still there is to be a resurrection of the just and on the other hand, there is to be a resurrection of the unjust, And the time of recompense for the righteous is to be the resurrection of the just, which is spoken of as being a particular period. He might just as well have said, "You shall be recompensed at the general resurrection." There was no need to have said, "At the resurrection of the just," if the two are to happen at the same time. The words "of the just" are superfluous in the passage unless they do refer to some era distinguished and distinct from the resurrection of the unjust.

I will not say that this is any clear proof, but still, all these things put together with other passages I might quote if time did not fail me, would, I think, establish upon a Scriptural basis the doctrine of the two resurrections. But I would refer to one more, which seems to me to be exceedingly clear, in John 6:39, 40, 44, 54. In these verses the Savior four times over speaks of His own believing people and promises them a resurrection. "I will raise him up at the last day." Now, is there any joy or beauty in this, to the people of God in particular, unless there be a specialty in it for them? It is the lot of all to rise and yet we have here a privilege for the elect! Surely, Brethren, there is a different resurrection.

Besides, there is yet a passage which now springs to my memory in Hebrews 11:35, where the Apostle, speaking of the trials of the godly and their noble endurance, speaks of them as, "not accepting deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection." The betterness was not in the after results of resurrection, but in the resurrection itself. How, then could it be a better resurrection, unless there is some distinction between the resurrection of the saint and the resurrection of the sinner? Let the one be

a resurrection of splendor—let the other be a resurrection of gloom and horror—and let there be a marked division between the two. That as it was in the beginning it may be even to the end, the Lord has put a difference between him that fears God and him that fears him not.

I am well aware that I have not been able to put the argument so well but that any antagonist may cavil at it. But I have been preaching to my own congregation rather than fighting with opponents and I hope you will take these passages and weigh them for yourselves. If they do not teach you that the dead in Christ shall rise first, do not believe me if I say they do. If you cannot perceive the fact yourself, if the Holy Spirit does not show it to you, why then read the passage again and then find if you can find another and a better meaning. I have no purpose to serve except to make the Scripture as plain to you as possible.

And I say it yet again—I have not a shadow of a doubt in my own soul that these passages do teach us that there shall first of all be a resurrection concerning which it shall be said, “Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection, on such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”

2. I now pass on to the second privilege here promised to the godly. *The second death on them has no power.* This, too, is a literal death—none the less literal because its main terror is spiritual—for a spiritual death is as literal as a carnal death. The death which shall come upon the ungodly without exception can never touch the righteous. Oh, Brethren, this is the best of all. As for the first resurrection, if Christ has granted that to His people there must be something glorious in it if we cannot perceive it. “It does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know when He shall appear we shall be like *Him*.”

I think the glories of the first resurrection belong to the glories which shall be revealed *in* us rather than the glories that are revealed *to* us. What shall be the majesty of that form in which we shall rise? What is the distinguished happiness we shall then enjoy? We can but guess at a distance—we cannot know it fully. But on this point we can understand what Scripture states and understand this much well—that damnation, the second death—shall have no power on those who rise at the first resurrection. How should it? How can damnation fall on any but those who are sinners and are guilty of sin? And the saints are not guilty of sin. They have sinned like others and they were by nature the children of wrath even as others. But their sin has been lifted from them—it was laid upon the Scapegoats’ head of old.

He, the Eternal Substitute, even our Lord Jesus, carried all their guilt and their iniquity into the wilderness of forgetfulness where it shall never be found against them forever. They wear the Savior’s righteousness, even as they have been washed in His blood. And what wrath can lie on the man who is not only guiltless through the blood, but is meritorious through imputed righteousness? Oh, arm of Justice, you are nerveless to smite the blood-washed. Oh, you flames of Hell, how could even so much as the breath of your heat pass upon the man who is safely covered in the Savior’s wounds? How is it possible for you, O Deaths, Destructions, Horrors, Glooms, Plagues and Terrors, so much as to flit like a cloud over the

serene sky of the spirit which has found peace with God through the blood of Christ?

No, Brethren—

***“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.”***

There shall be a second death. But over us it shall have no power. Do you understand the beauty of the picture? As if we might walk through the flames of Hell and they should have *no power* to devour us any more than when the holy children paced with ease over the hot coals of Nebuchadnezzar’s seven times heated furnace. Death may bend his bow and fit the arrow to the string—but we laugh at you, O Death! And you, O Hell, we will despise! For over both of you, enemies of man, we shall be more than conquerors through Him that has loved us. We shall stand invulnerable and invincible, defying and laughing to scorn our every foe. And all this because we are washed from sin and covered with a spotless righteousness.

But there is another reason why the second death can have no power on the believer—Because when the prince of this world comes against us—we shall be able to say what our Master did, “He has nothing in Me.” When we shall rise again we shall be freed from all corruption—no evil tendencies shall remain in us. “I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed—for the Lord dwells in Zion.” “Without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing”—without even the shadow of a spot which the eye of omniscience could discover—we shall be as pure as Adam before his fall—as holy as the Immaculate manhood when it first came from the Divine Hand.

We shall be better than Adam for Adam might sin. We shall be so established in goodness, in Truth and in righteousness that we shall not even be tempted again, much less shall we have any fear of falling. We shall stand spotless and faultless at the last great day. Brethren, lift up your heads—contending with sin, cast down with doubts—lift up your heads and wipe the tears from your eyes! There are days coming the like of which angels have not seen—but *you* shall see them. There are times coming when your spirits shall no more fear the chain, nor shall you even remember the wormwood and the gall.

***“What, though your inbred sins require
Your flesh to see the dust—
Yet as the Lord your Savior rose
So all His followers must.”***

And when they rise they shall leave the old Adam behind them. Blessed day! One of the most blessed parts of Heaven—of Heaven above or of Heaven below—will be freedom from the tendency to sin—a total death to that old nature which has been our plague and woe.

3. There is yet a third privilege in the text, upon which I shall speak but briefly. I believe this to be also one of the glories that shall be revealed.

The third privilege of the text is, “*They shall reign with Him a thousand years.*” Here is another point upon which there has been a long and very vigorous contention. It was believed in the early Church—I do not know whether there is any Scriptural foundation for the precise date they

fixed—that the seventh thousand years of the world’s history would be a Sabbath. That as there were six days of toil in the week and the seventh was a day of rest, so the world would have six thousand years of toil and sorrow and the seventh thousand would be a thousand years of rest.

I say I do not know that there is any Scripture for that. I do know that there is none against it. I believe the Lord Himself shall come, “but of that day and of that hour knows no man, no not even the angels of God.” And I think it is idle to attempt to fix the year or even the century when Christ shall come. Our business is to expect Him always, to be always looking for His appealing, watching for His coming. Whether He comes at cock-crow, or midnight, or at morning watch, we need be ready to go in with the wise virgins into the marriage feast and to rejoice with our Beloved.

If there have been any dates given, I am not able at present to find them. All these dates and mysteries I can leave to much more learned men and men who give their whole time to it. The book of Revelation needs another expounder besides those who have loaded our shelves until they groan, for they have generally made confusion worse confounded. Their expositions have been rather “an obviation” than a revelation. They have rather darkened counsel by words without knowledge than made the dark things plain. I am prepared to go about as far as my predecessor Dr. Gill went—as far as the old fathers of the Church went, as far as Baxter and Bunyan would have gone—but to go no further than that.

Yet I think we may say this morning there it in our text a distinct promise that the saints are to reign with Christ a thousand years and I believe they are to reign with Him *upon this earth*. There are some passages which I think obtain a singular fullness of meaning if this is true. Turn to Psalm 37:10, 11. It is that Psalm where David has been fretting himself because of the evildoers and their prosperity upon the earth. He says, “For yet a little while and the wicked shall not be: yes, you shall diligently consider his place and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.” You can interpret that to mean that the meek man shall enjoy much more of this world’s goods than the sinner and that he shall have abundance of peace.

But I think you have given it a lean meaning, a very lean meaning, indeed. If it is true that these meek ones shall yet possess this very earth and that here, in the abundance of peace through the Messiah’s reign, they shall rejoice in it, I think you have found a fuller meaning and one which has a God-like meaning. So it is that God’s promises always have a wider meaning than we can conceive. Now, in this case, if it only means that the meek are to have what they gain in this life, which is very little indeed—if they are only to have what they enjoy here upon earth—which is so little—I think if in this life only they have hope, they are of men the most miserable.

If it only means that, then the promise means less than we might conceive it to mean. But if it means that they shall have glory even here, then you have given to it one of the widest meanings you can conceive—a meaning like the meanings usually given to the promises of God—wide, large, extensive and worthy of Himself. Brethren, the meek do not inherit the earth to any great degree at present and we look for this in another age. Let me quote the language of Christ, lest you should think this passage peculiar to the Old Testament dispensation, “Blessed are the meek,

for they shall inherit the earth.” How? Where? When? Not now, certainly, not in Christ’s days, not in Apostolic times by any means.

What did the meek inherit, Brethren? Fire wood, flames, racks, pincers, dungeons. Their inheritance indeed, was nothing. They were destitute, addicted, tormented. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins and if the meek are ever to inherit the earth, certainly it must be in some age to come, for they have never inherited it yet. Turn again to a passage in Revelation 5:9, 10—“And they sung a new song.” It is the very song we sang this morning and it runs thus, “You are worthy to take the Book and to open the seals thereof: for You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation. And have made us unto our God kings and priests—and we shall reign on the earth.”

Whether anyone disputes the genuineness of these words, I do not know. But if they mean anything at all—if the Holy Spirit meant to set forth any meaning—surely it must have been that the people of Christ shall reign *on the earth*. Besides, remember our Savior’s words in Matthew 19:28-29, where in answer to a question which had been put by Peter as to what His saints should have as the result of their losses for His sake, He said unto them, “Verily I say unto you, that you which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the Throne of His glory, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone that has forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold and shall inherit everlasting life.”

It seems that Christ here is to come in the regeneration, when in a newborn world there shall be joys fitted for the newborn spirits—and then there shall be splendors and glories for the Apostles first and for all those who by any means have suffered any losses for Christ Jesus. You find such passages as these in Isaiah 24:23, “The Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before His ancients gloriously.” Indeed, I could not now take up your time by quoting many passages in which it seems to me that nothing but the triumph on the very spot where they have fought the battle, nothing but the glory in the very place where they have had the tug of war, will meet the meaning of God’s Word.

I do look forward to this with joy, that though I may sleep in Christ before my Master comes and I know not whether that shall be or not, yet I shall rise at the day of His appearing and shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just if I have truly and faithfully served Him. And that recompense shall be to be made like unto Him and to partake of His glories before the eyes of men—and to reign with Him during the thousand years. Dr. Watts, I believe, understood that Christ is to come literally, for he says—

***“Nor does it yet appear
How great we must be made;
But when we see our Savior here,
We shall be like our Head.
A hope so much divine
May trials well endure,
May purge our souls from sense and sin
As Christ the Lord is pure.”***

But to gather up what I have said and to make one other observation—this doctrine which I have preached just now is not an unpractical one. For throughout the New Testament whenever the Apostle wants to stir up men to patience, to labor, to hope, to endurance, to holiness—he generally says something about the advent of Christ. “Be patient, Brethren,” says he, “for the coming of the Lord draws near.” “Let your moderation be known unto all men, the Lord is at hand.” “Judge nothing before the time, till the Lord come.” “When the great Shepherd shall appear, you also shall appear with Him in glory.” Brethren, I think we shall do wrong if we make too much of this. But we shall do equally wrong if we make too little of it.

Let us give it a fair place in our thoughts and especially let those of us who fear God and believe in Jesus take this to be a window through which we can look when the house is dark and our home is full of misery. Let us look to the time when we shall rise among the first, following Christ the first fruits—when we shall reign with Christ, sharing in His glories—and when we shall know that the second death over us has no power.

II. I shall now turn to the second part of the discourse briefly. To the ungodly **THREE THINGS IN SIMPLICITY.**

Sinner, you have heard us speak of the resurrection of the righteous. To you the word “resurrection” has no music. There is no flash of joy in your spirit when you hear that the dead shall rise again. But oh, I pray you lend me your ear while I assure you in God’s name that you shall rise. Not only shall your soul live—you have perhaps become so brutish that you forget you have a soul—but your body itself shall live. Those eyes that have been full of lust shall see sights of horror. Those ears which have listened to the temptations of the Evil One shall hear the thunders of the Day of Judgment. Those very feet that bare you to the theater shall attempt, but utterly fail to sustain you when Christ shall sit in judgment.

Think not when your body is put into the soil that you have done with it. It has been partner with your soul in sin. It shall be sharer with your soul in the punishment. He is able to cast both body and soul into Hell. The heathens believe in the immortality of the soul. We need not therefore prove what a heathen could conceive. It is the doctrine of the resurrection of the *body* which is peculiar to Christianity. You are not prepared to cast away the Revelation of God, I know. You receive that Book as being God’s Book and it tells me that the dead, both small and great, shall rise. When the archangel’s trump shall sound, the whole of the old inhabitants of the world before the Flood shall rise out of the ocean.

The buried palaces, the sunken homes shall all give up the multitude who once married and were given in marriage until Noah entered into the ark. Up shall rise from the great deeps of the fathomless sea, thousands upon thousands of *bodies of* men who have slept now these three and four thousand years. Every churchyard, too, where men have been quietly buried with Christian rites but yet were unchristian still, shall yield up its dead. The battlefield shall yield a mighty harvest—a harvest which was sown in blood—which shall be reaped in tempest. Every place where man has lived and man has died shall see the dying quickened once again and flesh and blood once more instinct with life.

But the main thing with you is that you will be there. Living and dying as you now are. Ungodly and unconverted the most awful curse that could

fall on you—with the exception of the damnation of your soul—is the sure and certain resurrection of your body. Go, now and paint it if you will and seek a beauty which the worm shall loathe. Go and pamper your body—drink the sweet and eat the fat. Go and luxuriate and indulge it in ease. Oh, Sir, you may well pamper your bodies, for there is short enough time for your body to have mirth in. And when that short time is over you shall drink another wine—the dregs of the cup of God’s wrath which the wicked shall drain to the last drop.

Satisfy your ears with music now—you shall soon hear nothing but the howling of the damned! Go your way—eat, drink and be merry. But for all these the Lord shall bring you into judgment—sevenfold for all your sinful pleasures—yes seventy times seven., For all your joys of lust and wickedness and crime shall the Lord be avenged on you in the great and terrible day of His wrath. Sinner, think of this and when you sin think of the resurrection.

But after the resurrection, according to the text, comes *the judgment*. You have cursed God. The oath died away. No, Sir, it did not—it imprinted itself upon the great Book of God’s remembrance. You have entered the chamber of wantonness, or the hall of infidelity. You have walked through the stews of grime and through the stench and filth of the brothel. You have wandered into sin and plunged into it, thinking it would all die with the day—that as the night covers up the sights of the day, so the night of death should cover up the deeds of your day of life. Not so. The books shall be opened. I think I see your blanching cheeks—closing your eyes because you dare not look upon the Judge when He opens that page where stands your history.

I hear yon sinner, boldest among you all. He is crying, “You rocks fall on me.” There they stand, sublime and dread, those granite rooks. He would rather be crushed than stand there before the avenging Eye. But the mountains will not loosen. Their flinty bowels feel no pangs of sympathy, they will not move. You stand while the fiery Eye looks you through and through. And the dread voice reads on and on, your every act and word and thought. I see you as the shameful crimes are read and men and angels hear. I see your horror as a nameless deed is told in terms explicit, which none can misunderstand. I hear your thoughts brought out—that lust, that murder which was in the thought, but never grew into the deed.

And you are all this while astonished like Belshazzar when he saw the writing on the wall and his loins were loose and he was terribly afraid. So shall it be with you. And yet again and again and again, shall you send up that awful shriek, “Hide us! hide us from the face of Him that sits upon the Throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!”

But then comes the end, the last of all. After death the judgment, after judgment *the damnation*. If it is a dreadful thing to live again, if it is a more dreadful thing still to spend the first day of that life in the grand asize of God—how much more awful shall it be when the sentence is pronounced and the terror of punishment shall begin! We believe that the *souls* of the wicked are already tormented, but this judgment will cast *both body and soul* into the lake of fire. Men and women, you who fear not God and have no faith in Jesus, I cannot picture to you the damnation.

Across it let me draw a curtain. But though we must not picture it, I pray you realize it.

When Martin has painted some of his sublime pictures, he has generally heightened the effect by masses of darkness. Surely this is the way in which God has painted Hell—rather by masses of darkness than by definiteness of light. This much we know—Hell is a place of absence from God—a place for the development of sin, where every passion is unbridled, every lust unrestrained. A place where God punishes night and day those who sin night and day—a place where there is never sleep, or rest or hope—a place where a drop of water is denied, though thirst shall burn the tongue. A place where pleasure never breathed, where light never dawned, where anything like consolation was never heard of—a place where the Gospel is denied, where mercy droops her wings and dies.

Hell is a place where vengeance reigns and shakes his head and brandishes his sword—a place of fury and of burning—a place the like of which imagination has not pictured. May God grant it may be a place which you shall never see and whose dread you shall never feel. Sinner, instead of preaching it to you, let me bid you die from it. Die, sinner and flight from Hell becomes impossible—you are lost eternally. Oh, while yet you are on praying ground, I pray you, think on your end. “Because she remembered not her latter end, she came down wonderfully.” Let it not be said thus of you. Think! think! this warning may be the last you shall ever hear. You may never be spared to come to a place of worship again. Perhaps, while you sit here the last sands are dropping from the hour glass—and then no more warning can be given—because redemption and escape shall be impossible to you.

Soul, I lift up before you now Christ the Crucified One—“Whosoever believes on Him shall never perish, but have eternal life.” As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness so this morning the Son of Man is lifted up. Sinner, see His wounds. Look to His thorn-crowned head. See the nails of His hands and of His feet. Do you perceive Him? Hark, while He cries, “Why have you forsaken Me?” Listen again while He says, “It is finished! It is finished!” Salvation finished!

And now, salvation is freely preached to you. Believe on Christ and you shall be saved. Trust Him and all the horrors of the future shall have no power over you. But the splendors of this prophecy shall be fulfilled, be they what they may. Oh that this morning some of you may trust my Master for the first time in your lives! And this done, you need not curiously enquire what the future shall be, but you may sit down calmly and say, “Come when it will, my soul is on the Rock of Ages. It fears no ill. It fears no tempest. It defies all pain. Come quickly! Come quickly! Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus.”

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SERMON FOR NEW YEAR'S DAY NO. 1816

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 1, 1885,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.”
Revelation 21:5.***

How pleased we are with that which is new! Our children's eyes sparkle when we talk of giving them a toy or a book which is called new, for our short-lived human nature loves that which has lately come and is, therefore, like our own fleeting selves. In this respect, we are all children, for we eagerly demand the news of the day and are all too apt to rush after the “many inventions” of the hour. The Athenians, who spent their time in telling and hearing some new thing, were by no means singular persons—novelty still fascinates the crowd. As the world's poet says—

“All with one consent praise new-born gawds,”

I should not wonder, therefore, if the mere words of my text should sound like a pleasant song in your ears!

But I am thankful that their *deeper* meaning is even more joyful. The newness which Jesus brings is bright, clear, heavenly, enduring. We are, at this moment, especially ready for *a new year*. The most of men have grown weary with the old cry of depression of trade and hard times! We are glad to escape from what has been, to many, 12 months of great trial. The last year had become wheezy, croaking and decrepit in its old age—and we lay it asleep with a Psalm of judgment and mercy. We hope that this new-born year will not be worse than its predecessor and we pray that it may be a great deal better. At any rate, it is *new*, and we are encouraged to couple with it the idea of happiness, as we say, one to another, “I wish you a happy New Year.”—

***“Ring out the old, ring in the new;
Ring, happy bells, across the snow!
The year is going, let him go—
Ring out the false, ring in the true.”***

We ought not, as men in Christ Jesus, to be carried away by a childish love of novelty, for we worship a God who is always the same, and of whose years there is no end. In some matters, “the old is better.” There are certain things which are *already* so truly new that to change them for anything else would be to lose old gold for new dross. The old, old Gospel is the newest thing in the world! In its very essence it is forever good news. In the things of God the old is always new and if any man brings forward that which seems to be new doctrine and new truth, it is soon perceived that the new dogma is only worn-out heresy dexterously repaired—and the discovery in theology is the digging up of a carcass of er-

ror which had been better left to rot in oblivion. In the great matter of truth and godliness, we may safely say, "There is nothing new under the sun."

Yet, as I have already said, there has been so much evil about ourselves and our old nature—so much sin about our life and the old past, so much mischief about our surroundings and the old temptations—that we are not distressed by the belief that old things are passing away. Hope springs up at the first sound of such words as these from the lips of our risen and reigning Lord—"Behold, I make all things new." It is fit that things so outworn and defiled should be laid aside and better things fill their places. This is the first day of a new year and, therefore, a solemnly joyous day. Though there is no real difference between it and any other day, yet in our mind and thought it is a marked period which we regard as one of the milestones set up on the highway of our life.

It is only in imagination that there is any close of one year and beginning of another, but it has most fitly all the force of a great fact. When men "cross the line," they find no visible mark. The sea bears no trace of an equatorial belt and yet mariners know whereabouts they are and they take notice of it, so that a man can hardly cross the line for the first time without remembering it to the day of his death! We are crossing the line now. We have sailed into the year of Divine Grace, 1885, therefore let us keep a feast unto the Lord! If Jesus has not made us new, already, let the new year cause us to think about the great and necessary change of conversion. And if our Lord has begun to make us new and we have somewhat entered into the new world where dwells righteousness, let us be persuaded by the season to press forward into the center of His new creation, that we may feel to the fullest, all the power of His Grace!

The words He speaks to us tonight are truly Divine. Listen—"Behold, I make." Who is the great I? Who, but the eternal Son of God? "Behold, I make." Who can make but God, the Maker of Heaven and earth? It is His high prerogative to make and to destroy. "Behold, I *make all things*." What a range of creating power is here! Nothing stands outside of that all-surrounding circle. "Behold, I make all things new." What a splendor of almighty goodness shines out upon our souls! Lord, let us enter into this new universe of Yours. Let us be new-created with the "all things." In us, also, may men behold the marvels of Your renewing love! Let us, now, at the portal of the new year, sing a hymn to Jesus, as we hear these encouraging words which He speaks from His Throne. O Lord, we would rejoice and be glad forever in that which You create! The former troubles are forgotten and are hid from our eyes because of Your ancient promise—"Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isa. 65:17).

I am going to talk, tonight, for a little, upon *the great transformation* spoken of in the text, "I make all things new." And then upon *the earnest call* in the text to consider that transformation—"He that sat upon the throne said, '*Behold*'—attend, consider, look to it!" "Behold, I make all things new." Oh for a bedewing of the Holy Spirit while entering upon this theme! I would that our fleece might now be so wet as never to become dry

throughout the whole year. Oh for a horn of oil to be poured on the head of the young year, anointing it for the constant service of the Lord!

I. Briefly, then, here is one of the grandest Truths of God that ever fell from the lips of Jesus—"Behold, I make all things new." Let us gaze upon THE GREAT TRANSFORMATION. This renewing work has been in our Lord's hands from of old. We were under the Old Covenant and our first father and federal head, Adam, had broken that Covenant—and we were ruined by his fatal breach. The substance of the Old Covenant was on this wise—"If you will keep My command, you shall live and your posterity shall live. But if you shall eat of the tree which I have forbidden you, dying, you shall die and all your posterity in you."

This is where we were found, broken in pieces, sorely wounded and even slain by the tremendous Fall which destroyed both our Paradise and ourselves. We died in Adam as to spiritual life and our death revealed itself in an inward tendency to evil which reigned in our members. We were like Ezekiel's deserted infant, unswaddled and unwashed, left in our pollution to die. But the Son of God passed by and saw us in the greatness of our ruin. In His wondrous love, our Lord Jesus put us under a *New Covenant*, a Covenant of which He became the second Adam—a Covenant which ran on this wise—"If you shall render perfect obedience and vindicate My justice, then those who are in you shall not perish, but they shall live because you live."

Now, our Lord Jesus, our Surety and Covenant Head, has fulfilled His portion of the Covenant engagement and the compact stands as a bond of pure promise without condition or risk! Those who are participants in that Covenant cannot invalidate it, for it never did depend upon *them*, but only upon Him who was and is their federal Head and Representative before God. Of Jesus the demand was made and He met it! By Him man's side of the Covenant was undertaken and fulfilled! And now no condition remains—it is solely made up of *promises* which are unconditional and sure to all the seed. Today, Believers are not under the Covenant of, "If you do this you shall live," but under that New Covenant which says, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." It is not, now, "Do and live," but, "Live and do"!

We think not of merit and reward, but of Free Grace producing holy practice as the result of gratitude! What Law could not do, Grace has accomplished! We ought never to forget this bottom of everything—this making of all things new by the fashioning of a New Covenant. By it we have come out from under the bondage of the Law and the ruin of the Fall—and we have entered upon the liberty of Christ, into acceptance with God and into the boundless joy of being saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation so that we, "shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end." You young people, as soon as you know the Lord, I exhort you to study well that word, "Covenant." It is a key word, opening the treasures of Revelation! He that rightly understands the difference between the two Covenants has the foundation of sound theology laid in his mind.

This is the clue of many a maze, the open sesame of many a mystery. "I make all things new," begins with the bringing in of a better hope by vir-

tue of a better Covenant. The foundation being made new, the Lord Jesus Christ has set before us *a new way of life* which grows out of that Covenant. The old way of life was, "If you will enter into life, keep the Commandments." There they are—perfect, holy, just and good—but, alas, dear Friends, you and I have broken the Commandments. We dare not say that we have kept the Ten Commandments from our youth up—on the contrary, we are compelled by our consciences to confess that in spirit and in heart, if not in act, we have continually broken the Law of God—and we are, therefore, under sin and condemnation and there is no hope for us by the works of the Law.

For this reason the Gospel sets before us another way and says, "It is of faith, that it might be by Grace." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved." Therefore we read of being "justified by faith" and being made acceptable to God by faith. To be "justified" means being made really just—though we were guilty in ourselves, we are regarded as just by virtue of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us. Thus we fell into condemnation through another and we rise into justification through Another! It is written, "By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities"—and this Scripture is fulfilled in all those who believe in the Lord Jesus unto eternal life.

Our path to eternal Glory is the road of faith—"The just shall live by faith." We are "accepted in the Beloved" when we believe in Him whom God has set forth to be our righteousness. "By the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight." But we are "justified freely by His Grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." What a blessing it is for you and for me that Jesus has made all things new in that respect! I am glad that I have not to stand here and say, "My dear Hearers, do this and do that and you will be saved"—because you would not do as you were commanded, for your nature is weak and wicked. But I have to bid you—

***"Lay your deadly doing down, down at Jesus' feet!
Stand in Him, in Him alone, gloriously complete."***

I trust you will accept this most gracious and suitable way of salvation. It is most glorious to God and safe to you—do not neglect so great a salvation.

After you have believed unto life, you will go and do all manner of holy deeds as the result of your new life, but do not attempt them with the view of *earning* life. Prompted no longer by the servile and selfish motive of saving yourself, but by gratitude for the fact that you are saved, you will rise to virtue and true holiness. Faith has brought us into the possession of an indefeasible salvation and now, for the love we bear our Savior, we must obey Him and become "zealous for good works."

By Grace every Believer is brought into *a new relationship* with God. Let us rejoice in this—"You are no more a servant but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." Oh you who are now children, you were servants a little while ago! Some of you, my Hearers, are servants *now*, and as servants I would bid you expect your wages. Alas, your service has been no service, but a rebellion! And if you get no more wages

than you deserve, you will be cast away forever! You ought to be thankful to God that He has not yet recompensed you—that He has not dealt with you after your sins, nor rewarded you according to your iniquities. Do you not also know, you servants, what is likely to happen to you as servants? What do you, yourself, do with a bad servant? You say to him, “Here are your wages. Go.” “A servant abides not in the house forever.” you, too, will be driven out of your religious profession and your period of probation—and where will you go? The wilderness of destruction lies before you! Oh that you may not be left to wander with Ishmael, the son of the bond-woman!

“Behold, I make all things new,” says Jesus, and then He makes His people into sons. When we are made sons, do we work for wages? We have no desire for any present payment, for our Father says to us, “Son, you are always with Me, and all that I have is yours.” And, moreover, we have the inheritance in reversion, entailed by the Covenant. We cannot demand the servile wage because we have already all that our Father possesses! He has given us Himself and His all-sufficiency for our everlasting portion—what more can we desire? He will never drive us from His house. Never has our great Father disowned one of His sons! It cannot be—His loving heart is too much bound up in His own adopted ones. That near and dear relationship which is manifested in adoption and regeneration binds the child of God to the great Father’s heart in such a way that He will never cast him off, nor suffer him to perish. I rejoice in the fact that we are no longer bond slaves but sons. “Behold,” says Christ, “I make all things new.”

There has also been worked in us, by the work of the Holy Spirit, *a new life* with all the new feelings, new desires and new works which go with it. The tree is made new and, in consequence, the fruits are new. That same Spirit of God who taught us that we were ruined in our old estate, led us gently by the hand till we came to the New Covenant promise and looked to Jesus—and saw in Him the full atonement for sin. Happy discovery for us! It was the kindling of new life in us. From the moment that we trusted in Jesus, a new life darted into our spirit. I am not going to say which is first, the new birth, or faith, or repentance—nobody can tell which spoke of a wheel moves first—it moves as a whole. The moment the Divine Life comes into the heart, we believe. The moment we believe, the Eternal Life is there. We repent because we believe and believe while we repent. The life that we live in the flesh is no longer according to the lusts of the world, but we live by faith in the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Our spiritual life is a new-born thing, the creation of the Spirit of life. We have, of course, that natural life which is sustained by food and evidenced by our breath, but there is another life within which is not seen of men, nor fed by the provisions of earth. We are conscious of having been quickened, for we were dead, once, and we know it—but now we have passed from death into life—and we know it quite as certainly. A new and higher motive sways us, now, for we seek not self, but God. Another hand grasps the tiller and steers our ship in a new course. New desires are felt

which we were strangers to in our former state. New fears are mighty within us—holy fears which once we would have ridiculed! New hopes are in us, bright and sure, such as we did not even *desire* to know when we lived a mere carnal life.

We are not what we were—we are new—and have begun a new career. We are not what we *shall* be, but assuredly we are not what we used to be! As for myself, my consciousness of being a new man in Christ Jesus is often as sharp and crisp as my consciousness of being in existence. I know I am not only and solely what I was by my first birth—I feel within myself another life—a second and a higher vitality which has often to contend with my lower self and by that very contention makes me conscious of its existence. This new principle is, from day to day, gathering strength and winning the victory! It has its hand upon the throat of the old sinful nature and it shall eventually trample it like dust beneath its feet. I feel this within me—do you? [A loud voice, “Yes! Yes!”]

Since you feel this, I know you can say, tonight, that Jesus Christ, who sits on the Throne of God, makes all things new. Blessed be His name! [Several voices, “Amen!”] It needed the Lord, Himself, to make such as we are, new. None but a Savior on the Throne of God could accomplish it and, therefore, let Him have the glory for it. I believe that Jesus Christ has, in some of you, not only made you new, but *made everything new to you*. “Ah,” said one, when she was converted, “either the world is greatly altered, or else I am.” Why, either you and I are turned upside down in nature, or the world is! We used to think it a wise world, once, but how foolish we think it now! We used to think it a brave happy world that showed us real happiness, but we are no longer deceived—we have seen Madame Bubble’s painted face in its true deformity.

“The world is crucified unto me,” said Paul—and many of you can say the same. It is like a condemned criminal hung up to die. Meanwhile, there is no love lost, for the world thinks much the same of us and, therein, we can sympathize with Paul when he said, “I am crucified unto the world.” What a transformation Grace makes in all things within our little world! In our heart there is a new Heaven and a new earth! What a change in our joys! Ah, we blush to think what our joys used to be, but they are now heavenly! We are equally ashamed of our hates and our prejudices—but these have vanished, once and for all. Why, now we love the very things we once despised and our heart flies as with wings after that which once it detested! What a different Bible we have now! Blessed Book, it is just the same, but oh, how differently do we read it!

The Mercy Seat, what a different place it is, now! Our wretched, formal prayers—if we did offer them—what a mockery they were! But now we draw near to God and speak with our Father with delight. We have access to Him by the new and living way. The house of God, how different it is from what it used to be! We love to be found within its walls and we feel delighted to join in the praises of the Lord. I do not know that I admire Brothers and Sisters for calling out in the service as our friends did just now, but I certainly do not blame them. A person shook hands with me one day this week who does not often hear me preach and he expressed to

me his unbounded delight in listening to the doctrines of the Grace of God. And he added, "Surely your people must be made of stone." "Why?" I asked. "Why?" He replied, "If they were not, they would all get up and shout, 'Hallelujah,' when you are preaching such a glorious Gospel! I wanted to shout so badly on Sunday morning, but as everybody else was quiet, I held my tongue."

For which I thought he was a wise man. But yet I do not wonder if men who have tasted of the Grace of God and feel that the Lord has done great things for them, if they are glad, feel like crying out for joy! Let us have a little indulgence tonight! Now, you that feel that you must cry aloud for joy, join with me and cry, "Hallelujah!" [A great number of voices cried, "Hallelujah!"] Hallelujah, glory be to our Redeemer's name! Why should we not lift up our voices in His praise? We will! He has put a new song into our mouths and we must sing it! The mountains and the hills break forth before us into singing and we cannot be dumb! Praise is always our new delight—let us baptize the new year into a sea of it! In praise we will vie with angels and archangels, for they are not so indebted to Grace as we are—

***"Never did angels above taste
Redeeming Grace and dying love."***

But we have tasted these precious things and unto God we will lift up our loudest song forever and forever!

The process which we have roughly described as taking place in ourselves is, in other forms, going on in the world. The whole creation is travailing, all time is groaning, Providence is working, Grace is striving—and all for one end—the bringing forth of the new and better age. It is coming. It is coming! Not in vain did John write, "And I saw a new Heaven and a new earth: for the first Heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of Heaven saying, Behold, the Tabernacle of God is with men and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the Throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."

What a prospect does all this open up to the Believer! Our future is gloomy—let not our present be gloomy!

II. But now, in the text there is AN EARNEST CALL for us to consider this work of our Lord. He that sits on the Throne of God says, "*Behold, I make all things new.*" Why should He call upon us to *behold* it? *All* His works deserve study—"The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein." Whatever the Lord does is full of wisdom and the wise will search into it. But when the Lord, Himself, sets up a light and calls us to pause and look, we cannot help beholding!

I think that the Lord Jesus Christ especially calls us to consider this, that we may, according to our condition, derive profit from it. First, if the Lord Jesus makes all things new, then *a new birth is possible for you*, dear Friend, though you have come here, tonight, in a wrong state of heart with your sins upon you, binding you fast. There is enough of the Light of God in your soul for you to know that you are in darkness and you are saying to yourself, "Oh, that I could reach to better things! I hear how these people of God cry, 'Hallelujah!' at what Christ has done for them. Can He do the same for me?" Listen! He that sits on the Throne says in infinite condescension to you upon the dunghill, "Behold, I make all things new." There is nothing so old that He cannot make it new—nothing so fixed and habitual that He cannot change it.

Do you not know, dear Heart, that the Spirit of God has regenerated men and women quite as far gone as you are? They have been as deeply sunken in sin and as hardened by habit as ever you can be and they thought themselves given up to despair, as you think yourself to be—yet the Spirit of God carried out the will of the Lord Christ and made them new! Why should He not make *you* new? Let every thief know that the dying thief entered Heaven by faith in Jesus! Let everyone that has been a great transgressor remember how Manasseh received a new heart and repented of his evil deeds! Let everyone who has left the paths of purity remember how the woman that was a sinner loved much, because much had been forgiven her! I cannot doubt the possibility of your salvation, my dear Friend, whenever I think of my own! A more determined, obstinate rebel than I, could scarcely have been!

Child as I was, and under holy restraint as I was, so as to be kept from gross outward sin, I had a powerful inner nature which would not brook control. I strove hard and kicked against the pricks. I labored to win Heaven by self-righteousness and this is as real a rebellion as open sin! But, oh, the Grace of God, how it can tame us! How it can turn us! With no bit or bridle, but with a blessed suavity of tenderness, it turns us according to its pleasure. O anxious one, it can turn *you*! I want, then, to drop into your ears—and may the Spirit of God drop into your hearts—this Word of God—you may be born again! The Lord can work a radical change in you! He that sits on the Throne of God can do for you what you cannot do for yourself! And, as He made you once and you became marred by sin, He can make you new, for He says, "Behold, I make all things new."

Furthermore, you will say to me, "I desire to lead *a new life*." To do this you must be new, yourself, for as the man is, so his life will be. If you leave the fountain foul, the streams cannot be pure. Renewal must begin with the heart. Dear Friend, the Lord Jesus Christ is able to make your life entirely new. We have seen many transformed into new parents and new children. Friends have said in wonder, "What a change in John! What an alteration in Ellen!" We have seen men become new husbands and women become new wives. They are the same persons and yet not the same. Grace works a very deep, striking and lasting change. Ask those who have had to live with converted people, whether the transformation

has not been marvelous! Christ makes new servants, new masters, new friends, new brothers, new sisters!

The Lord can so change us that we shall scarcely know ourselves—I mean He can thus change you who now despair of yourselves. O dear Hearts, there is no absolute necessity that you should always go downward in evil till you descend to Hell! There is a hand that can give you a gravitation in the opposite direction! It would be an amazing thing if Niagara, when it is in its full descent, should be made to leap upwards and the St. Lawrence and the sea should begin to climb backward to the lakes! Yet God could do even that—and He can so reverse the course of your fallen nature and make you act as a new man! He can stay the tide of your raging passion! He can make you, who were like a devil, become as an angel of God, for thus He speaks from the Throne of His eternal majesty, “Behold, I make all things new.” Come and lay yourself down at His feet and ask Him to make you new! I beseech you, do this at once!

“Well, I am going to mend myself,” says one. “I have taken the pledge and I am going to be honest, chaste and religious.” This is commendable resolving, but what will come of it? You will break your resolutions and be no better by your attempts at reform. I expect that if you go into the business of mending yourself, you will be like the man who had an old gun and took it to the gunsmith. The gunsmith said, “Well, this would make a very good gun if it had a new stock, a new lock and a new barrel.” So you would make a very good man by mending—if you had a new heart, a new life and were made new all over so that there was not a bit of the old stuff left! It will be a great deal easier, depend upon it, even for God to make you new, than to mend you! For the fact is that “the carnal mind is enmity against God” and is not reconciled to God, neither, indeed, can be—so that mending will not be the answer—you must be made anew. “You must be born again.” What is needed is that you should be made a new creature in Christ Jesus. You must be dead and buried with Christ. And you must be risen, again, in Him—and then all will be well, for He will have made all things new. I pray God to bless these feeble words of mine for the helping of some of His chosen out of the darkness of their fears.

But now, Beloved, farther than this. There are children of God who need this text, “Behold, I make all things new,” whose sigh is that they so soon grow dull and weary in the ways of God and, therefore, they need *daily renewing*. A Brother said to me some time ago, “Dear Sir, I frequently grow very sleepy in my walk with God. I seem to lose the freshness of it and, especially, by about Saturday I get to where I hardly know where. But,” he added, “as for you, whenever I hear you, you seem to be all alive and full of fresh energy.” “Ah, my dear Brother,” I said, “that is because you do not know much about me.” That was all I was able to say just then. I thank God for keeping me near Himself, but I am as weak, stale and unprofitable as any of you. I say this with very great shame—shame for myself and shame for the Brother who led me to make the confession.

We are both wrong. With all our fresh springs in God, we ought to be always full of new life. Our love to Christ ought to be, every minute, as if it

were new-born. Our zeal for God ought to be as fresh as if we had just begun to delight in Him. "Yes, but it is not," says one—and I am sorry I cannot contradict him. After a few months, a vigorous young Christian will begin to cool down—and those who have been long in the ways of God find that Final Perseverance must be a miracle if ever it is to be accomplished, for naturally they tire and faint!

Well, now, dear Friends, why do you and I get stale and flat? Why do we sing—

***"Dear Lord, and shall we always live
At this poor dying rate"?***

Why do we have to cry—

***"In vain we tune our formal songs,
In vain we strive to rise!
Hosannas languish on our tongues,
And our devotion dies"?***

Why, it is because we get away from Him who says, "Behold, I make all things new." The straight way to a perpetual newness and freshness of holy youth is to go to Christ, again, just as we did at the first!

A better thing, still, is never to leave Him, but to stand forever at the foot of the Cross delighting yourself in His all-sufficient Sacrifice. They that are full of the joy of the Lord never find life grows weary. They that walk in the light of His Countenance can say of the Lord Jesus, "You have the dew of Your youth." And that dew falls upon those who dwell with Him! Oh, I am sure that if we kept up perpetual communion with Him, we would keep up a perpetual stream of delights—

***"Immortal joys come streaming down,
Joys, like His griefs, immense, unknown,"***

but these joys only come from Him. We shall be young if we keep with the always young and fresh Beloved, whose locks are bushy and black as a raven! He says and He performs the saying, "Behold, I make all things new."

He can make that next sermon of yours, my dear Brother minister, quite new and interesting. He can make that Prayer Meeting no longer a dreary affair, but quite a new thing to you and all the people. My dear Sister, next time you go to your class, you may feel as if you had only just begun teaching! You will not be at all tired of your godly work, but love it better than ever. And you, my dear Brother, at the corner of the street where you are often interrupted, perhaps, with foul language—you will feel that you are pleased with your position of self-denial. Getting near to Christ, you will partake in His joy and that joy shall be your strength, your freshness—the newness of your life! God grant us to drink of the Eternal Fountain, that we may forever overflow!

And, further, dear Friends, there may be some dear child of God here who is conscious that he lives on a very low platform of spiritual life and he knows that the Lord can raise him to *a new condition*. Numbers of Christians seem to always live in the marshes. If you go through the valleys of Switzerland, you will find yourself get feverish and heavy in spirit—and you will see many idiots, persons with the goiter and people greatly afflicted. Climb the sides of the hills, ascend into the Alps—and you will

not meet with that kind of thing in the pure fresh air! Many Christians are of the sickly-valley breed. Oh that they could get up to the high mountains and be strong!

I want to say to such, if you have been, all your lifetime, in bondage, you need not remain there any longer, for there is, in Jesus, the power to make all things new and to lift you into new delights! It will seem to be a dead lift to you, but it is within the power of those pierced hands to lift you right out of doubt, fear, despondency, spiritual lethargy and weakness—and to make you now, from this day forward, “strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” Now breathe a silent prayer, dear Brother, dear Sister, to Him who makes all things new. “Lord, make Your poor, spiritually sick child to be strong in spiritual health.”

Oh, what a blessing it would be for some workers if God would make them strong! All the Church would be the better because of the way in which the Lord would help them to do their work. Why should some of you be living at a penny a day and starving yourselves, when Your Father would give you to live like princes of the blood royal if you would but trust Him? I am persuaded that the most of us are beggars when we might be millionaires in spiritual things! And here is our strength for rising to a nobler state of mind, “Behold I make all things new.”

Another application of this Truth of God will be this—“Oh,” says one, “I do not know what to make of myself. I have had a weary time of late. Everything seems to have gone wrong with me. My family causes me great anxiety. My business is a thorny maze. My own health is precarious. I dread this year! In fact, I dread everything.” We will not go on with that lamentation, but we will hear the cheering word—“Behold, I make all things new.” The Lord, in answer to believing prayer and especially in answer to a full resignation to His will, is able to make *all providential surroundings new for you*. I have known the Lord, on a sudden, to turn darkness into light and take away the sackcloth and the ashes from His dear children, for, “He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.”

Sometimes all this worry is mere discontent—and when the child of God gets right, himself, these imaginary troubles vanish like the mist of the morning! But when they are real troubles, God can as easily change your condition, dear child of God, as He can turn His hand! He can make your harsh and ungodly husband to become gentle and gracious! He can bring your children to bow at the family altar and to rejoice with you in Christ! He can cause Your business to prosper or, if He does not do that, He can strengthen your back to bear the burden of your daily cross. Oh, it is wonderful how different a thing becomes when it is taken to God! But you want to make it all new *yourself* and you fret and you worry. And you tease and you trouble and you make a burden of yourself. Why not leave that off and, in humble prayer, take the matter to the Lord and say, “Lord, appear for me, for You have said, ‘I make all things new.’ Make my circumstances new”? He is certainly able to turn your captivity as He turns the sun when it has reached the southern tropic.

Come, there is one more application and that is that *the Lord can convert those dear friends about whose souls you have been so anxious*. The

Lord who makes all things new can hear your prayers! One of the first prayers that I heard, to-night, in the Prayer Meeting, was by a dear Brother that God would save his relatives. Then another with great tenderness prayed for his children. I knew it came from an aching heart. Some of you have heart-breakers at home—may the Lord break *their* hearts! You have grievous trouble because you hear the dearest that you have blaspheming the God you love. You know that they are Sabbath-breakers and utterly godless—and you tremble for their eternal fate.

Certain persons attend this Tabernacle—I do not see them tonight—but I can say of them that I never enter this pulpit without looking to their pews to see whether they are there—and breathing my heart to God for them. I forget a great many of you who are saved, but I always pray for *them*. And they will be brought in, I feel sure, but, oh, that it may be this year! I liked what a Brother said at the Church Meeting on Monday night, when his brother was introduced to the church. (Ah, there he sits). I asked about his brother's conversion and I said, "I suppose you were surprised to see him converted." He said, "I would have been very much surprised if he had *not* been." "But why, my dear Brother?" I asked. "Because I asked the Lord to convert him and I kept on praying that he might be converted—and I would have been very much surprised if he had not been."

That is the right sort of faith! I would be very much surprised if some of you that come here, time after time, are not converted! You shall be, blessed be God! We will give Him no rest until He hears us. But come! Are we to be praying for you and you not praying for yourselves? Do you not agree with our prayers? Oh, I trust you may! But, even if you do not, we will pray for you! And if we were sure that you opposed our intercessions—and were even angry with them—we would pray all the more, for we mean to have you won for Jesus, by the Grace of God, and you may as well come soon as late! We are bound to have you in the Church, confessing your faith in Jesus!

We will never let you go! Neither will we cease from our importunate prayers until we get an answer from the Throne of God and see you saved! Oh that you would yield on this first night of the year to Him who can make new creatures of you! God grant you may! The Lord answer our prayer, now, for Jesus' sake, for we seek the salvation of every hearer and every reader of this sermon! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Psalm 103.*
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—183, 1,035, 208.**

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A NEW CREATION

NO. 3467

**A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 15, 1915.**

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

***“He who sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new.”
Revelation 21:5.***

Men generally venerate antiquity. It were hard to say which has the stronger power over the human mind—antiquity or novelty. While men will frequently dote upon the old, they are most easily dazzled by the new. Anything new has at least one attraction. Restless spirits consider that the new must be better than the old. Though often disappointed, they are still ready to be caught by the same bait and, like the Athenians of Mars Hill, spend their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing. And as for ourselves, dear Friends, as we sometimes mournfully think of the flight of time, we are known to cheerfully look out upon the new epochs as they begin to dawn upon us. If our calendar suggests some dismal memories in the past, our calculation predicts some happier prospects in the future! And it will sometimes happen that we leave so much anxiety, adversity and chastisement behind us, that it is a relief to hope that the tide has turned, and that a course of comfort, prosperity and mercy lies before us. One weeps over the past and the lost. I suppose the best of men must do so at times. I am sure those of us who are not the best, feel often constrained to pour out some such a lamentation as this—

***“Much of our time has run to waste—
Our sins, how great the sum!
Lord, give us pardon for the past
And strength for days to come.”***

I do not know but it is sometimes as well, when one has been plunged in sorrow, or feels ashamed of his past life—after having regretted that which is bygone and repented of it, and over it—to feel as if he breathed another atmosphere and had started on a fresh career. Having thrown away the old sword, he is now about to see what he can do with the new. Having put off an old garment, he is desirous to walk more worthily of his vocation with fresh ones that are provided for him. Perhaps the thought of freshness, the fact of new times having dawned on our path, may be a little help to those of us who are dull and heavy. And we may be stirred up to action, or, if not to action, it may awaken earnest hope that the infusion of a new start into our lives, new vigor instead of the old lethargy, new love instead of the old lukewarmness, new zeal instead of

the old death-likeness—new, pertinacious, persevering industry for Christ instead of the old idleness, may result. God grant that it may be so!

Looking at the text in this light, I think it speaks to everyone here present. Would you begin anew, lo, there is One who can help you to do so! From the Throne of God where sits the once Crucified but now Glorified Savior, there comes a whisper of hope to each and every soul who would be made new and would begin life anew. “Behold I make all things new.” In trying to bring out the thoughts contained in this exclamation from the Throne—from the Emperor of the Universe, from the court of the King of Kings—we shall first speak, very briefly, *of the new creation*. Secondly, we *should bid you adore the great Regenerator*. And, in the third place, we shall ask you *to behold with attention, the fact before you, with a view of receiving benefit from it*. Observe the text speaks of—

I. A NEW CREATION.

“I *make*.” That is a Divine Word. “I make *all things*.” That, also, is Divine. “I make all things *new*.” That seems to reach the third stage, wherein the thrice holy God appears glorious in the highest degree! “I make all things new.” This our Lord Jesus Christ has done upon the greatest scale! We must view His purpose. It is the purpose and intention of the Lord Jesus to make this world entirely new. You recollect how it was made at first—pure and perfect. It sang with its sister spheres the song of joy and reverence. It was a fair world, full of everything that was lovely, beautiful, happy, holy. And if we might be permitted to dream for a moment of what it would have been if it had continued as God created it, one might fancy what a blessed world it would be at this moment! Had it possessed a teeming population like its present one, and if, one by one, those godly ones had been caught away, like Elijah, without knowing death, to be succeeded by pious descendants—oh, what a blessed world it would have been! A world where every man would have been a priest and every house a temple, and every garment a vestment, and every meal a sacrifice, and every place holiness to the Lord, for the Tabernacle of God would have been among them and God, Himself, would have dwelt among them! What songs would have hailed the rising of the sun—the birds of paradise caroling on every hill and in every dale their Maker’s praise! What songs would have ushered in the stillness of the night! Yes, and angels, hovering over this fair world, would oft have heard the strain of joy breaking the silence of midnight, as glad and pure hearts beheld the eyes of the Creator beaming down upon them from the stars which stud the vault of Heaven!

But there came a serpent and his craft spoiled it all. He whispered into the ears of Mother Eve—she fell, and we fell with her—and what a world this now is! If a man walks about in it with his eyes open, he will see it to be a horrible sphere. I do not mean that its rivers, its lakes, its valleys, its mountains are repulsive. No, it is a world fit for angels, naturally, but it is a horrible world *morally*! As I walked the other day down the streets of Paris and saw the soldiers with their pretty dresses—and the knives and forks which they carried with them to carve men and make a meal

for death—I could not help thinking this is a pretty world, this is. Only let one man lift his finger and a hundred thousand men are ready to meet a hundred thousand other men, all intent upon doing—what? Why, upon cutting each other’s throats! Upon tearing out each other’s bleeding hearts and wading up to their knees in each other’s gore till the ditches are full of blood, horses and men all mingled, and left to be food for dogs and for carrion crows! And then the victors on either side in the fray, return, beat the drums and sound the trumpets and say, “Glory! Glory! Look what we have done!” Devils could not be worse than men when their passions are let loose. Dogs would scarcely tear each other as men do. Men of intellect sit down and put their fingers to their foreheads, racking their brains to find out new ways of using gunpowder, and shot, and shell—so as to be able to blow twenty thousand souls into eternity as easily as 20 might be massacred by present appliances! And he is considered a clever man, a patriot, a benefactor of his own nation, who, by dint of genius, can discover some new way of destroying his fellow creatures. Oh, it is a horrible world, appalling to think of! When God looks at it, I wonder why He does not stamp it out, just as you and I do a spark of coal that flies upon our carpet from the fire! It is a dreadful world.

But Jesus Christ, who knew that we would never make this world much better, let us do what we would with it. He designed from the very first to make a new world of it. Truly, truly, this seems to me to be a glorious purpose! To make a world is something wonderful, but to make a world new is something more wonderful still! When God spoke and said, “Let there be light,” it was a fiat which showed Him to be Divine. Yet there was nothing, then, to resist His will. He had no opponent—He could build as He pleased and there were none to pluck down. But when Jesus Christ comes to make a new world, there is everything opposed to Him. When He says, “Let there be light,” Darkness says, “There shall not be light.” When He says, “Let there be order,” Chaos says, “No, I will maintain confusion.” When He says, “Let there be holiness, let there be love, let there be truth,” the principalities and powers of evil withstand Him and say, “There shall not be holiness, there shall be sin! There shall not be love, there shall be hate! There shall not be truth, there shall be error! There shall not be the worship of God, there shall be the worship of sticks and stones—men shall bow down before idols which their own hands have made!”

And yet, for all that, Jesus Christ, coming in the form of a Man, revealing Himself as the Son of God, determines to make all things new! And be assured, Brothers and Sisters, He will do it! Though He pleases to take His time and to use humble instrumentalities to effect His purposes, yet do it He will! The day shall come when this world shall be as fair as it was at the primeval Sabbath. When there shall be a new Heaven and a new Earth, wherein shall dwell righteousness. The ancient prophecy shall be fulfilled to the letter! God shall dwell among men. Peace shall be domiciled on earth and Glory shall be ascribed to God in the highest!

This great work of Christ, this grand design of making this old world into a new one shall be carried into effect!

In order to accomplish this, it has come to pass that *Christ has made for us a New Covenant*. The Old Covenant was, “Do this and live.” That Covenant was a sentence of death upon us all. We could not do, therefore we could not live, and so we died. The New Covenant has nothing in it contingent upon creature-doing, but it bases all its provisions upon Christ having done the work! “I will, and you shall,” this is the language of the New Covenant? The Covenant of Law, in which we were weak through the flesh, left us mangled and broken. The Covenant of Grace reveals God’s kindness towards us and our part, thereof, has been fulfilled for us by our Surety, Christ Jesus. Thus it runs, “Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more forever; a new heart also will I give them, and a right spirit will I put within them.” The old world is still under the old Covenant of Works and its children perish, for they cannot carry out the conditions of the Covenant—they cannot keep God’s Law—they break it constantly, and they die. But the children of Grace are under the New Covenant of Grace, and through the precious blood, which is the penalty of the old broken Covenant, and through the spotless righteousness of Christ, which is the fulfillment and magnifying of the old Covenant, the Christian stands secure and rejoices that he is saved! Christ has thus made His people dwell under a New Covenant, instead of under the old one.

In addition to the New Covenant, Christ has been pleased *to make us new men*. His saints are “new creatures in Christ Jesus.” They have a new nature! God has breathed into them a new life. The Holy Spirit, though the old nature is still there, has been pleased to put within them a new nature. There is now a contending force within them—the old carnal nature inclining to evil and the new God-given nature panting after perfection. They are new men, “begotten again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” This new nature is moved by new principles. The old nature needed to be awed with threats, or bribed with rewards—the new nature feels the impulse of love! Gratitude is its mainspring—“We love Him because He first loved us.” No mercenary motive now stirs the new creature—

**“My God, I love You not because
I hope for Heaven thereby,
Nor yet because who love You not
Must burn eternally.”**

I love You, O my Savior, because on the Cross You did bear shame, and spitting, and manifold disgrace for me. New principles stir the new nature which God has given! And this new nature is conscious of new emotions. It loves what once it hated—it hates what once it loved. It finds blight where once it sought for bliss, and finds bliss where once it found nothing but bitterness. It leaps at the sound which was once dull to its ears—the name of a precious Christ! It rejoices in hopes which once seemed idle as dreams. It is filled with a Divine enthusiasm which it once rejected as fanatical! It is now conscious of living in a new element,

breathing a fresh air, partaking of new food, drinking out of new wells not dug by men or filled from the earth. The man is new—new in principles and new in emotions!

And now the man is also *new in relationship*. He was an heir to wrath—he is now a child of God. He was a bond-slave—he is now a free man. He was the Ishmael who dwelt in the wilderness—he is now the Isaac, and dwells with Sarah after the tenor of the New Covenant. He rejoices in Christ Jesus and feasts to the full! He was once the citizen of earth—he is now a citizen of Heaven. He once found his all beneath the clouds, but now his all is beyond the stars! He has new relationships. Christ is his Brother. God is his Father. The angels are his friends and the despised people of God are his best and nearest kinsfolk! And therefore the man has new aspirations. He now pants to glorify God! What cared he about the glory of God once? He now pants to see God—once he would have paid the fare, if it had cost his life, that he might escape from the Presence of the Lord! Now he hungers and thirsts after the living God. Yes, if his soul had wings, and he could break the fetters of this mortality, he would mount at once to dwell where Jesus is! Dear Friends, are you new men and women? If you are, you understand what it is. If you are not, I know I cannot explain it to you. Oh, to be born-again is a great mystery! Blessed is the soul that comprehends it! But he that knows it not will never learn it by the lips—he can only know it by the Spirit of God causing him to also be made a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Thus far I have said that the objective of Christ was to make a new world, and He began by making a New Covenant. Then, through His Spirit, He goes on to make new men under the New Covenant, and you will see that by this means *He makes a new society*. Swelling words have been spoken and great attempts taken in hand to renovate society, but you can never renovate society till you have renovated the individual members who compose society! You may build a brick house, if you please, but, build it as you like, it will be a house of brick upon whatever principles of architecture it may be constructed! Not until that brick shall be transformed to marble can you hope to “dwell in marble halls.” So men may launch their divers theories and patent their social inventions, but after they have reshaped the society of sinners, it will still be a sinful society! It is otherwise with Christ. By making new men, He makes a new society, which society He calls His “Church.” That Church He sends into the world to act upon the rest of mankind. Verily, the day will come—whether it shall be at His Second Advent or before His Second Advent, I do not know—the day will come when, from the east to the west, and from the north to the south, there shall be a new world as far as men are concerned! There shall be no injustice towards the poor. There shall be no envying of the rich. There shall be no law to make men slaves. There shall be no power to oppress because there shall be no will to do it! Our Lord Jesus Christ shall put a new heart into earth’s kings and then He

shall come Himself to take their thrones and their crowns, and to be, Himself, our Universal King, and in His day shall the righteous flourish!

Now I believe the way for us to regard that happy day in which He will make all things new—that happy day when the lion shall eat straw like the ox and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, when the sword shall be turned into the sickle, and the spear into the pruning hook—the way for us to regard that day, I think, is not standing with our mouths open expecting it, but by setting to work after the Master's own fashion, seeking to bring it about! To gather out the elect from mankind, to illustrate the Gospel practically in our lives and so to do as Jesus did among the sons of men—promoting light, and peace, and truth, and holiness and happiness as God may help us!

I wish we had more time to enter fully into this part of the subject. We have not and, therefore, we must leave it, but may you and I have a part in this new creation! Turning to our second point, I want you to—

II. ADORE THIS GREAT REGENERATOR.

He says, "Behold I make all things new." Behold Him! He is a Man dressed in the common garments of the poor! He has no form nor comeliness and when you shall see Him there is no beauty in Him that you should desire Him. He has come to make the world new. He has no soldiery, no book of laws, no new philosophy. He has come to make the world new and to do this He has brought with Him—what? Why, *Himself*! He spends a life of weariness and sorrow among those who despise Him—and if you want to know first and foremost how He makes all things new, you must see Him sweating great drops of blood in the Garden—that is the blood of the new world which He is pouring forth! You must see Him bound, scourged, spat upon, led to the accursed tree! While God's wrath for sin is yet unspent, the world cannot be new, but when that wrath on account of sin is all poured upon the head of the great Substitute, then the world stands in a new relation to God and it can be a new world! See the Savior, then, in groans and pangs which cannot be described, bearing the curse of God, for He made Him to be sin for us, though He knew no sin. The curse fell on Him, as it is written, "Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree." It pleased the Father to bruise Him. He has put Him to grief. He has made His soul to be an offering for sin." That dolorous pain, then, of the Master, was the world's new-making! It was then and there that the world was born-again. No mother's pangs, when she brought forth a man-child, were such as those of Christ when He brought forth the new creation! It was there in the travail of His soul—did you ever catch that idea, "the travail of His soul"?—it was there that the new world was born! "Behold I make all things new" is a mysterious voice from the broken heart of a dying Savior! From the empty tomb, as He rises, I hear it come in silvery notes, "Behold I make all things new." You must trace the birth of the New Creation up to the grave of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the place where the Cross stood and where His body lay.

But the actual operations of new-making the world takes place *through the truth which Christ promulgated*. After the relation of the world to God had been changed by the sufferings of Jesus, the world's thought concerning God came to be changed by the preaching of Jesus. He came and revealed God to man as man had never before seen God. It was through Him we learned that "God is Love." It was through Him that we understood that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It is the preaching of the Cross of Jesus that is to make the world new! It is not the philosophies of men, but the Wisdom of God which effects the change! In the Presence of Christ your philosophies must sink into darkness as stars in the presence of the sun!

And it is also *by the giving of the Holy Spirit*, as the result of the Ascension of Christ on high, that the world is made new. Thus He gives power to the ministry. There were 3,000 new creations in one day when Peter preached the Gospel under the influence of the Holy Spirit! And that blessed Spirit of God is here tonight! Oh, I would that there might be some new creations tonight—that that Divine heavenly Spirit would come into some of your souls and drop there that vital spark of heavenly flame which shall never be quenched, but shall burn brightly in Heaven forever! Wherever the Gospel is preached, the Spirit is present in that Gospel, and He gives faith to men, gives life to men, and so they are made new and the new-making thus goes on! I have not time—though thoughts crowd into my mind—to speak about the way in which Christ thus new-makes the world. It is quite certain that three parts of His history are connected with it. I have only referred to His death, His burial and His Resurrection, but I might go on to speak of His constant and prevalent intercessions, for His pleading before the Throne of God is also a part of the mighty operation! Nor can I doubt but that His Second Advent will be the bringing out of the top stone with shouts of, "Grace, Grace unto it!" Then shall be fulfilled—finally and exhaustively fulfilled—the saying that is written, "Behold I make all things new." The text begins with, "Behold!" and I am going to close with that same note of admiration. I want you to—

III. BEHOLD AND TO BELIEVE.

Behold the Lord Jesus is now enthroned in Heaven! He it is who makes all things new. Is not this what some of you here present deeply need? If you look within yourselves, you will see much to disgust and alarm you. Perhaps you dare not take stock of yourselves—you dare not consider where you are, nor what you are, nor where you are bound. "To speak candidly," you say, "I need reforming." Very likely, but you need a great deal more than mere reformation! I have heard of a being who habitually used to swear, "God mend me!" Somebody said, "Better make a new one." That is the case with full many of you. You are saying, "Well, I will turn over a new leaf." You had better shut the book up, altogether, and never turn over any more leaves, for all the pages are alike bad! "Oh, well," says one, "I shall try if I cannot alter." I wish you would try God's

altering of you, instead of altering yourselves. “Well, but surely, surely, I may wash and be clean! I will try to make myself as clean as possible!” Yes, yes, that is all very well—but what if you have a corpse in the house? I would have you make it clean, yet that will not make it live! However much you may wash it, it is still corrupt. You may reform yourselves as much as ever you please—all your reformation will be futile—you need more, a great deal more than that! The fact is, you must be made new! Nothing less will do! You must be made new! You must be born-again!

“Ah!” says one, “if I could be made new, there might be a chance for me.” Well now, Christ looks down from His Throne in Heaven and He says, “Behold I will make all things new.” “Yes,” you say, “but He will not make *me* new.” Why not? Does He not say, “*I make all things new*”? “But my heart is as hard as a rock,” you say. Well, but He says, “I will make all things new,” so He can give you a new heart! “Oh, but I am so very stubborn.” Yes, yes, but He makes all things new, and He can make you as tender and sensitive as a little child! Oftentimes a gray-headed sinner has looked back to his childhood and remembered the time when he used to sing his little hymn at his mother’s knee—and he has said, “Ah! I have been in many strange places since then, and my heart has got seared and hard! I wish I could get back to what I was then!” Well, you can, you can! Christ can bring you there! No, He can bring you to something *better than you ever were when those golden ringlets hung so plentifully about that pretty little head of yours*, for you were not so innocent, then, as you now think you were! Christ can make you really pure in heart. He can make you a new creature, so that you shall be converted and become as a little child. “Oh,” you say, “how can I get it? How can I prepare myself for Him?” You do not need to prepare yourself for Him! Go to Him just as you are—trust Him to do it and He will do it! That is faith, you know—trust, dependence. Can you believe that Christ can save you? Oh, can you believe that? Well now, will you try Him to save you? Will you trust Him to deliver you from your drunkenness, from your angry temper, your pride, your love of self, your lusts? Do you desire to be a new creature in Christ Jesus? If so, that very desire must have come from Heaven! I hope that He has already begun the good work in you and He that begins it will carry it on. Do not be afraid, however bad your character, or however vicious your disposition. “Behold,” says Christ, “I make all things new.”

What a wonder it is that a man should ever hate a new heart! You know if a lobster loses its claw in a fight, it can grow a new claw—and that is thought to be very marvelous. It would be very wonderful if men would be able to grow new arms and new legs, but who ever heard of a creature who grew a new heart? You may have seen a branch lopped off a tree, and you may have thought that, perhaps, the tree will sprout again, and there will be a new limb, but who ever heard of old trees getting new sap and a new core? But my Lord and Master, the Crucified and exalted Savior, has given new hearts and new cores! He has put the vital

substance into men afresh and made new creatures of them! I am glad to notice the tears in your eyes when you think on the past—but wipe them away, now, and look up to the Cross and say—

***Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Your blood was shed for me,
And that You bid me come to Thee,
O Lamb, O God, I come.***

“Oh, make me a new creature!” If you have said that from your heart, you are a new creature, dear Brother or Sister, and we will rejoice together in this regenerating Savior!

Let me just say a few words to those of you who love the Lord. You may have some very bad children, or you may have some relatives who are going on in sin from bad to worse. I earnestly recommend you attentively consider my text. “Behold,” says Christ, “I make all things new.” “No, no,” says the old father, “I used to pray for my boy. He broke my heart. He brought his mother’s gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. But he has gone away and I have not heard from him for years—and I am almost afraid to wish I ever hear from him again—for did seemed so reckless that my only comfort is in trying to forget him.” “Yes,” says a husband here, “I have prayed for my wife so many times that I feel tempted to give it up—it is not likely that I shall ever live to see her saved.” Oh, but, Brothers and Sisters, we do not know! Since the Lord saved *us*, there cannot be any limits as to what He can do! Look at the text, “Behold I make all things new.” I will pray, “Lord, make my children new.” You shall pray, “Lord, make my wife new.” You godly wives who have ungodly husbands, you shall pray, “Lord, make our husbands new.” You who have dear friends who lie upon your bosom, as you anxiously think of them, pray the Lord Jesus to make them new! When our friends are made new, ah, what a great comfort they are—just as much so as they formerly were a sorrow. The greater the sinner, the greater the joy to loving Believers when they see him saved! “Behold,” says Christ—I do like that word—“Behold it! Stand and look at it! See how I took the man when he was up to his neck in sin and made him preach the Gospel! Can I not do the same again? Look there and see the dying thief upon the cross, black with a thousand crimes—I washed him and took him to Paradise the same day! What can I not do? Behold I make all things new.”

Courage, my Brothers and Sisters. We will not entertain any more doubt about Christ’s power to save! Rather, by God’s Grace, may we henceforth believe more in Him and, according, to our faith, so shall it be done unto us. If we can only trust Him for those of our friends whose faults seem to us few and light, our little trust will reap little reward. But if we can go with strong faith in a great God, and bring great sinners in our arms and put them down before this mighty Regenerator of men and say, “Lord, if You will, You can make them new”—and if we will never cease the pleading till we get the blessing, then we shall see ever-accumulating illustrations of the fact that Jesus makes all things new—and calling up the witnesses of His redeeming power, we shall cry in the

ears of a drowsy Church and an incredulous world, “Behold, behold, behold! He makes all things new.” The Lord give us to see it! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
REVELATION 1:1-14.**

Verse 1. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John.* Twice is that title used—“servant.” This is a revelation to Christ’s servants, made first unto His servant, John. There is no higher honor under Heaven than to be the servant of such a Master. His servants we are this day, and we find in that service perfect freedom and the highest imaginable delight. This, then is to us.

2-3. *Who bore record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that reads and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.* It is not said, “Blessed is he that understands the Book of Revelation,” or else I am afraid very few would come in for that benediction, but, “Blessed is he that reads and they that hear,” for it is a blessed thing to hear our Father speaking, even when we cannot understand it. When you were a little child, how did you learn to understand your father but by at first hearing him say a great deal which was far above you and out of your reach? I love to read those parts of God’s Word which I cannot yet understand, because I remember there are some parts which I do understand, now, which I did not once—and it was by reading them, hearing them and thinking of them, that gradually light broke into my soul! Why, then, should I not go on reading this Book of Revelation, though as yet I may be able to sustain no theory about it, may not as yet, indeed, understand it? But notice this. The Doctrine of this Book is practical after all. I think this Book has been trailed in the mire by being used as a sort of astrologer’s book to tell us about the future, instead of being used practically to humble us before God, and to teach us to lean upon eternal wisdom, which knows all things from the beginning. Oh, that we might more practically use the Doctrine of the Second Advent than has generally been done—not to speculate upon it—but to be warned by it to be on the watch for the coming of the Lord!

4. *John to the seven churches, which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come.* Is not this the Father, Jehovah, the I AM, who lives in all tenses and fills all time?

4. *And from the seven Spirits which are before His throne.* Are not these the symbols of the Holy Spirit, whose varied and perfect work are seen today among men, not only on the Throne of God, but before the Throne, working in the midst of the people of God?

5. *And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness.* Telling us the Truth of God and only the Truth—the Witness to be relied upon, deserving of our faith.

5, 6. *And the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth; unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood. And that made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

7. *Behold.* Regard it attentively. Think of it, and meditate upon it.

7. *Behold, He comes with clouds.* This is a grand Doctrine which should never be kept in the background! The Scriptures are not fully to be understood, except with this addition—they are not, indeed, complete unless we understand that there is something yet to come. The Old Testament without the first coming of Christ is a riddle without a key—and the New Testament without the Second Coming of Christ is somewhat in the same condition.

7. *Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him.* Your eyes, dear Friend, and mine. “Every eye shall see Him.” Whatever in the future we shall not see, we shall see Him! We may depend upon that. “And they also which pierced Him.” What a sight it will be for them—not only for those Romans and Jews who actually put Him to death, but for all of us who by our sins have pierced Him, by our evil words, our backslidings, have put Him to shame!

7. *And they also which pierced Him: and all the tribes of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.* It is certain—here is the seal, the great Divine Affirmative put to this—“Even so, Amen.”

8, 9. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, says the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.* Being there for having preached the Gospel—no doubt sent there as a punishment that that eloquent tongue also might, for a while, be silenced, and that his loving precepts might not so build up the Church. “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s-Day”—the first day of the week, especially set apart for the Lord’s worship. Notice that John observed this day. Though he was on a desert island, though he was far away from all Christian companionship, yet he took care to spend that day in worship, to draw near to God! Let us, then, never make excuses when we are travelling, and when we are away for purposes of recreation. The Lord’s-Day is as much the Lord’s-Day to us in one part of the world as another, and let us take care that we get the advantage of it. He has fenced it about on purpose for our benefit. It is not a day of bondage, but a day of holy joy and rest. Let us not miss the blessings which are so ripe this day. “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s-Day”—that is the Spirit of God came upon him, gave him to understand, and see, and feel spiritual things. Oh, that this might be the condition of all God’s people here this morning!

10. *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's-Day, and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet. Clear, shrill, musical.*

11. *Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and what you see, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia: unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.* There were Churches in each of these places. It is not the custom of the Holy Spirit to talk of the Church of England, but He would speak of the Church in London, the Church in Birmingham, the Church in Newcastle. These are each separate and distinct, independent Churches, though they are one in Christ Jesus—yes, each Church is, in itself, complete and entire if it is ordered according to the mind of the Holy Spirit.

12. *And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me.* Very naturally. When we hear a voice, we like to see the person from whom the voice comes. Hence I believe the reason why we often like the portrait of the preacher, and it is not, after all, anything more than an innocent infirmity that a man should wish to see the face of him who has spoken to him.

12. *And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks.* Or candelabra or lamp stands. Not, as you get in the Old Testament, one great seven-branched golden candlestick, but seven *distinct* candelabra, for these Churches are separate and entire, each Church in its own individuality.

13. *And in the midst of the seven candlesticks One like unto the Son of Man.* Or probably unto a son of man—like unto a man, for, notwithstanding all the majesty, the Person was that of a Man, and we are never to forget that, glorious as is the Godhead of Christ, and majestic as He is in all His sublime offices, yet, nevertheless, He most surely is Man—a very sweet consoling thought.

13. *Clothed with a garment down to the feet.*

**“Oh, joy! There sits in our flesh,
Upon a throne of light,
One of a human mother born,
In perfect Godhead bright.”**

13. *And girt about the chest with a golden band.* A royal robe. A band all decked and adorned with jewelry.

14. *His head and His hair were white like wool, as white as snow.* For He is the Ancient of Days, and all the wisdom that is supposed to belong to gray hair is with Him.

14. *And His eyes were as a flame of fire.* Discerning, burning into everything.

—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.**

GOOD NEWS FOR THIRSTY SOULS

NO. 1549

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JULY 4, 1880,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“I will give unto him that is thirsty of the
fountain of the water of life freely.”
Revelation 21:6.***

SALVATION is no small thing. It filled the heart and hands of the Son of God and, therefore, it ought not to be neglected by us. The precious promise before us concerns the gift of eternal salvation and it is set forth as the personal Word of the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself. The Apostle is very careful to make this clear, for he inserts the words, “And He said unto me,” as if John knew that poor, troubled hearts might doubt so large a promise were they not assured that Jesus, Himself, had expressly given it. John is a faithful and true witness. In this, as in another case, he could have written, “He knows what He says is true.” He declares to us that He who is Alpha and Omega, Himself, gave to him this word of promise. So especially careful was our Lord that the Gospel of Grace should be published correctly and without fail, that He delivered it, Himself, to John and also said to him, “Write: for these words are true and faithful.”

Not content with committing the message in words to the Apostle, He charges him, then and there, to put it down in black and white that it might never be forgotten. Thus He proved that He assuredly meant what He said and meant that it should stand good through all ages—“I will give unto him that is thirsty of the fountain of the water of life freely.” It is to be noticed, too, that our Lord spoke these words as a King—“He that sat upon the Throne said, Behold, I make all things new,” and then He added, “I will give unto him that is thirsty of the fountain of the water of life freely.” Divine Sovereignty, therefore, is not opposed to the most generous promises of the Gospel! Jesus Christ may give or withhold as He pleases—but His will is to give.

He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy and He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion, but the stern truth of His infinite Sovereignty is coupled with the sweet declaration of boundless charity—“I will give unto him that is thirsty of the fountain of the water of life freely.” However much we preach the Doctrines of Election and Divine Sovereignty, we never intend to limit the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, but as freely as if we had not believed in Sovereignty to publish our Lord's generous Gospel words, “Him that comes unto Me I will in no wise cast out.” Again, the doctrine that salvation in us as well as for us is entirely the work of God, is not opposed to the most open invitation to come to Christ, for the verse out of which we have culled our text begins thus—“I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End,” that is to say, “I am

the Founder and Finisher of salvation. I am the A and the Z of all life in the soul.”

This being accepted as the sure Truth of God, we may not, therefore, conclude that we are to be *inactive* till some miraculous work is worked upon us, for the promise is as true as the doctrine and it suggests immediate reception of Christ. “I will give to him that is thirsty of the fountain of the water of life freely,” is an invitation to *drink* and it will be wise on our parts to accept it at once and drink to the fullest! There is a splendid preface to this promise in the three words, “It is done.” This, indeed, is the reason why Grace can be so freely given! When our blessed Lord had completed His work on the Cross, He cried, “It is finished,” or, “It is done,” and then the living stream flowed freely for the sons of men! Then was the rock riven with rivers! Then was the stone rolled away from the well’s mouth! Then was the water of life made to gush from under the altar to refresh a barren world with its ever-deepening flood!

When this world’s history is over—when the entire program of Christ’s mediatorial work shall have been worked out and this dispensation shall have come to an end—then our Lord, from His Throne, shall say, “It is done,” and this shall be sung to His Glory, that He freely gave to thirsty souls of the fountain of the water of life! I am most happy to have such a text to preach from! I pray the Lord to bless every word that shall be spoken and that every one of you—from those in the uppermost gallery, to those who crowd the far corners of the area—may you ALL come, this morning, to the celestial spring and drink and thirst no more! You have drank, some of you, many times—come again and take draughts large and deep, for the fountain is as full as ever!

Some of you, spiritually, may be like those described by Coleridge—“With throats unslaked, with black lips baked.” Your tongue cleaves to the roof of your mouth with faintness and anguish. You are burning with a strong desire and pressed with an urgent need. Come! Come and welcome! Hasten even before we enter into the sermon—drink from the life-giving fountain while we linger in the porch of these prefatory sentences! The words of the redeeming Lord invite you to partake of Grace at once! O Holy Spirit, apply them with power to every heart!

There will be two heads of discourse at this time. The first is explanation and the second is encouragement.

I. The first is EXPLANATION. We shall only mention a few very simple Truths of God. The first is that all souls, by nature, are in great and dire need. Our Lord here speaks of those who are “thirsty,” and thirst is the index of one of our most pressing necessities. Many things we think we need and yet we live without them. But the need of which thirst is the expression is a very urgent one, involving the loss of all comfort and even of life, itself, if it is not supplied. A traveler who had experienced both hunger and thirst said, “Hunger you may palliate, but thirst is awful.” He meant much by saying, “thirst is awful.” There is no forgetting this pain and no stopping it except by drinking. When thirst swoops down upon a man from out of a burning sky, whether he wanders upon an ocean of sand or brine, it is a woeful day for him.

Has Hell, itself, worse misery than to ask in vain for a drop of water to cool one's tongue? The imagination of the ancients pictured Tantalus as thirsty and mocked by water up to the chin which fled from him as he stooped. The pain of thirst is keen to the last degree and the desire to drink is intense beyond imagination. Need of water is a terrible need, but the need of Divine Grace is even more dreadful! And such is the need of all our race. Every man, by nature, needs Grace. He does not always know what he needs and, indeed, many are so insensible that they do not feel their *soul's* necessities—yet those necessities are none the less urgent! There is a void within men which the whole world cannot fill. The experiment of filling the heart with the world has been tried and it has failed!

Alexander the Great, when he had conquered the known world, sat down and wept because there was not another world to conquer. Insatiable is the heart of man—you might as soon fill the bottomless pit. As the horseleech cries, "Give, give, give," even so does man's ravenous desire! If his soul's thirst is not relieved, man must die as surely as though slain by the sword. To die of thirst is one of the most dreadful of deaths—may none of you perish with spiritual thirst. Dear Souls, you need a Savior! You need the pardon of your sins! You need to be made anew in Christ Jesus and, whether you know it or not, if you do not get these things you will die in your sins and, therefore, die *eternally*, which is the second death. If this thirst is not quenched, you are in a desperate plight, indeed, for there is nothing before you but "a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation."

Some persons begin to be conscious of their soul's great need and these are they of whom the Savior speaks as "thirsty"—they have a dreadful need and they know it, by His Grace. I sometimes meet with enquirers who, when they are invited to believe in Jesus, reply, "I do not feel my need enough. I wish to take the living water, but I am not thirsty enough." I would have you know that frequently those are the most thirsty who thirst to thirst. If I know that I have a thirst, I at least have something! But if I am fearful that I do not even thirst, then my thirsting to thirst is a deeper thirst than thirst itself. I speak this way because of the infirmity of trembling hearts. Permit me to put this before you again.

You complain that you have so hard a heart that you do not even feel it to be hard—this fact is a clear proof that yours is an especially hard heart and just so when you cry, "I desire to desire," it is clear that you have an especially strong desire. Besides, let me remind you that no man living knows to the fullest his own need of a Savior. I suppose if we could altogether see our desperate condition by nature, or know to the full the heinousness of sin, we would become mad! Do not, therefore, ask to feel your need above measure, but thank God that you know your necessity enough as to apply to Jesus for His gracious supplies. Come and drink! Come and drink at the flowing fountain of love! For if you drink, you shall live! But a mere *sense* of need will not afford you relief.

Remember, also, that certain pains which are supposed to be a part of spiritual thirst are not necessarily connected with it. When a man is seeking Christ, it often happens that the devil comes in and suggests all man-

ner of blasphemies and despairing thoughts. Do not be so foolish as to conclude that you are not thirsting after Christ because you have happily been free from these diabolical insinuations. They are not the work of the Spirit of God—they are malicious inventions of the devil and you are infinitely better without them than with them! I have heard of a convert who was years before he could trust the Savior because he thought himself to be so great a sinner that the Lord could not possibly save him. Do not imitate so bad an example! Unbelieving thoughts are no part of thirsting after Christ and they are not to be desired, but dreaded.

Be very thankful if you can get to the Lord Jesus easily—it is a choice privilege. You know that you need Christ. You are sure that Christ can supply your need—therefore come and take Him without doubt or questions! Simple unquestioning faith is the very best way to come to Jesus, for it gives us speedy comfort and yields to our Lord great honor. People are very foolish when they look upon the diseases of Christians as if they were beauties. Young children have a great many little complaints before they grow up to be men. I need not mention them—every mother knows what a succession of troubles visit a large family. But suppose you knew one who had escaped these infantine disorders—what would you think of him if he were to murmur, “I don’t think I can have been born! I don’t think I can have life, for I never felt those complaints of infancy which other people speak of”? You would say, “You silly man, you ought to be glad that you had such a healthy childhood.”

Diseases are, in a measure, marks of life, for we may be sure that the dead do not suffer from them—but they are not necessary as proofs of vitality! Neither are doubts, despondencies and despairs at all necessary as tokens of regeneration. Do you need Christ? Do you desire Him? Do you seek Him? Then you are included in this text—“I will give unto him that is thirsty of the fountain of the water of life freely.” Do not look upon your thirst as a *preparation* for Christ, for thus you will be seduced into making a Christ out of your own *needs* and that will be ridiculous and ruinous! What would you think of a man who expected to find a remedy in his disease? He must be bereft of reason who expects to find an antidote within the poison!

In our case we have to deal with an Omnipotent Physician and however remarkable may be the development of our disease, the Lord Jesus knows the situation and is able to overcome all the difficulties of it and bring us sound health. Therefore, come and trust Him! Do you perceive your nature’s great and urgent need of Christ and do you desire Christ? If so, this text is for you, “I will give unto him that is thirsty of the fountain of the water of life freely.” Thirst is a desire arising out of a *need*. Now, so long as you have that desire, you need not stop to question your right to take Christ! A man is thirsty, even if he cannot explain what thirst is and how it comes. I must confess, myself, that I could not give you a physiological account of the origin and effect of the phenomenon of thirst. I suppose that certain organs which require moisture begin to dry up or collapse without it and so disarrange the functions and cause pain.

If I were some learned anatomist I could give you a lecture upon the theory of thirst and yet, though I cannot do this, I know *practically* what thirst is as well as a doctor could tell me. When I am thirsty and am invited to drink, I do not refuse because I cannot explain my thirst. Nor is there any absolute necessity, in order to salvation, that you should know all about how it is that Christ can supply your needs! I may not be able to explain scientifically why this glass of water quenches my thirst, but I know that it does—the liquid gets at the various organs and supplies them with what they require. I know enough about water to drink it when I am in need and, practically, that is all that is needed. If you know enough about Christ to understand that He can meet every need of your soul—and if you take Him to be your All in All—the matter is done! Remember, Jesus Christ often saves poor, simple-minded men when He does not save philosophers. If you take the Lord Jesus to be yours, you shall as truly have the benefit of His salvation as if you were a father in Israel.

Let us notice, once again, that being thirsty is not enough. The text promises water from the fountain of life to the man who is *thirsty*, but thirst cannot quench thirst! Some seekers act as if they thought it would. “Oh,” they say, “I am not thirsty enough. I wish I felt my need more!” But, my dear Friend, your thirst will not be quenched by being increased! “I should have some hope,” says one, “if I were more sensible of my danger.” Yet that is not a *Gospel* hope. Why should a man’s despairing because of his danger operate to deliver him from danger? As long as you stay where you are, you may get more and more sensible of danger until you reach the sensitiveness of morbid despondency—but you will be no nearer salvation. It is not your *sense* of need, it is Christ’s *power* to bless you and your yielding yourself up to Christ that will bring you salvation!

The remedy for the thirsty soul is very plainly hinted at in the text. What does a thirsty man do to get rid of his thirst? He drinks. Perhaps there is no better representation of faith in all the Word of God than that. To drink is to *receive*—to take in the refreshing draught—and that is all. A man’s face may be unwashed, but yet he can drink! He may be a very unworthy character, but yet a draught of water will remove his thirst! Drinking is such a remarkably easy thing—it is even more simple than eating. I heard, the other day, of a sad, sad case of a man with cancer of the tongue who cannot eat. He has not taken solid nourishment for six months, but still, he can receive food by drinking. When people are dying you can still moisten their lips. When nothing else can possibly pass their throats, they can receive liquid. So, dear Soul, whatever your state may be, you can surely receive Christ, for He comes to you like a cup of cold water! Does not water run down the throat of itself? So is it with the Gospel. Only be willing to open your mouth to have it and it is yours! Nothing is simpler.

Sometimes divines explain faith until nobody knows what it is and often and often I have known sinners look at their *faith* until they have quite forgotten to look to *Jesus*. This is as foolish as if a man desired to see a star and, having found a telescope, stood gazing *at it* instead of

through it. Look how much he thinks of his telescope! He lengthens and shortens the tube and examines it up and down to see whether it is a good instrument. But he does not see the star! No, and he never will till he uses the telescope properly and looks through it. Do not think of believing in your own faith, but believe in Jesus! Subordinate faith to Christ? It would be ill, indeed, to prefer your *cup* to the fountain! When you need comfort, neither muse upon your need, nor study yourself, nor weigh your faith, but set your whole mind upon Him who is Heaven's Glory and the sinner's only hope!

The essence of faith lies in having done with self and in receiving from without and that, not by any laborious process, but as easily as men receive water by drinking. We do not drink by machinery—we just open our mouths and allow the water to run down—even thus we receive Christ. Be willing to have Grace, be ready, as it were, to imbibe it by the mouth of faith. O blessed faith, which is nothing of itself and yet enriches its possessor! O blessed Grace, Divine living water, which is ours as soon as we are willing to have it! Surely there is sweet encouragement, here, to those poor souls who have said, "I cannot trust Christ. I dare not receive Him." You may *freely* receive Him and if you do but get Him, He will never leave you! If I were very, very thirsty and I found myself in your room and saw water on the table, I would not ask whether I might drink—I would drink first and ask you afterwards—knowing that you could not take it away from me after I had once drank it!

A poor dog stands at the door of a butcher's shop. He sees meat, but he does not know whether he may have it. If he is very, very hungry, he makes a snatch at it and when he once gets it he runs off to eat it, for he knows that although the butcher may take it away from him when it is in his mouth, he cannot take it from him after he has eaten it. Now then, needy ones, receive the Grace of God into your inmost hearts! Receive Jesus into yourselves and there is no possibility that He will be taken away from you! Drink, thirsty one! Drink to the full! You can never be deprived of that which you have received into your inmost self!

Thus I have endeavored to explain the text. I hope I have not darkened what I wished to set in clearest light. O Spirit of God, make men see this open secret, this plain riddle of drinking at the fountain of Grace!

II. We are to speak secondly by way of ENCOURAGEMENT. I am going to dwell upon this figure of thirst as it is used in the Scriptures, that I may lead every soul that feels its need of Christ to take Him at once. The first encouragement is this—our Lord Jesus Christ keeps open house for all thirsty ones. Kindly turn to the Word of God, for we must back up everything with Scripture this morning. Let us read the 17th verse of the 22nd chapter of the Book of Revelation—"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is thirsty come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

No voice at Christ's door says, "Stay away." But three voices join with His in crying, "Come." The Spirit and the bride and he that hears, all cry, "Come!" "Come!" "Come!" No officer stands at the door to sort out the comers and to say, "This one may come but the other may not." The invi-

tation is, "Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Said I not truly that Christ keeps open house? What can be more free or more comprehensive than this? Only publish it in your neighborhood that you intend to keep open house for a day and everybody who comes may eat and drink what he likes at your expense—you need not advertise it many times in the newspapers—only tell a few of the hungry brotherhood and they will swarm like bees! I will guarantee you a full table from early dawn to the set of sun in any of our crowded quarters, if you will only provide the best meat and say, "whoever will, let him come!"

How strange it is! How sadly strange, that our Lord Jesus keeps open house with better food than princes ever put upon a table and yet men will not come! They crowd for the bread of the body, but neglect their souls! Our Lord bids us go into the highways and hedges and compel men to come, for otherwise it seems they would rather perish with hunger and thirst than partake of the provisions of His Grace! O, Sirs, if you perish, it is no fault of Christ's, for His table is furnished and the entrance to His banquet hall is free! In His name do I declare the absolute freeness of His Grace! He has taken the doors off the hinges to set His hall wide open! He has put away all sentinels from His table and ordained that none of His servants may hinder coming souls. Our orders are, "Whoever will, let him come," and it would be a plain violation of our Master's orders if we were to hinder any. His generous invitation is, "Come and welcome! Come and welcome! Come and welcome! Let him that is thirsty, come, and whoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Now, as if it were not enough to keep open house, our Lord Jesus goes further, for in the next place, He issues many invitations of the freest kind. I will only quote one out of very many. Turn to the first verse of the 55th chapter of Isaiah, "Ho! Everyone that thirsts, come to the waters and he that has no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Grace must be gratis—the word, "freely," in our text makes it clear that salvation is an absolute *gift*, but here the fact is put in a negative form that there may be no mistake whatever! Mercy is "without money and without price"—without price in any possible sense. We neither purchase, nor procure, nor earn, nor produce salvation by merit, effort, sacrifice, or service!

It comes to us, not because we deserve it, but because we need it! We are blessed with it out of the goodwill and pleasure of the Lord and we do not purchase it by good deeds, good desires, pious resolves or persevering endeavors. We are empty and He fills us. In order that you may come to Jesus, no preparation is required. You may come just as you are and come at once—only confess that you need Him, desire to have Him and then take Him by trusting Him! He is like wine and milk, supplying delight and satisfaction and you are to take Him as men would take a drink. How could the invitation be put more broadly than it is? How could it be uttered more earnestly? It has a, "Ho!" to give it tongue. Tradesmen in certain parts of London stand outside of their shops and cry, "Buy, buy!" Or they yell out, "Ho!" to the passers-by because they are anxious to sell their wares.

Jesus is yet more eager to distribute His rich Grace, for He longs to see men saved. Ho! You that pass by, stop here awhile! Turn your attention this way! Here is something worthy of your thoughts. “Ho! Everyone that thirsts, come to the waters and he that has no money.” There are many such invitations in the Scriptures and, if not all expressed by the same metaphor, they are all equally as free and as clear as the one before us. Jesus entreats men to look to Him and live. He bids them come to Him and find rest for their souls. Does anyone say, “Well, I know that the ever-blessed Savior keeps open house and that He invites men freely, but still, I am afraid to come”? Perhaps, dear Friend, we may overcome your diffidence by the help of God if we remind you that our Lord makes a proclamation which has the weight of His personal dignity about it and comes as from a king.

Turn to the seventh chapter of John, the 37th verse—“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believes on Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.” This is the Sovereign Word of the King of kings! Standing up in the midst of the multitude, He proclaimed His own full and free salvation! And with His own voice He declared the day of Grace, “If anyone thirsts, let him come unto Me and drink.” O anxious Enquirer, what more do you need? I wish you could picture Jesus standing in our midst this morning and using such words! But if you cannot, if neither faith nor imagination can help you to realize His Presence, He is still here and by the mouth of His servant He still cries to this great crowd gathered here, “If anyone thirsts, let him come unto Me and drink.”

Will you not come? What is keeping you back? The call is to any man, any woman, any child, ANYBODY—anyone that needs mercy, anyone who desires salvation—let him come and have Jesus and eternal life! If you think yourself an outcast. If you seem shut out with seven bolted doors, yet do not take upon yourself the responsibility of condemning yourself. Come and try! If you thirst, come to Christ and He will give you Grace at once. Perhaps a trembler replies, “Yes! Here is a proclamation, but I should be more comforted if I could read promises.” Our text is one of the freest promises possible—“I will give unto him that is thirsty of the fountain of the water of life freely.” Come and test the promise, right now, and see if it is true or not.

But if you require another, turn to a grand Gospel chapter in Isaiah, the 41st and let me read you the 17th verse. Will not this suit you? “When the poor and needy seek water and there is none and their tongue fails for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water and the dry land springs of water.” Now then, you that cannot pray! You that are so dried up with inward drought that you cannot get the words out and scarcely feel the desires within! All you whose very hearts fail you so that you despair of hope! Believe this promise of God who cannot lie and plead it before Him! See if God will not open for you fountains on the very mountain tops

where you could least expect them and give you comfort which you looked not for!

Shall I quote another promise out of many? There is a sound of abundant refreshment in it. It is in the 44th chapter of Isaiah, 2nd verse—"I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground." He will not only give you enough to drink, but pour it on you to drench you with delight! Your hot and weary feet shall be ready to start again upon the journey of life because washed and cleansed by love! There is Grace enough in God to allow it to be lavished upon you. If I were in your case, poor thirsty Soul, I would catch at such a promise as that! "Lord," I would say, "I long to have You! I know I cannot be saved without You. I am sure that You can save me and lo! I trust You! If I die, I will die trusting in You!" You are saved, my Brother! There is no fear that God will ever reject a soul that has come to this—He will pour floods upon you yet!

Our gracious Lord, still further to encourage souls to come to Him, has been pleased to give many gracious explanations of what He meant. You will find one in the 4th chapter of John. How sweetly He explained to the woman at the well what living water is and what drinking of it is. He tells you that, by believing in Him, you receive into yourself everlasting life. Further on, in the 6th chapter of John, at the 35th verse, He shows what drinking of the living water is—"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that comes to Me shall never hunger and he that believes on Me shall never thirst."

I have opened up the plan of salvation many, many times, but I will try again. To be saved you must heartily trust Christ and Him alone. You are to believe on Him. First believe Him—that is, be convinced that what He says is true and then believe *on* Him—that is, depend upon what He has done and on what He is. He will make His Word good to you. Commit your soul to the Redeemer's keeping and He will keep it safely—

***"Venture on Him; venture wholly;
Let no other trust intrude."***

There is no *venture*, but I put it so that you may catch the idea. Lean your whole weight on Jesus. Hold on to Jesus as to a life buoy. Buckle your fate to Jesus, to sink or swim with Him. If He is a Savior, trust Him! Put all your eggs into this basket. Float all your treasures in this vessel. Let it be so that if He can and will save sinners He will save you. His Word is pledged that He will save all those who trust Him—accept that Word as Infallible and confide all your future to its truth. This is the way of life.

I tell you, beloved Hearers, that my own personal hope lies altogether in the hands of my Lord and in no degree elsewhere. I have now known the Lord some 30 years or more and at this moment, if anyone should ask me what is my hope of eternal life, I can only answer that it is just what it was 30 years ago, namely, the work and death of the Lord Jesus in my place. "Have you not preached the Gospel for years?" Yes, I have, with all my might and I have, by God's blessing, brought many thousands to repentance and faith. But I do not, in the slightest degree, rest my hope of Heaven upon my preaching. Whatever the Lord enables me to do for Him is His doing and His work and He alone must have the Glory for my

preaching—I dare not claim a grain of merit for it! I have only Christ to trust to and I need no more. I have no righteousness of my own, but I trust to free Grace and dying love.

The Cross will float me into the Port of Peace—if it does not I must be lost, for every other lifeboat has gone to the bottom long ago. Christ Jesus is my hope and I am persuaded that He is a Savior as suitable for you as He is for me. You young man over there, who is about the age which I had reached when I first trusted Christ, I pray you look to Him at once. Cease to be always looking to self. If you are thirsty, what is the good of looking down your own throat? What is the good of complaining that you feel too thirsty, or not thirsty enough? Man, rise up and drink! Poor Sinner, get away from yourself to Christ and take Christ into yourself as a man takes water into his body by simply drinking it! Take Christ to be your own Savior! Receive Him to be your sole reliance and you are a saved man! His sacred Book declares the Believer to be saved and if you, being a Believer, are *not* saved, then none of us can have hope!

Furthermore, our blessed Lord, in order to make this very plain, has set before us lively emblems. He gives us the figure of the rock in the wilderness. You remember how He supplied Israel's needs from day to day till He brought them into rest? The sun blazed upon the desert sands and the pilgrims were sorely tried with thirst, so that they murmured and thought it better to die than to suffer such inward burning. How were their pains removed? Moses struck the Rock with his rod and out leaped a stream of which they drank with eager joy! Can you not see them bowing down for a drink, or holding their vessels at the place where first the water springs forth?

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the smitten Rock, from where flow life and refreshing to all who will accept the Grace! All the need of your spirit, my Hearer, will be supplied if you are willing to take of this water of life freely. Come, dip your earthen vessel into this heavenly river and thirst no more. A smitten Savior is the one hope of a sorrowing sinner! Read Psalm 107:5 and you will find another symbol, or rather the same in a fresh form. "They wandered in the wilderness, where there is no way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their souls fainted in them; then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble and He delivered them out of their distresses." We are, at this moment, a great caravan traveling across this wilderness world. We are all in need and only God can supply us and, blessed be His name, that He will do if we cry to Him in our trouble and are willing to receive the Grace which He gives us in Christ Jesus our Savior!

Beloved, the very cup of communion and the whole communion table, itself, is meant, among other gracious lessons, to teach us the way of salvation. Here is bread. What am I to do with it? Look at it? study it? Analyze it? I may, if I choose, but that is not what it was meant for—it was intended to be eaten—use it that way and you use it well. The wine, too, is meant to be drunk. It is not placed upon the table to be gazed upon, or to be quarreled over, or to be distilled, but to be drunk! This is an act which any thirsty person can perform. You poor souls who cannot do any good

thing, surely you can receive of the food which your heavenly Father provides!

If you cannot bear fruit and so give something out, you can take something in. If there is nothing in you, there is all the more room to receive of the Divine fullness! Oh then, let the communion cup, concerning which the Savior said, "Drink"—let that tell you how to receive Christ—how to be saved by heartily accepting Christ! Our Lord Jesus Christ, in His wisdom, has given us, in addition, many encouraging instances of men who have thirsted for Grace. I will not detain you with many of them. We sang a part of the 42nd Psalm this morning, where David said he longed for the living God as the hart pants after the water brooks. Further on in the 63rd Psalm, he cries, "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God!" And a few verses down he sings, "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness." If you thirst after God you shall soon be satisfied! May your thirst increase until you get Him and then shall you be filled to the full.

Once more. Our Lord has been pleased to give His own special blessing to the thirsty ones, for, when He opened His mouth upon the mountain and gave out the benedictions which commence His memorable sermon, He said, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Oh, then, you thirsty ones, you are blessed in your very desires and longings! I do not know what more to say to you. What more could even *Inspiration* utter? This blessed Book has set before you such a wealth of precious things that one can barely imagine more. What is needed is that the Truth of God be applied and that you now come and take Christ!

I beg you to remember that you must take Christ by a personal act, each one for himself or herself. Each one must willingly believe, for God forces Christ on no one. If I am thirsty I must drink—no well or river can quench my thirst if I do not *personally* drink. It stands just thus, dear Soul—you must accept Christ or you are lost! Be sure of this, that God Himself cannot, *will* not, save you unless you accept Christ! He is Omnipotent but He cannot act contrary to His own solemn declaration and He has said, "He that believes not shall be damned." If you do not believe in Christ you must be lost to a certainty! You must, yourself, believe or be a castaway! Do not think that the Grace of repentance or faith will be worked in you against your will. You labor under a great mistake if you think so! You must joyfully take Christ or die in your sins!

Why should you not take Him? Is this some bitter medicine I am pressing on you and are you a silly child who must be coaxed into taking it? No, I set before you the Lord Jesus who is Sweetness itself. Why should you need persuading? Do you secretly hope that there may be some other salvation? You are greatly deceived if you do, for the Son of God would not have died to save if it could have been done in any other way! Of no other Fountain can you drink! What keeps you back from this? Are you trying to find reasons why you should *not* come to Christ? That is ruinous to yourself! Few persons hunt up arguments against themselves. If there is any money in dispute in a court of law, each party will hunt out reasons for his having it—I never saw a man stand up in court and plead against his

own interests! Will you turn advocate for the devil against yourself? Will you urge arguments to seal your own condemnation?

When Jesus Christ says, "Let him that is thirsty come," will you stand in your own way and block up your own path to life? Will you make God a liar for the sake of destroying your own soul? Surely a mania must be upon you! It is the wisest thing to say, "I am an undeserving, Hell-deserving sinner; but if God is infinite in mercy, why should He not save *me* as well as anyone else? He declares that if I trust His Son He will pardon me—I will trust His Son and partake of His forgiveness. He bids me drink of the water of life—I will drink. I will not question my right to come—He bids me do so and I will obey. I take Him at His Word. I trust in the blood of Jesus. Lord, receive me, for I receive Your Son. I have been trying to save myself and waiting until I *felt* something, or *did* something, in and of myself. But now, Lord, although I neither see nor feel anything but my lost estate, I do believe that Jesus can save me and, by Your Grace, I trust Him."

If this is your true act, dear Hearer, you are a saved man! Even if you only believed a minute ago, you have passed from death to life! The moment a sinner believes, he is justified! The atoning blood operates the moment faith sees it. O you who have but this *instant* believed, go your way and rejoice! You are in the hands of Jesus and none can pluck you from Him!

I have thus tried to preach a very plain sermon, containing the A B C of the Gospel. I believe that God will bless it to the conversion of many. I shall be terribly disappointed if He does not. I have entreated Him to let His own message have free course and mighty effect and I know that He will hear me. I beg God's people to pray that this sermon may enclose within the Gospel net more fish than ever we have had before! Some of you seekers have, up to now, thought the door of mercy to be bolted against you. Look! It stands wide open! Come and welcome! If any softness of feeling is stealing over you, let it work while you gladly yield. Do not talk nonsense on the way home and so lose the effect of the discourse. Hasten to your chambers, fall upon your knees and rise not till you have accepted Jesus as your own Savior. If you do so, salvation will have come to your house this day and God will be glorified. Amen and amen!

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AN AWFUL CONTRAST

NO. 2473

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JULY 12, 1896.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JULY 11, 1886.**

***“Then they spat in His face.”
Matthew 26:67.***

***“And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose
face the earth and the Heaven fled away.”
Revelation 20:11.***

GUIDED by our text in Matthew's Gospel, let us first go in thought to the palace of Caiaphas, the High Priest, and there let us, in deepest sorrow, realize the meaning of these terrible words—“Then they spat in His face.” There is more of deep and awful thunder in them than in the bolt that bursts overhead. There is more of vivid terror in them than in the sharpest lightning flash—“Then they spat in His face.”

Observe that these men, the priests, scribes, elders and their servitors did this shameful deed after they had heard our Lord say, “Hereafter shall you see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven.” It was in contempt of this claim, in derision of this honor which He foretold for Himself that, “then they spat in His face,” as if they could bear it no longer, that He, who stood to be judged of them, should claim to be their Judge—that He whom they had brought at dead of night from the Garden of Gethsemane as their captive, should talk of coming in the clouds of Heaven—“Then they spat in His face.”

Nor may I fail to add that they thus assaulted our Lord after the High Priest had torn his clothes. My Brothers and Sisters, do not forget that the High Priest was supposed to be the representative of everything that was good and venerable among the Jews! The High Priest was the earthly head of their religion. He it was who, alone of mortal men, might enter within the mysterious veil—yet it was he who condemned the Lord of Glory as he tore his clothes and said, “He has spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard His blasphemy.” It makes me tremble as I think of how eminent we may be in the service of God and yet how awfully we may be enemies of the Christ of God! Let none of us think that though we clamber up to the highest places in the Church we are, therefore, saved. We may be High Priests and wear the Urim and the Thummim. We may put on the breastplate

with all its wondrous mystic stones and bind around us the curious girdle of the ephod, and yet, for all that, we may be ringleaders in expressing contempt of God and of His Christ!

It was when Caiaphas, the High Priest, had pronounced the word of condemnation against Christ that, "then they spat in His face." God grant that we may never take upon ourselves any office in the Church of God and then, girt about with the authority and influence which such an office might lend to us, be the first to pour derision and contempt upon the Christ of God! Yet I do not hesitate to say that when men look to the earthly priesthood instead of looking to Christ, the Great High Priest. When men are taught to trust in the "mass" instead of trusting in Christ's one Sacrifice for sin upon the Cross, it is *then* that the very priests lead the way in spitting in His face! Antichrist never more surely dwells anywhere than in the place where Christ is thus dishonored—and none do Him such dire disgrace as those who ought to bow at His feet and lift Him high among the sons of men—yet who reject Him and refuse His rightful claims.

"Then they spat in His face," after He had proclaimed His Godhead as King and Judge of all, and after the man who ought to have been His principal earthly servant had turned arch-traitor and led the way in contempt of Him by accusing Him of blaspheming! "Then they spat in His face."

There are two or three thoughts that come to my mind when I think that these wicked men actually spat in Christ's face—in that face which is the light of Heaven, the joy of angels, the bliss of saints and the very brightness of the Father's Glory! This spitting shows us, first, *how far sin will go*. If we need proof of the depravity of the heart of man, I will not point you to the stews of Sodom and Gomorrah, nor will I take you to the places where blood is shed in streams by wretches like Herod and men of that sort. No, the clearest proof that man is utterly fallen and that the natural heart is enmity against God is seen in the fact that they spat in Christ's face, did falsely accuse Him, condemn Him, lead Him out as a malefactor and hang Him up as a felon that He might die upon the Cross! Why, what evil had He done? What was there in His whole life that should give them occasion to spit in His face? Even at that moment, did His face flash with indignation against them? Did He look with contempt upon them? Not He, for He was all gentleness and tenderness even towards these, His enemies, and their hearts must have been hard and brutal, indeed, that, "then they spat in His face."

He had healed their sick. He had fed their hungry. He had been among them a very fountain of blessing up and down Judea and Samaria, and yet, "then they spat in His face." I say again, relate not to me the crimes of ancient nations, nor the horrible evils committed by uncivilized men, nor the more elaborate iniquities of our great cities! Tell me not of the abominations of Greece or Rome—this, this, in the sight of the angels of God and in the eyes of the God of the angels, is the masterpiece of all in-

iquity—"Then they spat in His face." To enter into the King's own palace and draw near to His only-begotten Son—and to spit in His face—this is the crime of crimes which reveals the infamous wickedness of men! Humanity stands condemned of the blackest iniquity now that it has gone as far as to spit in Christ's face!

My meditation also turns towards the Well-Beloved into whose face they spat. And my thought concerning Him is this—*how deep was the humiliation He had to endure!* When He was made sin for us, though He, Himself, knew no sin, when our Lord Jesus Christ took upon Himself the iniquities of His people and was burdened with the tremendous weight of their guilt—it became incumbent upon the justice of God to treat Him as if He were actually a sinner. He was no sinner and He could not be one—He was perfect Man and perfect God—yet He stood in the place of sinners and the Lord caused to meet upon Him the iniquity of all His people! Therefore, in the time of humiliation He must not be treated as the Son of God, neither must He be held in honor as a righteous Man! He must first be given up to shame and to contempt—and then to suffering and to death and, consequently, He was not spared this last and most brutal of insults—"Then they spat in His face." O my Lord, to what terrible degradation are You brought! Into what depths are You dragged through my sin and the sin of all the multitudes whose iniquities were made to meet upon You! O my Brothers, let us hate sin! O my Sisters, let us loathe sin, not only because it pierced those blessed hands and feet of our dear Redeemer, but because it dared even to spit in His face! No one can ever know all the shame the Lord of Glory suffered when they spat in His face.

These words glide over my tongue all too smoothly—perhaps I do not feel them as they ought to be felt—though I would do so if I could. But could I feel as I ought to feel in sympathy with the terrible shame of Christ and then could I interpret those feelings by any language known to mortal man, surely you would bow your heads and blush! And you would feel rising within your spirits a burning indignation against the sin that dared to put the Christ of God to such shame as this! I want to kiss His feet when I think that they spat in His face.

Then, once more, my thoughts run to Him, again, in this way—I think of *the tender Omnipotence of His love*. How could He bear this spitting when, with one glance of His eyes, had He been but angry, the flame might have slain them and withered them all up? Yet He stood still even when they spit in His face! And they were not the only ones who thus insulted Him, for, afterwards, when He was taken by the soldiers into Pilate's hall, they also spat upon Him in cruel contempt and scorn—

***"See how the patient Jesus stands,
Insulted in His lowest case!
Sinners have bound the Almighty hands,
And spit in their Creator's face."***

How could He bear it? Friends, He could not have borne it if He had not been Omnipotent. That very Omnipotence which would have enabled

Him to destroy them was Omnipotence of *love*, as well as Omnipotence of force. It was this that made Him—if I may so say—“restrain Himself,” for there is no Omnipotence like that which restrains Omnipotence. Yet so it was that He could endure this spitting from men! Can you think of this marvelous condescension without feeling your hearts all on fire with love for Him, so that you long to do some special act of homage to Him by which you may show that you would gladly pay Him for this shame if you could? I will not say more about that point, for the shameful fact stands indelibly recorded in the Scripture—“Then they spat in His face”—but I want to bring the Truth of God home, Brothers and Sisters, and show you how we may have done to Christ what these wicked men did. “Oh,” says one, “I was not there! *I did not spit in His face.*” Listen! Perhaps you *have* spat in His face. Perhaps even *you* have spat in His face. You remember that touching hymn that we sometimes sing—

***“My Jesus! Say what wretch has dared
Your sacred hands to bind?
And who has dared to buffet so
Your face so meek and kind?
My Jesus! Whose the hands that wove
That cruel thorny crown?
Who made that hard and heavy Cross
That weighs Your shoulders down?
My Jesus! Who with spittle vile
Profaned Your sacred brow?
Or whose un pitying scourge has made
Your precious blood to flow?
‘Tis I have thus ungrateful been,
Yet, Jesus, pity take!
Oh, spare and pardon me, my Lord,
For Your sweet mercy’s sake!”***

There are still some who spit in Christ’s face by *denying His Godhead*. They say, “He is a mere man—a good man, it is true, but only a man.” How they dare say that, I cannot make out, for he would be no good man who claimed to be God if he were not God! Jesus of Nazareth was the basest of impostors who ever lived if He permitted His disciples to worship Him and if He left behind Him a life which compels us to worship Him! If He were not really and truly God, then of all those who declare that He is not God—and there is a very great company of them even among the nominally religious people of the present day, we must sorrowfully, but truthfully say, “Then they spat in His face.”

They also do the same who *rail at His Gospel*. There are many, in these days, who seem as if they cannot be happy unless they are tearing the Gospel to pieces. Especially is that Divine mystery of the Substitutionary Sacrifice of Christ the mark for the arrows of these wise men, I mean those who are wise according to the wisdom of this world. We delight to know that our Lord Jesus Christ suffered in the place of His people—

***“He bore that we might never bear
His Father’s righteous ire.”***

Yet I have read some horrible things which have been written against that blessed doctrine and, as I read them, I could only say to myself, "Then they spat in His face." If there is *anything* that is beyond all else, the Glory of Christ, it is His atoning Sacrifice! And if ever you thrust your finger into the very apple of His eye and touch His honor in the most tender possible point, it is when you have anything to say against His offering of Himself a Sacrifice to God, without blemish and without spot, that He might put away the iniquities of His people! Therefore judge yourselves in this matter and if you have ever denied Christ's Deity, or if you have ever assailed His atoning Sacrifice, it might truly have been said of *you*—"Then they spat in His face."

Further, this evil is also done *when men prefer their own righteousness to the righteousness of Christ*. There are some who say, "We do not need pardon, we do not need to be justified by faith in Christ—we are already good enough." Or, "We are working out our own salvation—we mean to save ourselves." O Sirs, if you can save yourselves, why did Jesus bleed upon the Cross? It was a superfluity, indeed, that the Son of God should die in human form if there is a *possibility* of salvation by your own merits! And if you prefer your merits to His, it must be said of you, also, "Then they spat in His face." Your righteousnesses are only filthy rags! And if you prefer these to the fair white linen which is the righteousness of saints. If you think to wash yourselves in your tears and so despise that precious blood apart from which there is no purging of our sin—to *you* does our text apply—"then they spat in His face," when they preferred their own righteousness to Christ's.

I have often spoken to you about the parable of the prodigal son, but, possibly, your case is more like that of the elder brother in the parable. You have your portion of goods and it is all your own, and you are keeping it. You are rich, and increased in goods and have need of nothing. You are self-righteous. You think that you can do very well without God and without Christ—and you half suspect that God can hardly do without you. You are doing so very well in the observance of rites and ceremonies, and the performance of charity and devotions, that if *you* go into the far country, you will cut a very respectable figure! You will be one of those excellent citizens of that country who will, in due time, send some poor prodigal into your fields to feed your swine. I am inclined to believe that your case is even more sad and hopeless than that of the prodigal, himself! You, too, have gone far away from God. You are living without Him. He is not in all your thoughts. You could almost wish that there were no God, for then there would be no dark cloud hovering in the distance to spoil your summer's day, no fear of storms to come to mar the joy of the hour. Just as truly as of the avowed infidel who openly rejects Christ, it must be said of you, "Then they spat in His face."

The same thing is oh so sadly true *when anyone forsakes the profession of being a follower of Christ's*. There are some, alas, who, for a time, have appeared to stand well in the Church of God—I will not judge

them—but there have been some who, after making a profession of religion, have deliberately gone back to the world. After seeming for a while to be very zealous, they have become worldly and, perhaps, even lascivious and vile. They break the Sabbath, they neglect the Word of God, they forsake the Mercy Seat—and their last end is worse than their first. When a man forsakes Christ for a harlot, when he gives up Heaven for gold, when he resigns the joys he professed to have had in Christ in order that he may find mirth in the company of the ungodly, it is another instance of the truth of these words, “Then they spat in His face.” To prefer any of these things to Christ is infamous—and the mere act of spitting from the mouth seems little compared with this sin of spitting with the very heart and soul—and pouring contempt upon Christ by choosing some sin in preference to Him. Yet, alas, how many are thus still spitting in Christ’s face! Perhaps some now present are doing it.

If, dear Friends, our conscience in any measure accuses us of this sin, *let us at once confess it*. Let us humble ourselves before the Lord and with the very mouth that spat upon Him, let us kiss the Son lest He be angry and we perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little!

And when we have confessed the sin, *let us believe that He is able and willing to forgive us*. I know that it requires a great act of faith, when sin is consciously felt, to believe in the splendor of Divine Mercy. But, dear Friends, believe it! Do the Lord Jesus the great honor of saying to Him, “Gracious Lord, wash me in Your precious blood. Though I did spit in Your face, wash me in that cleansing Fountain and I shall be whiter than snow.” And according to your faith, so shall it be done to you. You shall have the forgiveness, even, of this great sin if you confess it and believe that Christ is both able and willing to forgive it!

And when you have done that, then *let your whole life be spent in trying to magnify and glorify Him* whom you and others have defamed and dishonored! Oh, I think that if I had ever denied Christ’s Deity, I would want to stand in this pulpit night and day to revoke what I had said—and to declare Him to be the Son of God with power! I think that if I had ever set up anything in opposition to Him, I should want, day and night, to be setting Him up above everything else, as, indeed, I long to do! Come, Christian Brothers and Sisters, let us do something unusual in Christ’s honor! Let us find out something or invent something fresh, either in the company of others or all by ourselves, by which we may further glorify His blessed name!

Yet once more, if ever anybody should despise us for Christ’s sake, let us not count it hard, but *let us be willing to bear scorn and contempt for Him*. Let us say to ourselves, “‘Then they spat in His face.’ What, then, if they also spit in mine? If they do, I will ‘hail reproach and welcome shame,’ since it comes upon me for His dear sake!” Look, that wretch is about to spit in Christ’s face! Put *your* cheek forward, that you may catch that spittle upon *your* face, that it fall not upon Him, again, for as He was put to such terrible shame, everyone who has been redeemed with

His precious blood ought to count it an honor to be a partaker of the shame, if by any means we may screen Him from being further despised and rejected of men!

There, dear Friends, I have not preached, I have just talked very, very feebly and not at all as I wished and hoped I might be able to about this wonderful text—“Then they spat in His face.”

Now try to follow me, just for a few minutes, while I let you see that same face in a very different light. Our second text is in the 20th Chapter of the Revelation, at the 11th verse—“And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, *from whose face the earth and Heaven fled away*; and there was found no place for them.”

This passage needs no words of mine to explain it. Notice how the Apostle begins—“*I saw.*” Oh, I wish I had the power to make you see this great sight! Sometimes, to vividly realize a Truth even once is far better than to have merely heard it stated ten thousand times. I remember the story of a soldier who was employed in connection with one of the surveys of Palestine. He was with some others of the company in the valley of Jehoshaphat and, without thinking seriously of his words, he said to his comrades, “Some people say that when Christ shall come a second time to judge the world, the judgment will take place in the valley of Jehoshaphat, in this very place where we now are.” Then he added, “When the Great White Throne shall be set, I wonder whereabouts I shall be.” It is said that he carelessly exclaimed, “I shall sit here upon this big stone.” And he sat down, but in an instant he was struck with horror and fainted because, in the act of sitting down, he had begun to realize somewhat of the grandeur and the terror of that tremendous scene!

I wish I knew how to do or say *anything* by which I could make you realize this scene that John saw in his vision. The Lord Jesus Christ went up to Heaven from the top of Olivet in His own proper body—and He shall so come in like manner as He was taken up into Heaven—but He shall come, not the lowly Man of Sorrows, but as Judge of All, seated upon a great white throne! And John says, “I saw it.” As we sang, a few minutes ago—

**“The Lord shall come! But not the same
As once in lowliness He came—
A silent lamb before His foes,
A weary Man, and full of woes.
The Lord shall come! A dreadful form,
With rainbow wreath and robes of storm.
On cherub wings, and wings of wind,
Appointed Judge of all mankind.”**

I wish, dear Friends, that even in your *dreams* you might see this sight, for, though I have no trust in dreams by themselves, yet any realization of this great Truth of God will be better than the mere hearing of it.

“I saw,” said John, “a great white throne.” He saw *a throne*, for Christ now reigns! He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords—and when He comes

again, He will come in the power of universal sovereignty as the appointed Judge of all mankind! He will come upon a throne!

That throne is said to be *white*. What other throne can be so described? The thrones of mere mortals are often stained with injustice, or bespattered with the blood of cruel wars. But Christ's Throne is white, for He does justice and righteousness and His name is Truth.

It will also be a *great white throne*—a throne so great that all the thrones of former kings and princes shall be as *nothing* in comparison with it. The thrones of Assyria, and Babylon, and Persia, and Greece, and Rome shall all seem only like tiny drops of dew to be exhaled in a moment! But this Great White Throne shall be the recognized seat of the King of Kings, the Sovereign over all sovereignties—"I saw a great white throne."

John not only saw the Great White Throne, but also, "*HIM that sat upon it.*" What a wondrous sight that was! John saw Him, whose eyes are "as a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace." John saw Him whose Divine Majesty shall shine resplendent even through the nail-prints which He shall still wear when seated on the Great White Throne. What a sight it was to John, who had leaned His head upon Christ's breast, to behold that same Master, whom He had seen die upon the Cross, now sitting upon the throne of universal judgement! "I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat upon it."

Now notice what happened—"from whose face the earth and the Heaven fled away." As soon as ever this Great White Throne appeared, Heaven and earth began to roll away like a wave receding from the shore! What must HE be, before whose face Heaven and earth shall retreat as in dismay?

Observe, first, *Christ's power*. He does not drive away the Heaven and the earth. He does not even speak to them. The sight of His face is all that is needed—and the old Heaven, and the old sin-stained earth shall begin to flee away—"the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth, also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up." And all that by the mere showing of Christ's face! He does not have to lift His arm, He has not to seize a javelin and to hurl it at the condemned earth—at the sight of His face, *Heaven and earth shall flee away!*

Behold the terror of *Christ's majesty*. And what will you do in that day—you who spit in His face, you who despised Him? What will you do in that day? Suppose the Great Judgment Day had already come! Suppose that the Great White Throne was just over yonder and that when this service was over, you must appear with all the risen dead before your Judge. One would have to say, "I have refused Him! How shall I dare look in His face?" Another would cry, "He drew me, once. I felt the tugging of His love, the drawings of His Spirit, but I resisted and would not yield. How can I meet Him now? How can I look Him in the face?" Another will have to say, "I had to strive hard to escape from the grasp of His hand of mercy. I stifled conscience and I went back into the world."

You will all have to look into that face, and that face will look at all of you! One will have to say, "I gave up Christ for the world." "I gave Him up for the theater," another must say. "I gave Him up for the dancing saloon," another will say. "I gave Him up for the love of women," another will say. "I gave Him up that I might carry on my business as I could not carry it on if I was a true Christian—I gave up Christ for what I could get." You will have to say all this—and that very soon. As surely as you see me upon this platform, you *will* see the King upon the Great White Throne—that King who was once despised and rejected of men!

O Sirs, I would that you would think of all this! It is not one hundredth part so much my concern as it is yours! I am not afraid to see Christ's face, for He has looked on me in love and blotted out all my sin—and I love Him and *long to be with Him forever and ever*. But if you have never had that look of love. If you have never been reconciled to Him, I ask you, by the love you bear yourselves, to begin to think about this matter! Begin to prepare to meet this King of Men, this Lord of Love, who, as surely as He is the Lord of Love, will be the King of Wrath, for there is no anger like the anger of love! There is no indignation like "the wrath of the Lamb," of which we read a few minutes ago. Divine Love, when it has become righteous indignation, burns like coals of juniper and is quenchless as Hell! Therefore—

***"You sinners, seek His Grace,
Whose wrath you cannot bear!
Fly to the shelter of His Cross
And find salvation there"***

and before Heaven and earth begin to flee away from the face of Him who sits upon the Throne, and before you, yourselves, begin to cry to the rocks to cover you and the mountains to hide you from that face—seek His face with humble penitence and faith that you may be prepared to meet Him with joy in that last tremendous day!

If what I have been saying is all a dream, dismiss it and go your ways to your sins. But if these things are the very Truth of God—and verily they are—act as sane men should and think them over, and prepare to meet your Judge! God help you to do so, for Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:

MATTHEW 26:57-68;. REVELATION 6:12-17; 19:11-16; 20:11-15; 21:1.

We shall read two or three short portions of God's Word in order to bring before you the wonderful contrast to which I am about to direct your thoughts.

Matthew 26:57. *And they that had laid hold on Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the High Priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.* It was night, but these wicked men could sit up for this gruel deed, to judge the Lord of Glory, and to put the Innocent One to shame! They "led Him away to Caiaphas the High Priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled."

58. *But Peter followed Him afar off to the High Priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.* I have heard Peter represented as if he did wrong to follow Christ "afar off." I think he was the bravest of all the Apostles, for scarcely one of them followed Christ at all, at that time. Afterwards, John came to his senses and went into the Judgment Hall. Peter kept at a distance from his Lord, but he *did* follow Him and he *did* go into the High Priest's palace. He "went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end." Peter was right enough in following Christ—it was *afterward*, when the temptation came, that he fell so grievously.

59, 60. *Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council sought false witness against Jesus, to put Him to death; but found none.* Because they did not agree, they would not hold together. This is the weakness of falsehood—that it contradicts itself. These men felt that they must have some show of truth-likeness, even in condemning Christ, and this they could not get, at first, even from their false witnesses!

60, 61. *Yes, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses and said, This Fellow said, I am able to destroy the Temple of God, and to build it in three days.* Brothers and Sisters, observe that this was a little twisting of Christ's words, but that slight wresting made them as different as possible from what Christ had really said. I suppose that if you want to know how this twisting or wresting is done, any one of our general elections will give you the most wonderful examples of how everything that any man may say can be twisted to mean the very reverse of what he said! If there is one thing in which English people are expert beyond all others, it is in the art of misquoting, misstating and misrepresenting. As our Lord was wronged in this fashion, nobody need be surprised if the same should happen to him. "This Fellow said, I am able to destroy the Temple of God, and to build it in three days."

62. *And the High Priest arose, and said to Him, Answer You nothing? What is it which these witness against You?* What was the good of answering? What is ever the good of answering when the only evidence brought against one is palpable and willful misrepresentation? So the Savior was silent. And thus He not only proved His wisdom, but He also fulfilled that marvelous prophecy of Isaiah, "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth."

63. *But Jesus held His peace. And the High Priest answered and said to Him, I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God.* Now came the answer! The good confession that our Lord witnessed before His cruel adversaries.

64. *Jesus said to Him, You have said: nevertheless I say to you, Hereafter shall you see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven.* How that sentence must have come with

the vividness of a lightning flash before their faces! What a declaration of power from One who stood there, bound before His enemies, apparently helpless and about to die!

65-68. *Then the High Priest tore his clothes, saying, He has spoken blasphemy! What further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard His blasphemy. What do you think? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. Then they spat in His face, and buffeted Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy to us, You Christ, Who is he that struck You? Our Lord had told these mockers that they should one day see Him coming in the clouds of Heaven. Let us read in the Book of the Revelation concerning that great event.*

Revelation 6:12-16. *And I beheld when He had opened the sixth seal and, lo, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood, and the stars of Heaven fell to the earth, even as a fig tree casts its late figs, when it is shaken by a mighty wind. And the Heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every slave, and every free man hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb! Think of the contrast between this awful cry and the sentence we read just now—"Then they spat in His face." "Mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the Throne." Think, too, of the contrast of which we were reminded in our opening hymn—*

***"While sinners in despair shall call,
'Rocks hide us; mountains, on us fall!'
The saints, ascending from the tomb,
Shall joyfully sing, 'The Lord is come!'"***

17. *For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?* Let us read further on in the same Book.

Revelation 19:11, 12. *And I saw Heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and He that sat upon Him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He does judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns—*

***"Bright with all His crowns of glory,
See the royal Victor's brow."***

Again, note the contrast—"Then they spat in His face." "And on His head were many crowns"—

12-16. *And He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in Heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His vesture and*

on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. And this is He in whose face His enemies did spit!

Now turn to the next chapter.

Revelation 20:11 *And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the Heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. Driven, like chaff before the wind, from the face of Him who sat upon the Throne!*

12-15. *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and Hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged, every man according to their works. And death and Hell were cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death. And whoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the Lake of Fire.*

Revelation 21:1. *And I saw a new Heaven and a new earth: for the first Heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.*

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—364, 275, 363.

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.**

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE

NO. 710

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING, AUGUST 12, 1866,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it,
from whose face the earth and the Heaven fled
away. And there was found no place for them.”
Revelation 20:11.*

MANY of the visions which John saw are very obscure, and although a man who is assured of his own salvation may possibly be justified in spending his days in endeavoring to interpret them, yet I am sure of this—it will not be a profitable task for unconverted persons. They have no time to spare for speculations, for they have not yet made sure of positive certainties. They need not dive into difficulties, for they have not yet laid a foundation of simplicities by faith in Christ Jesus. Better far to meditate upon the Atonement than to be guessing at the little horn. Better far to know the Lord Jesus in His power to save, than to fabricate an ingenious theory upon the number of the beast.

But this particular vision is so instructive, so unattended by serious difficulties, that I may invite all here present to consider it, and the more so because it has to do with matters which concern our own eternal prospects. It may be, if God the Holy Spirit shall illuminate the eyes of our faith to look and see that “great white throne and Him that sat upon it,” that we may reap so much benefit from the sight as forever to make the arches of Heaven ring with gratitude that we were brought in this world to look at the “great white throne.” By so doing we shall not be afraid to look upon it in the day when the Judge shall sit, and the quick and dead shall stand before Him.

I shall, first, endeavor to explain what John saw. And then, in the second place, I shall try to set forth the effect which I think would be produced by this sight if the eyes of our faith should now be fixed on it.

I. First, then, I have to call your very earnest attention to WHAT JOHN SAW. It was a scene of the Last Day—that wondrous day whose coming none can tell—

*“For, as a thief unheard, unseen, it steals
Through night’s dark shade.”*

When the eagle-eyed seer of Patmos, being in the Spirit, looked aloft into the heavens, he saw a throne from which I gather that there is a throne of moral government over the sons of men, and that He who sits upon it presides over all the inhabitants of this world. There is a throne whose dominion reaches from Adam in Paradise down to “the last man,” whoever he may be.

We are not without a Governor, Lawgiver, and Judge. This world is not left so that men may do in it as they will, without a legislator, without an avenger, without One to give reward or to inflict punishment. The sinner, in his blindness looks, but he sees no throne, and therefore he cries, "I will live as I like, for there is none to call me to account." But John, with illuminated eye, distinctly saw a throne, and a personal Ruler upon it who sat there to call His subjects to account. When our faith looks through the glass of Revelation it sees a throne, too. It were well for us if we felt more fully the influence of that ever-present throne. That "the Lord reigns" is true, Believer—tonight—and at all times.

There is a throne where sits the King eternal, immortal, invisible! The world is governed by laws made and kept in force by an intelligent Lawgiver. There is a moral Governor. Men are accountable, and will be brought to account at the Last Great Day, when they shall all be either rewarded or punished. "I saw a great white throne." How this invests the actions of men with solemnity! If we were left to do exactly as we willed without being called to account for it, it were wise, even then, to be virtuous, for rest assured it is best for ourselves that we should be good—and it is in itself malady enough to be evil.

But we are not so left. There is a Law laid down which involves a penalty to break. There is a Lawgiver who looks down and spies every action of man, and who does not suffer one single word or deed to be omitted from His notebook. That Governor is armed with power. He is soon coming to hold His assize, and every responsible agent upon the face of the earth must appear at His bar and receive, as we are told, "according to the deeds done in the body, whether they are good or whether they are evil." Let it, then, be gathered from the text that there is in very deed a personal and real moral Governor of the world, an efficient and suitable Ruler—not a mere name, not a myth, not an empty office—but a Person who sits on the throne, who judges right, and who will carry out that judgment before long.

Now, Brothers and Sisters, we know that this moral Governor is God Himself who has an undisputed right to reign and rule. Some thrones have no right to be, and to revolt from them is patriotism. But the best lover of his race delights the most in the monarchy of Heaven. Doubtless there are dynasties which are tyrannies, and governors who are despots. But none may dispute the right of God to sit upon His throne, or wish that another hand held the scepter. He created all, and shall He not judge all? He had a right, as Creator, to lay down His laws, and, as those laws are the very pattern of everything that is good and true, He has, therefore, because of this, an eternal right to govern, in addition to the right which belonged to Him as Creator.

He is the Judge of all, who must do right from a necessity of His Nature. Who else, then, should sit upon the throne, and who shall dare to claim to do so? He may cast down the gauntlet to all His creatures and say, "I am God, and beside Me there is none else." If He reveals the thunder of His power, His creatures must silently admit that He is Lord alone.

None can venture to say that this throne is not founded upon right. Moreover, there are some thrones on which kings, however right, are deficient in might—but this is not the case with the King of kings. We constantly see little princes whose crowns fit their heads so ill that they cannot keep them on their brows. But our God has might invincible as well as right infallible!

Who shall meet Him in battle? Shall the stubble defy the fire, or shall the wax make war with the flame? Jehovah can easily swallow up His enemies when they set themselves in battle array against Him. “Behold, He touches the hills and they smoke! He looks upon the mountains and they tremble! He breaks Leviathan in pieces in the depths of the sea. The winds are His chariots, and the tempests are His messengers. At His bidding there is day, and at His will night covers the earth. Who shall stay His hand, or say unto Him, “What are You doing?” His throne is founded in right and supported by might. You have Justice and Truth to settle it, but you have Omnipotence and Wisdom to be its guards, so that it cannot be moved.

In addition to this, His throne is one from the power of which none can escape. The sapphire throne of God, at this moment, is revealed in Heaven where adoring angels cast their crowns before it. And its power is felt on earth, where the works of creation praise the Lord. Even those who do not acknowledge the Divine government are compelled to feel it, for He does as He wills, not only among the angels in Heaven, but among the inhabitants of this lower world. Hell feels the terror of that throne. Those chains of fire, those pangs unutterable, are the awful shadow of the throne of Deity. As God looks down upon the lost, the torment that flashes through their souls darts from His holiness which cannot endure their sins.

The influence of that throne, then, is found in every world where spirits dwell, and in the realms of inanimate nature it bears rule. Every leaf that fades in the trackless forest trembles at the Almighty’s bidding, and every coral insect that dwells in the unfathomable depths of the sea feels and acknowledges the Presence of the all-present King. So, then, my Brethren, if such is the throne which John saw, see how impossible it will be for you to escape from its judgment when the great day of assize shall be proclaimed, and the Judge shall issue His summons bidding you appear. To where can the enemies of God flee? If up to Heaven their high-flown impudence could carry them, His right hand of holiness would hurl them from there, or, if under Hell’s most profound wave they dive to seek a sheltering grave, His left hand would pluck them out of the fire to expose them to the *fiercer* light of His countenance!

Nowhere is there a refuge from the Most High. The morning beams cannot convey the fugitive so swiftly as the almighty Pursuer could follow him. Neither can the mysterious lightning flash, which annihilates time and space, journey so rapidly as to escape His far-reaching hand. “If I mount up to Heaven, You are there. If I make my bed in Hell, You are there.” It was said of the Roman empire under the Caesars that the whole world was only one great prison for Caesar, for if any man offended the

emperor it was impossible for him to escape. If he crossed the Alps, could not Caesar find him out in Gaul?

If he sought to hide himself in the Indies, even the swarthy monarchs there knew the power of the Roman armies, so that they would give no shelter to a man who had incurred imperial vengeance. And yet, perhaps, a fugitive from Rome might have prolonged his miserable life by hiding in the dens and caves of the earth. But oh, Sinner, there is no hiding from God! The mountains cannot cover you from Him! Even if they would, neither can the rocks conceal you. See, then, at the very outset, how this throne should awe our minds with terror. Founded in right, sustained by might, and universal in its dominion, look and see the throne which John of old beheld!

This, however, is but the beginning of the vision. The text tells us that it was a “white throne,” and I would call your attention to that. “I saw a great white throne.” Why white? Does not this indicate its immaculate purity? There is no other white throne, I fear, to be found. The throne of our own happy land, I believe, is as white and as pure as any throne might well be on earth. But there have been years, even in the annals of that throne, when it was stained with blood and not many reigns back it was black with debauchery. Not always was it the throne of excellence and purity, and even now, though our throne possesses a lustrous purity, rare enough among earthly thrones, yet in the sight of God there must be in everything that is earthly something that is impure, and therefore the throne is not white to Him.

As for many other thrones that are still existing, we know that with them all is not white. This is neither the day nor the hour for us to call the princes to the bar of God, but there are some of them who will have much to answer for, because in their schemes of aggrandizement they took no account of the blood which would be shed or of the rights which would be violated. Principle seldom moves the royal mind. The knavish law of policy is the basis of king-craft—a policy worthy of highwaymen and burglars. And some kings are little. On the continent of Europe there are not a few thrones which I might describe as either black, or crimson, as I think of the turpitude of the conduct of the monarch, or of the blood through which he has waded his way to dominion.

But this is a great *white* throne, a throne of hallowed monarchy that is not stained with blood nor defiled with injustice. Why, then, is it white for purity? Is it not because the King who sits on it is pure? Hark to the thrice sacred hymn of the cherubic band and the seraphic choir, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth.” Creatures who are perfectly spotless, themselves, unceasingly reverence and adore the yet superior holiness of the great King. He is too great to need to be unjust, and He is too good to be unkind. This King has done no wrong, and can do no wrong—and He is the only King of whom this can be said without fiction. He who sits on this white throne is Himself the Essence of holiness, justice, truth, and love. O fairest of all Thrones! Who would not be a willing subject of your peerless government?

Moreover, the throne is pure because the law the Judge dispenses is perfect. There is no fault in the statute Book of God. When the Lord shall come to judge the earth, there will be found no decree that bears too harshly upon any of His creatures. "The statutes of the Lord are right." They are true and righteous altogether. That Book of the Ten Commands in which you find a summary of the Divine will, who can improve it? Who can find anything in excess in it, or point out anything that is wanting? "The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul," and well may that be a white throne from which there emanates such a Law!

But you know that with a good law and a good lawgiver, yet sometimes the throne may make mistakes, and it may be stained by ignorance, if not by willful injustice. But the sentence which shall go forth from this great white throne shall be so consistent with justice that even the condemned culprit himself must give his unwilling assent to it. "They stood speechless," it is said—speechless because they could neither bear the sentence nor in any way impugn it. It is a white throne since never was a verdict delivered from it of which the culprit had a right to complain. Perhaps there are some here who view this as a matter of hope, but to ungodly persons it will be the very reverse.

Oh Sinner, if you had to be judged before an impure tribunal, you might, perhaps, escape. If the King were not holy, unholiness might, perhaps, go unpunished. If the law were not perfect, offenses might be condoned. Or if the sentence were not just, you might, through partiality, escape. But where everything is so pure and white—

***"Careless sinner,
What will become of you?"***

I have thought, too, that perhaps this throne is said to be a white throne to indicate that it will be eminently conspicuous. You will have noticed that a white object can be seen from a very great distance. You may have observed, perhaps, on the Welsh mountains, a white cottage far away, standing out conspicuously. The Welsh like to make their cottages intensely white, so that though you would not have perceived it, had it been left of a stone color, you see it at once, for the bright whitewashed walls catch your eye. I suppose that a marksman would prefer a white object to aim at before almost any other color.

And this great white throne will be so conspicuous that all the millions who were dead, but who shall rise at the sound of the last trumpet, shall all see it—nor shall it be possible for a single eye to close itself against the sight! We must see it—it shall be so striking a sight that none of us will be able to prevent its coming before us. "Every eye shall see Him." Possibly it is called a white throne because of its being such a convincing contrast to all the colors of this sinful human life. There stand the crowd, and there is the great white throne. What can make them see their blackness more thoroughly than to stand there in contrast with the perfections of the Law and the Judge before whom they are standing? Perhaps that throne, all glistening, will reflect each man's character. As each unforgiven man shall look at that white throne, its dazzling whiteness will overcome him and

cover him with confusion and with terror when he sees his own defilement in contrast with it.

“O God!” he says, “how can I bear to be judged by such a One as You are? I could face the judgment seat of my fellows, for I could see imperfections in my judges, but I cannot face You, You dread Supreme, for the awful whiteness of Your throne, and the terrible splendor of Your holiness utterly overcome me! Who am I, sinner as I am, that I should dare to stand before that great white throne!”

The next word that is used by way of adjective is “great.” It was a “great white throne.” You scarcely need me to tell you that it is called a great white throne because of the greatness of Him who sits upon it. Speak of the greatness of Solomon? He was but a petty prince. Speak of the throne of the Mogul or his Celestial Majesty of China, or of the thrones of Rome and Greece before which multitudes of beings assembled? They are nothing—mere representatives of associations of the grasshoppers of the world—who are as nothing in the sight of the Lord Jehovah! A throne filled by a mortal is but a shadow of dominion. This will be a great throne because on it will sit the great God of earth, and Heaven, and Hell—the King eternal, immortal, invisible—who shall judge the world in righteousness, and His people with equity.

Brethren, you will see that this will be a “great white throne” when we remember the culprits who will be brought before it. Not a *handful* of criminals, but millions upon millions, “multitudes, multitudes, in the Valley of Decision.” And these not all of the lesser sort—not serfs and slaves alone whose miserable bodies rested from their oppressors in the silent grave—but the great ones of the earth shall be there. Not alone the downtrodden serf who toiled for nothing, and felt it sweet to die, but his tyrant master who fattened on his unrewarded toils shall be there!

Not alone the multitudes who marched to battle at their master’s bidding, and who fell beneath the shot and the shell, but the emperors and kings who planned the conflict shall be there! Crowned heads no greater than heads uncrowned. Men who were demigods among their fellows shall mix with their slaves, and be made as vile as they! What a marvelous procession! With what awe the imagination of it strikes the heart! What a pompous appearing! Ah! Ah! You downtrodden multitudes, the great Leveler has put you all upon a footing now! Death laid you in one equal grave, and now Judgment finds you standing at one equal bar to receive the sentence of One who fears no king, and dreads no tyrant—who has no respect of persons—but who deals justice alike to all!

Can you picture the sight? Land and sea are covered with the living who once were dead! Hell is empty, and the grave has lost its victims! What a sight will that be! Xerxes on his throne with a million marching before him must have beheld a grand spectacle, but what will this be? No flaunting banner, but the ensigns of eternal majesty! No gaudy courtiers, but assembled angels! No sound of drum nor roar of cannon, but the blast of the archangel’s trumpet and the harps of ten thousand times ten thousand holy ones! There will be unrivalled splendor, it is true, but not that

of heraldry and war! Mere tinsel and gewgaw shall have all departed, and in their place there shall be the splendor of the flashing lightning and the deep bass of the thunder. Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, with all His angels with Him shall descend—the pomp of Heaven being revealed among the sons of men!

It will be a great white throne because of the matters that will be tried there. It will be no mere quarrel about a suit in Chancery, or an estate in jeopardy. Our *souls* will have to be tried there! Our future, not for an age, not for one single century, but forever and forever! Upon those balances shall hang Heaven and Hell—to the right shall be distributed triumph without end. To the left destruction and confusion without a pause—and the destiny of every man and woman shall be positively declared from that tremendous throne! Can you perceive the greatness of it? You must measure Heaven! You must fathom Hell! You must compass *eternity*—and until you can do this you cannot know the greatness of this great white throne!

Great, last of all, because throughout eternity there shall always be a looking back to the transactions of that day. That day shall be unto you, you Saints, “the beginning of days,” when He shall say, “Come, you blessed of My Father.” And that day shall be to you who perish, the beginning of days, too. Just as that famous night of old in Egypt, when the first-born were spared in every house where the lamb had shed its blood was the first of days to Israel—but to Egypt the night when the first-born felt the avenging angel’s sword was a dread beginning of nights forever. Many a mother reckoned from that night when the Destroyer came, and so shall you reckon throughout a dread eternity from the day when you see this great white throne!

Turn not away your eyes from the magnificent spectacle till you have seen the glorious Person mentioned in the words, “And Him that sat on it.” I wonder whether anything I have said has made you solemnly think of the great day. I am afraid I cannot speak so as to get at your hearts, and if not, I had better be silent. But do now, for a moment, think upon Him who sat upon the great white throne. The most fitting One in all the world will sit upon that throne! It will be God, but hearken, it will also be Man. “He shall judge the world by this Man, Christ Jesus, according to my Gospel,” says the Apostle. The Judge has to be God. Who but God were fit to judge so many, and to judge so exactly? The throne is too great for any but for Him of whom it is written, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is Your scepter.”

Christ Jesus, the Son of God, will judge, and He will judge as Man as well as God. And how fitting it is that it should be so! As Man He knows our infirmities. He understands our hearts, and we cannot object to this, that our Judge should be, Himself, like we are. Who better could judge righteous judgment than One who is “bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh”? And then, there is this fitness about it. He is not only God and Man, but He is *the* Man, the Man of men! Of all men the most manly, the type and pattern of manhood. He will be the test in His own Person, for if

a man is like Christ, that man is right. But if a man is otherwise than Christ-like, that man deserves to be condemned. That wondrous Judge needs only look upon His own Character to read the Law and to review His own actions to discern whether other men's actions are right or wrong.

The thoughts of many hearts were revealed by Christ on earth, and that same Christ shall make an open exhibition of men at the Last Great Day. He shall judge them. He shall discern their spirits. He shall find out the joints and the marrow of their being—the thoughts and intents of the heart He shall lay bare. Even you, Believer, will pass the test before Him! Let no man deceive you with the delusion that you will not be judged—the sheep appeared before the great dividing Shepherd as well as the goats—those who used their talents were called to account as well as he who buried his pound, and the disciples themselves were warned that their idle words would bring them into judgment.

Nor need you *fear* a public trial. Innocence courts the light. You are not saved by being allowed to be smuggled into Heaven untested and unproved, but you will, in the righteousness of Jesus, pass the solemn test with joy! It may not be at the same moment as the wicked that the righteous shall be judged (I shall not contend for particulars), but I am clear that they *will* be judged, and that the blood and righteousness of Jesus are provided for this very cause—that they may find mercy of the Lord in that day.

O Sinner! It is far otherwise with you! Your ruin is sure when the testing time comes! There will be no witnesses needed to convict you, for the Judge knows all. The Christ whom you despised will judge you! The Savior whose mercy you trampled on—in the fountain of whose blood you would not wash, the despised and rejected of men—it is He who shall judge righteous judgment to you, and what will He say but this, “As for these, My enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, cut them in pieces before my eyes!”

II. I need a few minutes—and I have but too few left—to DRAW THE INFERENCES WHICH FLOW FROM SUCH A SIGHT AS THIS—and so turn the vision to practical account. Believer in Christ, a word in your ear. Can you see the great white throne, and Him that sits upon it? I think I see it now. Then let me search myself. Whatever profession I may make, I shall have to face that great white throne. I have passed the elders. I have been approved by the pastor. I stand accepted by the Church. But that great white throne is not passed yet.

I have borne a reputable character among my fellow Christians. I have been asked to pray in public and my prayers have been much admired, but I have not yet been weighed in the last balances—and what if I should be found wanting! Brother Christian, what about your private prayers? Can you live in neglect of the closet and yet remember that your prayers will be tried before the great white throne? Is your Bible left unread in private? Is your religion nothing but a public show and sham? Remember the great white throne, for mere pretense will not pass there!

Brother Christian, what about your heart and your treasure? Are you a mere money-hunter? Do you live as others live? Is your delight in the fleeting present? Do you have dealings with the throne of Heaven? Have you a stony heart towards Divine things? Have you little love to Christ? Do you make an empty profession, and nothing more? Oh, think of that great white throne, that great white throne! Why, there are some of you, who, when I preach a stirring sermon, feel afraid to come again to hear me! Ah, but if you are afraid of *my* voice, how will you bear His voice who shall speak in tones of thunder?

Do searching sermons seem to go through you like a blast of the north wind, chilling your very marrow and curdling your blood? Oh, but what must it be to stand before that dread tribunal? Are you doubting *now*? What will you do *then*? Can you not bear a little *self*-examination? How will you bear that *God*-examination? If the scales of earth tell you that you are lacking, what message will the scales of Heaven give you? I do warn you, fellow professors, speaking to you as I desire to speak now to my own heart, "Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith. Prove your own selves. Know you not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you, except you be reprobates?"

Having spoken a word to the Christian, I should like to say to every one of you, in remembrance of this great white throne, shun hypocrisy! Are you tempted to be baptized though you are not a Believer, in order to please parents and friends? Beware of that great white throne, and think how your insult to God will look at that Last Great Day! Are you persuaded to put on the cloak of religion because it will help your business, or make you seem respectable? Beware, you hypocrite! Beware of that great white throne, for of all the terrors that shall come forth from it, there shall be none more severe than those which shall scathe the mere professor who made a profession of religion for gain!

If you must be damned, be damned any way than as a hypocrite—for they deserve the deepest Hell who for gain make a profession of godliness. The ruin of By-Ends and Hypocrisy will be just, indeed. O you high-flying professors, whose wings are fastened on with wax, beware of the sun which will surely pour its heat upon you, for fearful will be your fall from so great a height! But there are some of you who say, "I do not make any profession of religion." Still my text has a word to you. Still I want you to judge your actions by that Last Great Day.

O Sir, how about that night of sin? "No," you say, "never mind it. Bring it not to my mind." It shall be brought to your remembrance, and that deed of sin shall be published far wider than upon the housetops, proclaimed to all the multitudes who have ever lived since the first man, and your infamy shall become a byword and a proverb among all created beings! What do you think of this, you secret sinners? You lovers of wantonness and chambering? Ah, young man, you have commenced by filching, but you will go on to be a downright thief. It is known, Sir, and, "be sure your sin will find you out." Young woman, you have begun to dally with sin, and you think none has seen you, but the most Mighty One has seen

your acts and heard your words—there is no curtain between Him and your sin!

He sees you clearly, and what will you do with these sins of yours that you think have been concealed? “It was many years ago,” you tell me. Yes, but though buried these many years to *you*, they are all alive to Him, for everything is present to the all-seeing God—and your forgotten deeds shall one day stand out present to you, also. My Hearers, I implore you, do nothing which you would not do if you thought God saw you, for He does see you! Oh, look at your actions in the light of the judgment. Oh, that secret tipping of yours—how will that look when God reveals it? That private lust of yours which nobody knows of—how would you dare to do it if you remembered that God knows it?

Young man, it is a secret, a fearful secret, and you would not whisper it in anyone’s ear—but it shall be whispered—no, it shall be *thundered* out before the world! I pray you, Friend, think of this! There is an Observer who takes notes of all that we do and will publish all to an assembled universe. And as for us all, are we ready to meet that Last Great Day? I had many things to say to you, but I cannot keep you to say them now, lest you grow weary. But if tonight the trumpet should be sounded, what would be your state of mind? Suppose that now every ear in this place should be startled with a blast most loud and dread, and a voice were heard—

**“Come to judgment,
Come to judgment, come away”?**

Supposing some of you could hide in the vaults and in the foundations, would not many of you rush to the concealment? How few of us might go down these aisles walking steadily into the open air and saying, “I am not afraid of judgment, for ‘there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.’”

Brothers and Sisters, I hope there are some of us who could go gladly to that judgment seat, even if we had to traverse the jaws of death to reach it. I hope there are some of us who can sing in our hearts—

**“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 blame.”**

It might put many of us much about to say that. It is easy to speak of full assurance, but, believe me, it is not quite so easy to have it in earnest in trying times. If some of you get the finger-ache your confidence oozes out at your joints, and if you have but a little sickness you think, “Ah, it may be cholera, what shall I do?” If you cannot bear to die, how, then, will you bear to *live forever*?

Could you not look Death in the face without a shudder—then how will you endure the Judgment? Could you gaze upon Death, and feel that he is your friend and not your foe? Could you put a skull upon your dressing table, and commune with it as your memento mori? Oh, it may well take the bravest of you to do this, and the only sure way is to come as we are

to Jesus, with no righteousness of our own to trust to, but finding all in Him! When William Carey was about to die, he ordered to have put upon his tombstone this verse—

***“A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On Christ’s kind arms I fall.
He is my strength, my righteousness,
My Jesus, and my All.”***

I would like to wake up in eternity with such a verse as that in my mind, as I wish to go to sleep in this world with such a hope as that in my heart—

***“Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to the Cross I cling.”***

Ah, I am talking about what some of us will know more of, perhaps, before this week is over! I am speaking now upon themes which you think are a long way off, but a moment may bring them near. A thousand years is a long time, but how soon it flies! One almost seems, in reading English history, to go back and shake hands with William the Conqueror—a few lives soon bring us even to the flood. You who are getting on to be forty years old, and especially you who are sixty or seventy, must feel how fast time flies. I only seem to preach a sermon one Sunday in time to get ready for the next.

Time flies with such a whirl that no express train can overtake it, and even the lightning flash seems to lag behind it. We shall soon be at the great white throne! We shall soon be at the judgment bar of God. Oh, let us be making ready for it! Let us not live so much in this present, which is but a dream—an empty show—but let us live in the real, substantial future. Oh that I could reach some heart here tonight! I have a notion that I am speaking to someone here who will not have another warning. I am sure that with such throngs as crowd here Sunday after Sunday, I never preach to the same congregation twice. There are always some here who are dead between one Sunday and another. Out of such masses as these it must be so according to the ordinary computation.

Who among you will it be who will die this week? Oh, ponder the question well! Who among you will dwell with the devouring flames? Who among you will abide with everlasting burnings? If I knew you I would gladly bedew you with tears! If I knew you who are to die this week, I would gladly come and kneel down at your side and implore you to think of eternal things. But I do not know you, and therefore, by the living God I do implore you all to fly to Jesus by faith! These are no trifles, Sirs, are they? If they are, I am but a sorry trifler, and you may go your ways and laugh at me! But if they are true and real, it becomes me to be in earnest, and much more does it become *you* to be in earnest.

“Prepare to meet your God!” He comes! Prepare now! “Now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation!” The gates of mercy are not closed! Your sin is not unpardonable! You may yet find mercy! Christ invites you. His blood drops cry to you—

***“Come and welcome,
Come and welcome,***

Sinner, come.”

Oh, may the Holy Spirit put life into these poor words of mine, and may the Lord help you to come now! The way to come, you know, is just to trust in Christ. It is all done when you trust in Christ! Throw yourselves right on Him, having nothing else to trust to. See now, my whole weight leans on the front of this platform. Should this rail give way, I fall. Lean on Christ just in that way—

***“Venture on Him, venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude.”***

If you can get a grip of the Cross, and stand there beneath the crimson canopy of the Atonement, God Himself cannot smite you, and the Last Great Day shall dawn upon you with splendor and delight, and not with gloom and terror. I must send you away, but not until all Believers present have given you an invitation to return to the Lord Jesus. To do this we will sing the following verses—

***“Return, O wanderer, to your home.
Your Father calls for you!
No longer now an exile roam
In guilt and misery,
Return, return!
Return, O wanderer, to your home,
‘Tis Jesus calls for you!
The Spirit and the bride say,
Come!
Oh now for refuge flee;
Return, return.
Return, O wanderer, to your home,
‘Tis madness to delay!
There are no pardons in the tomb,
And brief is mercy’s day.
Return! Return!”***

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THE LAMB—THE LIGHT

NO. 583

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JULY 31, 1864,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon,
to shine in it: for the Gory of God
did lighten it and the Lamb is its light.”
Revelation 21:23.***

To the lover of Jesus it is very pleasant to observe how the Lord Jesus Christ has always stood foremost in Glory from before the foundation of the world and will do so as long as eternity shall last. If we look back by faith to the time of the creation, we find our Lord with His Father as one brought up with Him. “When there were no depths, I was brought forth, when there were no fountains abounding with water. While as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I was there: when He set a compass upon the face of the depth: when He established the clouds above: when He strengthened the fountains of the deep.”

He was that Wisdom who was never absent from the Father’s counsels in the great work of creation, whether it was the birth of angels or the making of worlds of men. One of the first events ever recorded in Scripture history is, “When He brings in the First-Begotten into the world, He says, let all the angels of God worship Him.” Such words were never spoken of any *creature*, but only of Him who is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father. He is glorious forever—the First-Born of every creature, the Head of the household of God—the express Image of His Person and the fullness of His Glory.

In the earliest periods of which we possess any knowledge, Jesus Christ stood exalted far above all principalities and powers and every name that is named. When human history dawns and the history of God’s Church commences, you still find Christ preeminent. All the types of the early Church are only to be opened up by Him as the key. It would have been nothing to be of the seed of Israel if it had not been for the promise of the Shiloh that was to come! It would have been in vain that the sacrifices were offered in the wilderness, that the ark abode between the curtains, or that the golden pot which had the manna was covered with the Mercy Seat if there had not been a real signification of Christ in all these. The religion of the Jew would have been very *emptiness* if it had not been for Christ who is the Substance of the former shadows.

Run on to the period of the Prophets and in all their prophesying do you not see additional glimpses of the Glory of Christ? When they mount to the greatest heights of eloquence do they not speak of Him? Whenever their soul is carried up, as in a chariot of fire, is not the mantle left behind them a word telling of the Glory of Jesus? They could never glow with fervent heat except concerning Him. Even when they denounced the judg-

ments of God, they paused between the crashes of God's thunder to let some drops of mercy fall on man in words of promise concerning Him who was to come. It is always Christ from the opening leaf of Genesis to the closing note of Malachi—Christ, Christ, Christ—and nothing but Christ!

It is very delightful, Brethren, when we come to such a text as this, to observe that what was in the beginning is now and ever shall be, world without end, Amen. In that millennial state of which the text speaks, Jesus Christ is to be the light and all its Glory is to proceed from Him. And if the text speaks concerning Heaven and the blessedness hereafter, all its light and blessings and Glory stream from Him—"The Lamb is its light." If we read the text and think of its connection with us today we must confess that all our joy and peace flow from the same fountain! Jesus Christ is the Sun of Righteousness to us as well as to the saints above.

I shall try, then—though I am conscious of my feebleness to handle so great a matter—I shall try as best I can to extol the Lord Jesus, first of all, in the excellence of His Glory in the millennial state. Next, in Heaven. And then, thirdly, in the condition of every heavenly-minded man who is on his way to Paradise—in all these cases, "the Lamb is its light."

I. First, then, a few words concerning THE MILLENNIAL PERIOD. We are not given to prophesying in this place. There are some of our Brethren who delight much in that. Perhaps it is well that there should be some who should devote their time and thoughts to that portion of God's Word which abounds in mysteries. But for our part we have been so engaged in seeking to win souls and in endeavoring to contend with the common errors of the day that we have scarcely ventured to land upon the rock of Patmos, or to peer into the dark recesses of Daniel and Ezekiel.

Yet this much we have ever learned most clearly—that on this earth, where sin and Satan gained victory over God through the fall of man—Christ is to achieve a complete triumph over all His foes! Not on another battlefield, but on this. The fight is not over. It commenced by Satan's attack upon our mother Eve and Christ has never left the field from that day until now. The fight has lasted thousands of years. It grows sterner every day. It is not over. And it never shall be over until the serpent's head is effectually bruised and Christ Jesus shall have gotten unto Himself a perfect victory.

Do not think the Lord will allow Satan to have even so much as one battle to call his own. In the great campaign, when the history shall be written, it shall be said, "The Lord reigns." All along the line He has gotten the victory. There shall be victory in every place and spot. And the conquest of Jesus shall be complete and perfect. We believe, then, that in this very earth where superstition has set up its idols, Jesus Christ shall be adored! Here, where blasphemy has defiled human lips, songs of praise shall rise from islands of the sea and from the dwellers among the rocks!

In this very country, among those very men who became the tools of Satan and whose dwelling places were dens of mischief—there shall be found instruments of righteousness—and lips to praise God and occasions of eternal Glory unto the Most High. O Satan, you may boast of what you have done and you may think your scepter still secure, but He comes, even He who rides upon the white horse of victory! And when He

comes you shall not stand against Him, for the two-edged sword which goes out of His mouth shall drive you and your hosts back to the place from where you came. Let us rejoice that Scripture is so clear and so explicit upon this great doctrine of the future triumph of Christ over the whole world!

We are not bound to enter into any particulars concerning what form that triumph shall assume. We believe that the Jews will be converted and that they will be restored to their own land. We believe that Jerusalem will be the central metropolis of Christ's kingdom. We also believe that all the nations shall walk in the light of the glorious city which shall be built at Jerusalem. We expect that the Glory which shall have its center there shall spread over the whole world—covering it as with a sea of holiness, happiness and delight! For this we look with joyful expectation.

During that period the Lord Himself, by His glorious Presence, shall set aside the outward rites of His sanctuary. "The city has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it." Perhaps sun and moon here are intended those ordinary means of enlightenment which the Church now needs. We need the Lords' Supper to remind us of the body and blood of Christ. But when Christ comes there will be no Lord's Suppers, for it is written, "Do this until He comes." But when He comes, then will be the final period of the remembrance-token because the Person of Christ will be in our midst.

Neither will you need ministers any longer any more than men need candles when the sun rises. They shall not say one to another, "Know the Lord: for all shall know Him, from the least to the greatest." There may be even in that period certain solemn assemblies and Sundays but they will not be of the same kind as we have now—for the whole earth will be a temple and every day will be a Sunday! The avocations of men will all be priestly—they shall be a nation of priests—distinctly so and they shall, day without night, serve God in His temple. Everything to which they set their hand shall be a part of the song which shall go up to the Most High.

Oh, blessed day! Would God it had dawned, when these temples should be left, because the whole world should be a temple for God. But whatever may be the splendors of that day—and truly here is a temptation to let our imagination revel—however bright may be the walls set with chalcedony and amethyst, however splendid the gates which are of one pearl—whatever may be the magnificence set forth by the "streets of gold," this we know—that the sum and substance, the light and Glory of the whole will be the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, "for the Glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is its light."

Now I want the Christian to meditate over this. In the highest, holiest and happiest era that shall ever dawn upon this poor earth, Christ is to be her light! When she puts on her wedding garment and adorns herself as a bride is adorned with jewels, Christ is to be her Glory and her beauty! There shall be no earrings in her ears made with other gold than that which comes from His mine of love. There shall be no crown set upon her brow fashioned by any other hand than His hands of wisdom and of Grace. She sits to reign, but it shall be upon His Throne. She feeds, but it shall be upon His bread. She triumphs, but it shall be because of the

might which ever belongs to Him who is the Rock of Ages! Come then, Christian, contemplate for a moment your beloved Lord!

Jesus, in a millennial age, shall be the light and the Glory of the city of the new Jerusalem. Observe then, that Jesus makes the light of the millennium because His Presence will be that which distinguishes that age from the present. That age is to be akin to Paradise. Paradise God first made upon earth and Paradise God will last make. Satan destroyed it. And God will never have defeated His enemy until He has reestablished Paradise—until once again a new Eden shall bless the eyes of God's creatures! Now the very Glory and privilege of Eden I take to be not the river which flowed through it with its four branches, nor that it came from the land of Havilah which has dust of gold. I do not think the Glory of Eden lay in its grassy walks, or in the boughs bending with luscious fruit.

I think its glory lay in this—that the “Lord God walked in the garden in the cool of the day.” Here was Adam's highest privilege—that he had companionship with the Most High! In those days angels sweetly sang that the tabernacle of God was with man and that He did dwell among them. Brethren, the Paradise which is to be regained for us will have this for its essential and distinguishing mark—that the Lord shall dwell among us! This is the name by which the city is to be called—Jehovah Shammah—the Lord is there. It is true we have the Presence of Christ in the Church now—“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” We have the promise of His constant indwelling—“Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.”

But still that is vicariously by His Spirit. Soon He is to be personally with us. That very Man who once died upon Calvary is to live here! He—that same Jesus—who was taken up from us shall come in like manner as He was taken up from the gazers of Galilee. Rejoice, rejoice, Beloved, that He comes, actually and really comes! And this shall be the joy of that age—that He is among His saints and dwells in them, with them, and talks and walks in their midst. The Presence of Christ it is which will be the means of the peace of the age. In that sense Christ will be the light of it, for He is our peace. It will be through His Presence that the lion shall eat straw like an ox, that the leopard shall lie down with the kid.

It will not be because men have had more enlightenment and have learned better through advancing civilization, that they shall beat their swords into plowshares. It is notorious that the more civilized nations become, the more terrible are their instruments of destruction. And when they do go to war, the more bloody and protracted their wars become. I venture to say that if in a thousand years' time Christ shall not come, if war were to break out, where we now fight for ten or twenty years we shall have the venomous hatred of one another and the means of carrying on a war for a century!

Instead of advancing in peacefulness, I do fear the world has gone back. We certainly cannot boast now of living in calm days of peace. But Christ's Presence shall change the hearts of men. Then spontaneously, at sight of the great Prince of Peace, they shall cast away their armor and their weapons of war and shall learn war no more. In that sense, then, because His Presence will be the cause of that happy period, He is the light of it.

Again, Christ's Presence is to that period its special instruction. They shall need no candle, neither light of the sun, nor of the moon. Why? Because Christ's Presence will be sufficiently instructive to the sons of men. When the Lord Jesus Christ comes, superstition will not need an earnest testimony to confute it—it will hide its head. Idolatry will not need the missionary to preach against it—the idols He shall utterly abolish and shall cast them to the moles and to the bats. Men and women, at the sight of Christ, and at the knowledge that He is reigning gloriously upon earth, will give up their unbelief.

The Jew will recognize the Son of David and the Gentile will rejoice to worship Him who was once slain as the King of the Jews. The Presence of Christ shall do more for the enlightenment of His Church than the teaching of all her officers and ministers in all ages. She shall then, in the sight of her Lord, come to a fullness of knowledge and have a perfect understanding of God's Word. Once again, Christ will be the light of that period in the sense of being its Glory. Oh, it is the glory of the Christian now to think that Christ reigns in Heaven! In this we boast in every season of depression and when we are downcast—that He is exalted and sits at the right hand of the Father!

But the glory of that age shall be that Christ is come, that He sits upon the throne of David as well as upon the Throne of God—that His enemies bow before Him and lick the dust. Think, my Brethren, of the splendor of that time when from every nation and land they shall bring Him tribute! When praises shall ascend from every land! When the streets of that city shall be thronged every day with adoring worshippers! When He shall ride forth conquering and to conquer and His saints shall follow Him upon white horses!

We sometimes have high days and holidays when kings and princes go abroad and the streets are full and people crowd even to the chimney pots to see them as they ride along. But what shall it be to see King Jesus crowned with the crown which His mother crowned Him in the day of His espousals? What a contrast between the cavalcade winding its way along the streets of Jerusalem, along the Via Dolorosa up to the mount of execution—what a contrast, I say! Then women followed Him and wept, but now men will follow Him and shout for joy! Then He carried His Cross, but now He shall ride in state! Then His enemies mocked Him and gloated their eyes with His sufferings—now His enemies shall be put to confusion and covered with shame! And upon Himself shall His crown flourish! Then it was the hour of darkness and the time of the Prince of the Pit, but now it shall be the day of light and the victory of Emmanuel and the sounding of His praise both on earth and in Heaven!

Contemplate this thought. And though I speak of it so feebly, yet it may ravish your hearts with transport that Christ is the Sun of that long-expected, that blessed day! Christ shall be the highest mountain of all the hills of joy, the widest river of all the streams of delight! Whatever there may be of magnificence and of triumph, Christ shall be the center and soul of it all! Oh, to be present and to see Him in His own light—the King of kings and Lord of lords!

II. And now we will turn our thoughts another way from the millennial period to THE STATE OF THE GLORIFIED IN HEAVEN ITSELF. “The city has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it.” The inhabitants of the better world are independent of creature comforts. Let us think that over for a minute. We have no reason to believe that they daily pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.” Their bodies shall dwell in perpetual youth. They shall have no need of raiment. Their white robes shall never wear out, neither shall they ever be defiled.

Having food and raiment on earth we are content, but in Heaven, “they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” Yet the fields yield them neither flax nor any other material for clothing, neither do the acres of Heaven yield them bread. They are satisfied by leaning upon God, needing not the creature for support. They need no medicine to heal their disease, “for the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick.”

They need no sleep to recruit their fatigue and although sleep is sweet and balmy—God’s own medicine—yet they rest not day nor night, but unweariedly praise Him in His temple. They need no social ties in Heaven. We need here the associations of friendship and of family love, but they are neither married nor are given in marriage there. Whatever comfort they may derive from association with their fellows is something extra and beyond—they do not need any—their God is enough. They shall need no teachers there. They shall doubtless commune with one another concerning the things of God and tell one another the strange things which the Lord has worked for them, but they shall not need this by way of *instruction*. They shall all be taught of the Lord, for in Heaven “the Glory of God does lighten it and the Lamb is its light.”

There is an utter independence in Heaven, then, of all the creatures. No sun and no moon are wanted—no, no creatures whatever! Here we lean upon the friendly arm, but there they lean upon their Beloved and upon Him alone. Here we must have the help of our companions, but there they find all they want in Christ alone. Here we look to the meat which perishes and to the raiment which decays before the moth, but there they find everything in God. We have to use a bucket to get water from the well, but there they drink from the wellhead and put their lips down to the Living Water. Here the angels bring us blessings, but we shall want no messengers from Heaven then.

They need no Gabriels there to bring their love-notes from God, for there they see Him face to face. Oh, what a blessed time shall that be, when we shall have mounted above every second cause and shall hang upon the bare arm of God! What a glorious hour when God and not His creatures, God and not His works, but God *Himself*, Christ *Himself* shall be our daily joy!—

**“Plunged in the Godhead’s deepest sea,
And lost in His immensity.”**

Our souls shall then have attained the perfection of bliss. While in Heaven it is clear that the glorified are quite independent of creature aid—do not forget that they are entirely dependent for their joy upon Jesus Christ. He is their sole spiritual light. They have nothing else in Heaven to give them perfect satisfaction but Himself.

The language here used, “the Lamb is its light,” may be read in two or three ways. By your patience, let us so read it. In Heaven Jesus is the light in the sense of joy, for light is ever in Scripture the emblem of joy. Darkness betokens sorrow but the rising of the sun indicates the return of holy joy. Christ is the Joy of Heaven. Do they rejoice in golden harps, in palm branches and white robes? They may do so, but they only rejoice in these things as love-gifts from Him. Their joy is compounded by this—“Jesus chose us, Jesus loved us, Jesus bought us, Jesus washed us, Jesus robed us, Jesus kept us, Jesus glorified us: here we are entirely through the Lord Jesus, through Him alone.”

Each one of these thoughts shall be to them like a cluster from the vines of Eshcol. Why I think there is an eternal source of joy in that one thought, “Jesus bought me with His blood.” Oh, to sit on the mountains of Heaven and look across to the lowly hill of Calvary and see the Savior bleed! What emotions of joy shall stir the depths of our soul when we reflect that there upon the bloody tree He counted not His life dear unto Him that He might redeem us unto God!—

***“Calvary’s summit shall I trace,
View the heights and depths of Grace,
Count the purple drops and say,
‘Thus my sins were washed away.’ ”***

In Glory they think of the Character and Person of Jesus and these are wells of delight to them. Thus they muse—Jesus is eternal. God. His enemies reviled Him but still He is God. Jesus became the virgin’s Child. Jesus lived a life of holiness and Jesus died. But see what triumph springs from His condescension and His shame—He rises, He ascends and leads captivity captive—He scatters gifts among men! He reigns over earth and Hell and Heaven—King of kings and Lord of lords. “The government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, The Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

When I have listened to Handel’s music in “The Messiah,” where that great musician wakes every instrument to praise the name of Jesus, I have felt ready to die with excess of delight that such music should ever have been composed by mortal man to the honor of our great Messiah. But what will be the music of celestial choirs? How would such hearts as ours burst and such souls as ours leap out of their bodies if they could but know, while here, such joys as celestials know above!

But, Beloved, our faculties shall be strengthened, our capacities shall be enlarged, our whole being shall be expanded and thus we shall be able to bear the full swell of seraphic music and join in it without fainting from delight, while they sing of the Glory of the Son of Man—the Son of God! Christ is the Light of Heaven, then, because He is the Substance of its joy. Light may be viewed in another sense. Light is the cause of beauty. That is obvious to you all. Take the light away and there is no beauty anywhere. The fairest woman charms the eye no more than a heap of ashes when the sun has departed. Your garden may be bright with many colored flowers, but when the sun goes down you cannot know them from the grass which borders them.

You look upon the trees, all fair with the verdure of summer—but when the sun goes down they are all hung in black. Without light no radiance

flashes from the sapphire, no peaceful ray proceeds from the pearl. There is nothing of beauty left when light is gone. Light is the mother of beauty. In such sense the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Light of Heaven—that is to say, all the beauty of the saints above comes from God Incarnate. Their excellence, their joy, their triumph, their glory, their ecstatic bliss all spring from Him. As planets, they reflect the light of the Sun of Righteousness. They live as beams proceeding from the central orb, as streams leaping from the eternal fountain.

If He withdrew, they must die. If His Glory were veiled, their glory must expire. Think of this, Christian, and I am sure you will be reminded how true this is beneath the sky, as well as above, that if light is the mother of beauty, Christ is the Light! There is nothing good, nor lovely, nor gracious about any one of us except as we get it from Christ and from Christ Jesus alone. “The Lamb is its light.” Another meaning of light in Scripture is knowledge. Ignorance is darkness. Now in Heaven they need no candle, nor light of the sun because they receive light enough from Christ—Christ being the fountain of all they know.

I think it is Dr. Dick who speaks about the enjoyments of Heaven consisting very likely in going from star to star and viewing the works of God in different portions of His universe, admiring the anatomy of living creatures, studying geology, ferrying across the waves of ether and voyaging from world to world. I do not believe in such a Heaven for a moment! I do not conceive it a worthy employment for immortal spirits, and, if there were nothing else to make me think so, the text would be enough. “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it.” There is no need of the works of God to give instruction to its inhabitants, “for the Glory of God did lighten it. “The Glory, not of God’s works, but of God’s Son, is their glorious Light—

***“The spacious earth and spreading flood
Proclaim the wise and powerful God.
And Your rich glories from afar
Sparkle in every rolling star.
But in His looks a glory stands,
The noblest labor of Your hands.
The pleasing luster of His eyes
Outshines the wonders of the skies.”***

They need no light of the sun and moon where Jesus is. However well the sun and moon may tell of God, we shall not need them from day to day to send forth their light throughout all the earth and their word unto the end of the world, for the Glory of Christ will teach us all we wish to learn. And beholding the unveiled Glory of God will be far better than prying into the works of Nature even though we had an angel’s power of discovery. We shall know more of Christ in five minutes, when we get to Heaven, than we shall know in all our years on earth. Dr. Owen was a master of theology, but the smallest child who goes to Heaven from a Sunday school knows more of Christ after being in Heaven five minutes, than Dr. Owen did.

John Calvin searched very deep and Augustine seemed to come to the very door of the great secret. But Augustine and Calvin would be but children on the first form there—I mean if they knew no more than on earth. Oh, what manifestations of God there will be! Dark dealings of Providence

which you never understood before will then be seen without the light of a candle or of the sun. Many doctrines puzzled you and you could not find the clue to the labyrinth of mystery. But there all will be simple and plain so that the wayfaring man may run and understand it. You have had many experiences and tossing to and fro and you have felt your ignorance, your corruption and weakness. But there you shall see to the very bottom of human nature—you shall understand the virulence of man's depravity and the heights of God's Sovereignty—the marvels of His electing love and the magnificence of His Divine power by which He has made us to be part-takers of the Divine Nature—

***“There you shall see and hear and know
All you desired or wished below,
And every power find sweet employ
In that eternal world of joy.”***

And this knowledge, I say, shall not come from any inferior agent but from the Lord God who shall be your Glory and from Jesus Christ Himself who shall teach you all Truth. I must not dwell longer on this point except to say this one thing, that light also means manifestation. “Everyone that does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that does truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are worked in God.” Light manifests. In this world it does not yet appear how great we must be made. God's people are a hidden people—their life is hid with Christ in God. They possess God's secret and that secret other men cannot discover.

Christ in Heaven is the great revealer of God's mind. And when He gets His people there, He will touch them with the wand of His own love and change them into the image of His manifested Glory. They were poor and wretched but what a transformation! Their rags drop off and they are acknowledged as princes. They were stained with sin and infirmity, but one touch of His finger and they are bright as the sun and clear as crystal—transformed even as He was upon Mount Tabor—whiter than any fuller can make them.

They were ignorant and weak on earth but when He shall teach them, they shall know even as they are known. They were buried in dishonor but they are raised in glory. They were sown in the grave in weakness but they are raised in power. They were carried away by the hands of remorseless Death but they arise to immortality and life. Oh, what a manifestation! Light is sown for the righteous and Christ is the sacred rain that brings the harvest above ground. The righteous are always pearls but they are hidden, as it were, in the oyster and Christ brings them forth. They were always diamonds, they were far away in the Golconda of sin. But Christ has fetched them up from the deep mines. They were always stars but they were hidden behind the clouds. Christ, like a swift wind, has blown the clouds away and now they shine like stars in the firmament forever and ever.

In this sense Christ is the Light of Heaven, because it is through Him that the true and real character of all the saints has been manifested. Come, my Soul, take wing a moment—it is not far for you to fly—mount and walk the golden streets and as you walk you shall see nothing but Jesus glorified! Come up to the Throne and you shall see Christ on it. Sit

down and listen to the song—Christ is the theme! Go to the banquet—Christ is the meat! Mingle with the dancers—Christ is their joy! Make you one in their great assemblies and Christ is the God they worship—“Worthy the Lamb that died,” they cry—

**“To be exalted thus—
‘Worthy the Lamb,’ our lips reply,
For He was slain for us.”**

III. Let us turn to our last thought. And here I hope we can speak experimentally, whereas on the other two points we could only speak by faith in the promise of God. THE HEAVENLY MAN’S STATE MAY BE SET FORTH IN THESE WORDS. First, then, even on earth the heavenly man’s joy does not depend upon the creature. Brethren, in a certain sense we can say today that, “the city has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it.” We love and prize the happy brightness which the sun scatters upon us. As for the moon, who does not admire the fair moonlight when the waves are silvered and silent Nature wears the plumage of the dove?

But we do not need the sun or the moon! We can do without them for the Sun of Righteousness has risen with healing beneath His wings. There are Brothers and Sisters here this morning who are very happy and yet it is long since they saw the sun. Shut up in perpetual night, through blindness, they need not the light of the sun nor of the moon, for the Lord God is their Glory—Christ is their Light. If our eyes should be put out, we could say, “Farewell, sweet light, farewell, bright sun and moon—we prize you well, but we can do without you—Christ Jesus is to us as the light of seven days.”

As we can do without these two most eminent creatures, so we can be happy without other earthly blessings. Our dear friends are very precious to us—we love our wife and children, our parents and our friends—but we do not need them. May God spare them for us! But if they were taken it does not come to a matter of absolute need, for you know, Beloved, there is many a Christian who has been bereft of all and he thought, as the props were taken away one after another, that he should die of very grief. But he did not die—his faith surmounted every wave and he still rejoices in his God!

I know that at the thought of those dear ones who are taken from you the sluices of your grief are drawn up, but still I hope you will not be so false to Christ as to deny what I now say—that His Presence can make amends for all losses—that the smile of His face will make a paradise so sweet that no sorrow or sighing shall be heard in it—

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

It is a very happy thing to be placed in circumstances where one knows no lack of bread—to have a house, a comfortable home and sufficient monies for our family is very pleasant—but O dear Friends, if it comes to actual need, the Christian does not want this! He needs no sun nor moon even here! Look at the chosen sons of poverty—they toil from morning to night and never get a single inch beyond. Living from hand to mouth they

are happy! Ah, some of them infinitely happier than the rich man with all his sumptuous fares and the fine linen with which he wraps himself. Why there have been men reduced to all but beggary who have rejoiced far more in their poverty than others in their wealth—we have seen some of God's saints in the workhouse—or lingering in a dark ill-furnished alms room and we have heard them speak as joyously about God and their state as if they were dwelling in mansions or palaces!

Yes, many a poor child of God has learned to sing—

***“I would not change my blessed estate
For all the world calls good or great.
And while my faith can keep her hold,
I envy not the sinner's gold.”***

For “this city has no need of the sun, nor of the moon, to shine in it, for the Glory of God does lighten it and the Lamb is its light.” Health, too—who can prize it enough? When stretched upon the bed of sickness—then we begin to know how priceless a gift was a sound body! But ah, the Christian, though he loves health can do without it. I have heard of Christians who have been blind and who have been bedridden and have not stirred from their bed for many years. They could scarcely lift their hands through paralysis and never had stood upon their feet for many years through some stroke of God's hand. Yet they have delighted themselves in the Lord!

They have laid there ill-nursed, ill-cared for—simply living to illustrate to what degree a mortal man may become a mass of suffering and a prodigy of grief! And yet, as I have sometimes stood by such bedsides, I have heard more rapturous expressions concerning present joy and future prospects than from God's strongest saints in their healthiest hours! The dying girl, when consumption has paled her cheek and taken the flesh from off her poor aching bones, has nevertheless appeared in a sacred majesty of might which showed me that she needed no moon nor sun to lighten her, no health nor strength to give her spirits—for the Presence of Christ made her conqueror in the extremity of weakness and victorious in the grim presence of Death itself!

The Christian, then, dear Friends, leans upon the arm of God—he has pressed through the crowd of creatures—he has bid them all retire that he might live nearer to his All-Sufficient Lord! And if, when he has reached his Lord, the creatures turn their backs and go away, he says, “There, you may all go! I have *Him* now! I embrace Him now! He has kissed me with the kisses of His lips. You may spit on me and you will—now He has spoken softly to me—you may curse me if you please. Now that He has told me I am His and He is mine, even my father and mother may forsake me, for the Lord has taken me up.” Yes, the heavenly man, even before he gets to Heaven has no need of the sun nor of the moon, for the Glory of God does lighten him.

We finish by observing that such a man, however, has great need of Christ—he cannot get on without Christ. O Beloved, if the sun were struck from the spheres what a poor, dark, dreary world this would be! We should go groping about, longing for the grave. But that would be nothing compared with our misery if Christ were taken away! O Christian,

what would you do without a Savior? We should be of all men the most miserable—we who have once known Him!

Ah, you who do not know Christ—you can get on pretty well without Him—like a poor slave who has never known liberty and rests content in bondage. The bird in its cage which never did fly over the fields—which has been born in the cage—can be pretty easy. But after we have once stretched our wings and once know what liberty means we cannot be shut out from our Lord. As the dove mourns itself to death when its mate is taken away, so should we if Christ were gone. We can do without light, without friendship, without life—but we cannot live without our Savior! Oh, to be without Christ? My Soul, what would you do in the world without Him in the midst of its temptations and its cares? What would you do in the morning without Him when you wake up and look forward to the day's battle?

What would you do if He did not put His hand upon you and say, "Fear not, I am with you"? And what would you do at night, when you come home jaded and weary, if there were no prayer, no door of access between you and Christ? What should we do without Christ in our trials, our sicknesses? What should we do when we come to die with no one to make our dying bed feel soft as downy pillows? Oh, if the infidel's laugh has truth in it, it may well ring bitterly in our ears, for it were a bitter truth to us. No Christ? Then to die is dreadful, indeed!

To have such high hopes and to have them all blasted! High, loud boasting and to have our mouths stopped forever! But, Beloved, we need not suppose such a thing for we know that our Redeemer lives and we know that He never forsakes the work of own hand. Married as He is to our souls, He will never sue for divorce against any one of His dear people, but He will hold and bless us till we die. And we on our part will confess of our spiritual life that the Lamb is its light. Of every day and every night—of every joy and every sorrow—the Lamb has been until now our light and shall be till we die.

If this is so, how dark is the case of those who do not know the Lamb? In what misery and ignorance do you grope who do not know the Savior? Would you know Christ, would you have the happiness of resting upon His bosom? Trust Him, then—for whoever trusts Him is saved. To trust Christ is that saving faith which brings the soul out of condemnation. "He that believes on Him is not condemned." Trust, guilty as you are—trust to His Atonement and it shall wash you! Trust to His power—it shall prevail for you! Trust to His wisdom—it shall protect you! Trust to His heart—it shall love you, world without end. Amen.

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THE BARRIER

NO. 1590

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 27, 1881,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“And there shall in nowise enter into it anything that defiles, neither whatever works abomination, or makes a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.”
Revelation 21:27.***

THE text refers to the glorified Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. That perfected company of the elect and sanctified is set forth in this wonderful chapter under the image of a city descending “from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” Her workday dress all laid aside, the bride appears in garments of needlework and raiment of worked gold. The militant Church, the Church of the present day, is comparable to a tent and is well imaged by the Tabernacle in the wilderness—it is lit up within by the Glory of God’s Presence and covered without by the fiery cloudy pillar of His eternal Providence! But to the eyes of men it is mean and inconsiderable, for verily it does not yet appear what it shall be. By-and-by this same Church which, today, is likened unto a structure of curtains readily removed from place to place, shall become a city—fixed, permanent, high-walled and compact—a “city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.”

The comforts and trials of the desert life shall be exchanged for the quiet and comfort of a city dwelling. There shall be nothing of the wilderness about the Church triumphant—it shall be a right royal abode, the metropolis of the universe, the palace of the great King! Everything that is lustrous, pure, precious, majestic shall be there. Rare and priceless things which are now the peculiar treasure of kings shall be the common possession of all the sanctified. The Church shall be no longer despised, but shall sit as a queen among the nations while at her feet they shall heap up all their glory and honor. In that Church there shall remain nothing for which men shall reproach her, but everything shall be manifested in her for which they shall do her honor. Her very streets to be trod on shall be of pure gold like unto transparent glass and her lowest course of stones shall be of jasper.

Everything about the perfected Church shall be the best of the best—she shall be recognized as being the fairest among women, the bride, the Lamb’s wife, the crown and flower of the universe! We read the sparkling figures of John’s vision as emblems of moral and spiritual excellence, but we doubt not that *beyond* the spiritual riches of the Church, all materialism will also be at her disposal and the restored creation shall bring her choicest beauties to adorn the chosen bride of the Lamb. We have said that the glorified Church will be the crown of the new creation and it is into the new heavens and the new earth that she is represented as coming

down from God. He that sits upon the Throne said, "Behold, I make all things new."

The creation which is round about us at this hour waxes old and is ready to vanish away. Wise men tell us that there are evident preparations in the bowels of the earth for a burning up of the earth and of all the works of men that are upon it, for its center is an ocean of fire. God shall but speak and as once the waters leaped upon the world and utterly destroyed all things that were upon it, so shall He call to the waves of flame and they shall rise from their hidden furnaces to melt all things with their fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness! The former things shall have passed away and a new creation shall dwell beneath the new heavens, filling up the new earth—and the flower and perfection of the new creation shall be the Church of the Living god in her full bloom and perfection!

Even now the regenerate are a kind of first fruits of God's creatures, the forerunners of the renewed universe. But then they shall be its center and glory! The new birth is the beginning of the new creation—we lead the way, even we who are the Church of the First-born—but the whole creation groans to follow us so as to be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God! It is the glorified Church, I say, that is here spoken of and, therefore, the text may be said to refer to Heaven, for at the present moment the nucleus of the glorified Church is in Heaven and from Heaven every defiled thing must be shut out.

Hence, too, it may refer to the kingdom of the millennial age, when the saints will reign with Christ upon the earth for a thousand years, when even upon this battlefield our conquering Leader shall be crowned with victory and where His blood was shed, His Throne shall be set up, for among the sons of men shall He triumph, even among those that spat in His face. The text may also be read as including the eternal world of future bliss, for of that glorious, endless, undefiled inheritance, the Church glorified will be the possessor—but out of her shall long before have been gathered all things that offend and them that do iniquity.

From Heaven and from all heavenly joys and states, sin must be shut out. Into the perfected Church there shall never enter anything that defiles and from all its honors and rewards every polluted person is shut out by immutable decree. I should like you, for a minute or two, to think of that perfected Church as she is described in this chapter, for it is a description worthy of the most profound study. What glory will surround the risen saints in their capacity as the city of God—"having the glory of God"—says the 11th verse. What a glory of glories is this! Even now, my Brothers and Sisters, you that are in Christ possess the Grace of God, but you shall, by-and-by, conspicuously shine with the Glory of God! At present you share in the dishonor which falls to the lot of your Master and His cause among a wicked generation, but then you shall share in the Glory which is the reward of the travail of His soul. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

How glorious will that Church be whose light shall be the Presence of God, Himself—light in which the nations of them that are saved shall rejoice! O my God, write my name among them! And to that end write me among Your persecuted saints below! Well may we be content to endure what little shame shall come upon the Church militant on earth if we may participate in the honor of the Church glorified above, for this is a glory which excels, “having the Glory of God.” The city is described as exhibiting great massiveness, for the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. It is a solid square, perfect and compact—

***“Your walls are made of precious stones,
Your bulwarks diamond square.”***

What a Church will the Church of God be in those happier days! Now she is as a rolling thing, removed as readily as a shepherd’s tent—but then she shall stand firm as a cube which rests upon its base!

We watch the Church of God, sometimes, with trepidation and alarm, for though we know that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against her, yet her feebleness makes the timid tremble. But in her state after the Resurrection there shall remain no signs of feebleness, for that which was sown in weakness shall be raised in power! She shall be a city the like of which has never been beheld, whose foundation shall be deeper than the depths beneath and her towers shall reach above the clouds! No institution shall exist so long or flourish so abundantly as the Church of the Living god! When you think of the massiveness of the Church of God settled in her place by the Almighty, Himself, who has established her, remember at the same time her vastness, for a multitude that no man can number shall be comprehended among her inhabitants—her census shall prove her citizens to be as the stars of Heaven for multitude!

Her stones shall not lie cut about as a little heap, but from her vast foundation the living stones shall rise course upon course, 12 foundations of jewels, till “the mountain of the Lord’s House shall be exalted above the hills.” I say again, write my name down among the dwellers in the great city! What higher honor can I crave than to have it said, “This man was born there”? To be numbered with princes; to be named with emperors—what of it? Your golden fleece, silken garter and gilded stars are all poor toys—true glory lies in being part and parcel of the Church—today despised and rejected by men, but which shall, before long, look forth fair as the sun and astonish the world with the brightness of her rising! Ambition’s self needs ask no more than citizenship in the heavenly Jerusalem.

The perfection of the Church is set forth in her being foursquare, her value in the sight of God by her walls being composed of the rarest gems and her delights in the variety of the sparkling jewels which bedeck her. There is scarcely one precious stone omitted of those that were known to Orientals, while some are mentioned which are scarcely known to us at all. All manner of joys and treasures and pleasures and delights, every form and shade of excellence, virtue and bliss shall belong to the perfected ones when their number and character shall be complete and they shall be comparable to the city of God! The safety and quiet of the Church is set forth by her gates forever open. In times of war the city gates are fast closed, but for the New Jerusalem there will remain no fear of foe, no need to set a watch against an invader.

Gog and Magog will be slain and Armageddon's battle fought and finished—unbroken rest shall be the portion of the glorified. Write my name among them, O my God, and permit me to enter into Your rest! Best of all, remark how holy the Church will be. She shall have no temple within her walls, for this simple reason, that she shall be *all* Temple. She shall have no spot reserved for sacred uses, because all shall be “holiness unto the Lord.” The Divine Presence shall be in all and over all and this shall be the joy of her joy! “The Glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof.”

Brethren, the glory of the Church even here below is the Presence of God in her midst, but what will that Presence be when it shines forth in noonday brightness—when spirits strengthened for the vision shall endure with transport the full splendor of Jehovah's throne? Tongue cannot tell the glory, for thought cannot conceive it! Write my name among the blessed who shall see Jehovah's face! O living God, my soul thirsts after You! To dwell in Your Presence is the summit of the soul's delight! To be with You where You are and to behold Your Glory is the Heaven of Heaven! To what beyond this can thoughts aspire?

I. It being declared that the glorified Church is to be all this and a great deal more, of which we cannot now speak particularly, we may well long to enter within her gates of pearl. But what says the text? I beseech you listen attentively to the solemn sound OF THE WORDS OF EXCLUSION—“There shall in nowise enter into it anything that defiles, neither whatever works abomination, or makes a lie.” Listen, I say, to these words of exclusion, though it sounds like a death-knell in my ears! Learn that it can be abundantly justified to the conscience of all thoughtful men! Learn that your own soul, if it is honest, must set its seal to the sentence of exclusion. This is no arbitrary decree, it is a solemn declaration to which all holy spirits give their willing assent and consent—an ordinance of which even the excluded, themselves, shall admit is just.

For, first, it is not meet that so royal and Divine a corporation as the glorified Church of God should be ruined by defilement. God forbid that “her light, which is like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal,” should ever be dimmed by the breath of *sin*! How beautiful was this fair world in the early morning of her creation, when the dew of her youth glistened upon her and the sunlight of God made her face to shine. Keep watch and ward, you shining ones, that this beauty be not marred! Let watchers and holy ones fly round the new-made world to drive far from her the apostate spirit and his fellows who kept not their first estate! Sad was the hour when, with dragon wings, the fallen spirit descended into Eden, advanced to mother Eve and whispered in her ear the fell temptation! Oh, you seraphs, would God your fiery swords had kept out the Arch-Deceiver, that this world might never have fallen, that we might have dwelt here amidst sunny glades by pure rivers rippling over sands of gold—a holy and happy race, making every hill and valley vocal with the praises of God!

Now, O Earth, you are a field of blood, but you might have been a garden of delights! Now you are one vast cemetery where all the dust was once a part of the living fabric of mortal men—but you might have been as

the firmament filled with stars, all shining to their Creator's praise! Alas that Eden should now remain only as a name—gone as a vision of the night! Inasmuch as we could heartily wish that evil had never entered into the primeval world, we earnestly deprecate the idea that it should ever defile the new! Shall those new heavens ever look down with amazement upon the flight of a rebellious spirit flying beneath their serene azure on an errand of destruction? Shall the jeweled walls of the thrice Holy City be leaped over by an enemy of the King who is there enthroned? Shall the serpent leave his horrid trail upon the heavenly Eden, twice made of the Lord? God forbid!

The purity of a world twice made, the perfection of the Church of the regenerate, the majesty of the Presence of God all demand that every sinful thing should be excluded. All Heaven and heavenly things cry, "Write the decree and make it sure, there shall in nowise enter into it anything that defiles." Engrave it as in eternal brass and let Omnipotence go with the decree to execute it with the utmost rigor, for it would be horrible, indeed, if a second time evil should destroy the work of God! Into the Church of the First-born above, the breath of iniquity must not enter. It cannot be that the work which cost the Redeemer's blood should yet be defiled! The eternal purpose of the Father and the love of the Spirit forbid that the Lord's own perfected Church should be invaded by any unholy thing.

Brothers and Sisters, there can be no entrance of evil into the Kingdom of God, for it is the very essence of the bliss of the glorified Church that evil should be excluded! Imagine, for a moment, that the decree of our text were reversed or suspended and that it were allowed that a few unregenerate men and women should enter into the glorified Church of God. Suppose, in addition, that those few should be of the gentler sort of sinners, not those who would profanely blaspheme the name of God, nor openly break the eternal Sabbath, but a few who are indifferent to God's Glory and cold and formal in His praise. How could Heaven bear with these? These, who are neither cold nor hot, are sickening both to Christ and to His people—and must they endure the nausea of their society? Why, as in a living body the existence of a dead piece of bone breeds fret, pain and disease, so would the presence of these few defiling ones cause, I know not what, of inquietude and sorrow. It must not be!

Love to the saints demands that they be no more vexed by sin or sinners. Pity, mercy, yes, even the partiality of kindred love dares not ask that it may be! All Heaven is up in arms at the supposition! Holy spirits are alarmed at the idea that they should again be tempted by the presence of evil! Bar the gates of pearl and never open them again, you spirits, rather than that there should come upon that pure street of transparent gold a foot that will not walk in the ways of God's commandments or the halls of Zion be disgraced by a single spirit that shall refuse to love the holy and exalted name! Heaven were not Heaven if it were possible for evil of *any* sort to enter there. Therefore, stand firm, O dread decree, for it would be cruelty to saints and destruction to Heaven that there should in anywise enter into it anything that defiles.

Furthermore, let me beg you to consider that there is an impossibility of any defiled, sinful, unrenewed person ever entering into the corporate body of the glorified Church of God—an impossibility within the persons themselves. Look, good Sirs, the reason why wicked men cannot be happy is not only because God will not let rebellion and peace dwell together, but because they will not *let* themselves be happy. The sea cannot rest because it is the sea and the sinner cannot be quiet because he is a sinner! How could you, O natural, unregenerate man, ever enter into the Kingdom of Heaven as you are? You are not capable of it! It is not possible! Holiness has in it no attractions for you since you love sin and the wages of it. You do not know God and cannot see Him, for this is the privilege of the pure in heart and of them alone. You live in a world where everything has been made by the great Lord and yet you do not perceive His hands, so great is your blindness! Shall blind men grope through the streets of the New Jerusalem?

You are unacquainted with the simplest elements of spiritual things, for they can only be spiritually discerned and you have no spiritual faculty. You are blind and deaf! Yes, dead to God and heavenly things—you know you are! Well, then, of what use would it be that you should enter the spiritual realm, supposing it to be a place? For if you were admitted into the place called Heaven, you would not be a partaker of the state of Heaven and it is the state of mind and character which is, after all, the essence of the joy. To be in a heavenly place and not in a heavenly condition would be worse than Hell, if worse can be! What are songs to a sad heart? Such would Heaven be to an unrenewed mind. The element of Glory would destroy, rather than bless an unrenewed mind!

It is as though you saw before you a blazing furnace in which happy creatures disported themselves among the flames, bathing themselves in the white heat, leaping in rapture amid the rising sparks, for they are children of the flame who drink in fire and find it life. Imagine yourself to be a poor fly such as you hear buzzing on the windowpane and you ask to enter into the glow of the furnace, thinking to be as merry as the fire-children. Keep back! Why tempt your doom? You will die soon enough—why ask to perish more quickly? No place would be so dreadful to a sinner as the place where God is most openly manifest! That holy element which is the habitat of the new-born soul would be the grave, the everlasting prison if an unholy soul could enter there.

To the wicked, the day of the Lord is darkness and not light. And the Glory of the Lord is terror and not bliss. Oh, unconverted Hearer, they sing in Heaven—but in their songs your ears would find no delight. They worship God in Heaven—but as Divine worship is irksome to you, even if it is kept up for an hour or so below—what would it be to dwell forever and ever in the world to come in the midst of hallelujahs? O soul defiled with sin, you are incapable of Heaven! The Roman Emperor Caligula, in his madness, made his horse first consul of Rome—but his horse could not be a magistrate—it could not judge or govern, whatever the emperor might decree! Though he fed it upon gilded oats from an ivory manger, it was a horse and nothing more!

Even so, if a man is unregenerate and unbelieving, we may do what we will with him, but he cannot rise to spiritual joys. And if we could even bid him come into Heaven, he would still remain what he was—incapable of the joy and bliss which God has prepared for them that love Him. So stands it a fact in the very essence and nature of things, that there shall in nowise enter into the realm of the spiritual, the Kingdom of the true, the land of the blessed, the home of the perfected, *anything* that defiles. It cannot come there from incapacity within itself. Let me add that our own hearts forbid that evil should so enter. As I mused on this text, I supposed myself to be defiled with sin, yet standing outside the pearl gates of Heaven.

Then I said within myself, “If I might enter there defiled as I am, would I do so?” And my heart answered, “No, I would not if I could. How could I blot such brightness and spoil such happiness?” Suppose myself infected today with a deadly fever—an incurable typhus which would bring death to any that touched me? The blast is pitiless and the snow is falling—and I stand shivering at the door of one of your houses—longing for shelter. I see inside the room your little children, playing in full health! Shall I venture among them? I long to escape from the cold outside, but if I should enter your room I should bring fever to you and death to your innocent little ones and to yourselves—and thus turn your happiness into misery! I would turn away and brave the storm and sooner die than bring such desolation into a friend’s home!

And well might any honest spirit say at sight of the perfect family above, “No, if I might, I would not be admitted into a perfect Heaven while yet I might defile it and spread the contagion of moral evil.” You know, Brothers and Sisters, how a few rags from the East have sometimes carried a plague into a city. And if you were standing at the dock when a plague-laden ship arrived, you would cry, “Burn those rags! Do anything with them, but keep them away from the people! Bring not the pest into a vast city where it may slay its thousands!” So do we cry, “Great God, forbid it that anything that defiles should enter into Your perfected Church! We cannot endure the thought.” Draw your swords, you angels! Stand in your serried ranks, you seraphim, and smite every defiled one that would force a passage within the gates of pearl! It must be—“There shall in nowise enter into it anything that defiles.”

The fiat of God has gone forth and the fiery sword is set at the gate of the new Eden. Into the first Paradise there came the serpent—into the second never shall the subtle tempter enter! Into the first Paradise there came sin and God was driven from it as well as man—but into the second there shall never come anything that approximates sin or falsehood—the Lord God shall dwell there forever and His people shall dwell there with Him. Thus much, then, upon the words of exclusion.

II. I desire, as I continue this meditation in the power of the Holy Spirit, not so much to preach as to think inwardly and ask you to think with me OF THOSE WORDS OF EXCLUSION WORKING WITHIN THE SOUL—within my soul, within yours. They sit in judgment upon me and they chasten me. It strikes home to my conscience and awakens me to self-examination. Its voice is solemn and strikes heavily upon the ears as we

remember its wide sweep and comprehensive breadth—"There shall in nowise enter into it anything that defiles." No person who defiles, no fallen spirit, or sinful man can enter. And as no person, so no *tendency*, leaning, inclination, or *will* to sin can gain admission! No wish, no desire, no hunger towards that which is unclean shall ever be found in the perfect city of God! Nor even a *thought* of evil can be conceived there, much less a sinful act performed. Nothing shall ever be done within those gates of pearl contrary to the perfect Law, nor anything imagined in opposition to spotless holiness.

Consider such purity and wonder at it! The term, "anything that defiles," includes even an idea, a memory, a thought of evil. Thoughts that flit through the mind as birds through the air that never roost or build a nest—even such shall never glance across the skies of the new creation! It is altogether perfect! And, mark well, that no untruth can enter—"neither whatever makes a lie." Nothing can enter Heaven which is not real! Nothing erroneous, mistaken, conceited, hollow, professional, pretentious, unsubstantial can be smuggled through the gates. Only the Truth of God can dwell with the God of Truth. These are sweeping and searching words—no evil, nothing that works to evil—no falsehood, nothing that works to falsehood can ever enter into the triumphant Church of God!

O my Soul! My Soul, how does this bear upon *you*? Cuts it not to the very quick? For how are *you* to enter, defiled as you are and so diseased with falsehood of one sort or another? Well may we be awakened when we remember what defiled and defiling creatures we have been in the days of our unregeneracy. Brothers and Sisters, let us not shrink from the humbling contemplation! Come down from your high places and see the horrible pit in which you lie by nature. Think of your past lives, I pray you—of those days in which you found pleasure in walking after the flesh. I call on you to remember the sins of your youth and your former transgressions of thought, word, and deed! If they are shut out who defile and *are* defiled, where are you? Where are you? These sins of ours, though they were committed years ago, are, none the less, sinful today—they are as fresh to God as if we perpetrated them this very moment.

Your hands are still bloody red, O sinful Man, though your crime was worked some 20 years ago! You are still black, O Sinner, though it was 50 years ago that your chief sin was committed, for time has no bleaching power upon a crimson sin. The guilt of an old offense is as fresh as though it were worked but yesterday. Our sins, in themselves, make us unclean and unfit for holy company and, alas, they are many! Our sins have left a second defilement on us by creating the tendency to do the same again. Is there one among us that has sinned who does not know that he is all the more likely to sin again? Since after once being drawn aside by sin, there are stronger urges in the same way—sin once committed becomes a fountain of defilement! The stream in which the fish has played will be sought by it again in its season and the swallow will return to its old nest—even so will the mind return to its folly. Yes, so it is. And if everything that defiles is shut out from the Holy City—my God, my God—am not I shut out, too?

Do not think that only *actual* sin shuts men out of Heaven, for this text goes to the *heart* by reminding us that we have within us inbred sin which would defile us speedily even if we were now clean of positive transgression. The fountain from which actual sin comes is within every unrenewed bosom. How can you and I enter Heaven while there is unholy anger in us? The best of men are too apt to retain an unhallowed quickness of temper which, under certain circumstances, works wrath. There shall in nowise enter into Heaven a hasty temper, or a quick imperious spirit, or a malicious mind, for these defile. In certain persons there is no quickness of spirit, but there is a cold obstinacy, so that having once resolved, though the resolve is evil, they stand to it doggedly and cannot be moved. Like obstinate mules, they can scarcely be driven—blows cannot stir them from their purpose! Disobedient obstinacy cannot enter the Kingdom—my Hearers—are you under its dominion?

And, oh, there is in all of us a lusting after evil of some sort or other! Only place us in certain conditions and the flesh longs after forbidden things and though we chide ourselves and check the longing, yet is there not within us a relish for the sweet stolen morsels of transgression? We could weep our eyes out when we discover what a palate for pleasurable sin our old nature still retains—yes, a longing for the very sin of which we most bitterly repent and from which we most eagerly long to be delivered! How can we hope to enter Heaven if there are these appetites in us? They are there and they defile! What can we do? There, too, is that vile thing called, “pride.” Why, some of us cannot be trusted with a pennyworth of success and we are exalted above measure! Some of God’s children cannot have ten minutes fellowship with Christ but they must put on their fine feathers and crow right lustily because they feel themselves to be nearing absolute perfection! Alas for the pride of our hearts and the pollution which comes of it! How can such vain creatures be admitted among the glorified?

Nor is this all, for sloth preys on many and tempts them to shun God’s service—and especially to shun the Cross of Christ. Sloth is a rust which has a sadly defiling power—we gather moth and mildew from inaction. Never is a man pure who is not zealous in the service of God. We rot in corruption if we lie still. How, then, shall we be admitted within the jeweled city? Ah, look within your heart, my Brother—look steadily beneath the fair film of the surface and mark the inward evil which it conceals. Judge not yourself when at your best, occupied with your prayers and praises and almsgivings, but look steadily into your soul at other times and you shall see a loathsome mass of evil life, a seething corruption moving within your heart—for evil remains, even in the regenerate—and this cannot enter Heaven. Thank God, it cannot! Even though the words of exclusion stagger me and send me back as with a stunning blow and makes me cry, “You shut me out, my God, by this, Your decree,” yet I feel that if it is so—the decree is right, just and good. “There shall in nowise enter into it anything that defiles.” Amen and amen!

Now, I ask you whether these words of exclusion do not, in you who know its meaning, slay all hope of self-salvation? For, first, here are our past sins and they defile and make us defiling. How are we to get rid of

them? How can we wash out these polluting blots? Tears? So much salt water thrown away if looked upon as a bath for sin! Good works performed? They are already *due* to God! How shall future discharge of debts repay the past? O my God, if I have ever known what sin means, I have also known that it is impossible that its defiling nature should ever be changed, or that the pollution should ever be removed by any efforts of my own!

I spoke with one the other day who said that she was seeking salvation by good works. I knew that she had performed self-denying acts of charity and I asked her whether she felt nearer to the salvation at which she aimed. I knew that I spoke to a sincere, honest person and her reply did not surprise me. She answered sadly, "The more I do, the more I feel I ought to do and I am no nearer to the point I am aiming at." And so it is—the more a sincere heart does seek to serve God, the more it feels the shortcoming of its service—and the more a person seeks after purity by his own efforts, the further he judges himself to be from it! Our standard rises as we rise toward it! Our conscience becomes tender in proportion as we obey it and so, in the nature of things, rest of heart comes not in that manner.

Ah, there remains not beneath Heaven *anything* that can wash out the defilement of past sin except only one cleansing flood! O sinful Man, plunge your hands into the Atlantic and they shall crimson every drop of its tremendous waters and yet the stain on your hands shall be as scarlet as before! No, no, no—it is certain that no man can enter Heaven by reason of his transgression and his sinfulness—unless Omnipotence shall cleanse him! But then look at the other part of the difficulty, that is, the making of your own heart pure and clean. How shall this be done? How shall the Ethiopian change his skin and the leopard his spots? Have you tried to master your temper? I hope you have. Have you managed it? Your tendencies this way or that—you have strived against them, I hope. But have you mastered them?

I will tell you. You *thought* you had. You thought you had bound the enemy with strong ropes—you tied him and you fastened him down—you shut him up in an inner chamber and you said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson." You felt that the champion was vanquished, now, but oh how grimly did he laugh at you as the old adversary arose within you and snapped the bonds and hurled you to the ground! You were defeated when you thought that you had won the victory! I cannot overcome myself, nor overcome my sin. I will never cease from the task, God helping me, but apart from the Divine Spirit, the task is as impossible as it is to make a world!

III. It seems to me that we may most fitly come to the close of our sermon by thinking Of THE WORDS OF SALVATION which just meets the difficulty raised by the sentence—"There shall in nowise enter into it anything that defiles." But, first, my *past* sin, what of that? There are many who are even now within the Church of God above and we will ask, concerning them, "Who are these arrayed in white robes and from where did they come?" We receive the reply, "These are they that have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." "In the blood of the

Lamb!" I feel as if I could sing those words! What joy that there should be *anything* that can take all my sins away—all without exception—and make me whiter than snow!

If Christ is God. If it is true that He, within that Infant's body, contained the fullness of the Deity and, being thus God and Man, He did take away my sin and in His own body on the Cross did bear it and suffer its punishment for me, then I can understand how my transgression is forgiven and my sin is covered. Short of this, my conscience cannot rest. The misty atonements of modern divines cannot calm my conscience—they are not worth the time spent in listening to them! They are cobwebs of the fancy, altogether insufficient to sustain the strain, even, of the present conscience, much less of the conscience which shall be awakened by the judgment bar of God!

But this Truth of God—Christ, instead of me! God, Himself, the offended One in the offender's place, bowing His august head to vengeance and laying His eternal majesty in the dishonor of a tomb—this is the fullness of consolation! O Lamb of God, my Sacrifice, I shall enter Heaven now! I shall pass the scrutiny of the infallible watchers! I shall not be afraid of the eyes of fire. I shall be without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing—"Washed in the blood of the Lamb!" This is our first great comfort, Brothers and Sisters—"He that believes in Him is not condemned." He that believes in Him is justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the Law of Moses. "There is therefore, now, no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

But here is the point, there is still no entrance into the Holy City as long as there are any evil tendencies within us. This is the work, this is the difficulty and since these are to be overcome, how is the work to be done? Simple believing upon Christ brings you justification, but you need more than that—you need sanctification, the purging of your nature—for have we not seen that until our nature, itself, is cleansed, the enjoyment of Heaven is impossible? There can be no knowledge of God, no communion with God, no delight in God hereafter unless all sin is put away and our fallen nature is entirely changed. Can this be done?

It can! Faith in Christ tells us of something else besides the blood. There is a Divine Person—let us bow our heads and worship Him—the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father—and He, it is, who renews us in the spirit of our minds. When we believe in Jesus, the Spirit enters into the heart, creating within us a new life. That life struggles and contends against the old life, or rather, the old death and, as it struggles, it gathers strength and *grows*. It masters the evil and puts its foot upon the neck of the tendency to sin. Do you feel this Spirit within you? You must be under its power or perish! If any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. I would not have you imagine that in death everything is to be accomplished for us mysteriously in the last solemn article—we are to look for a work of Grace in *life*—a *present* work, molding our character among men.

Oh, Sirs, the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit is not a sort of extreme unction reserved for deathbeds—it is a matter for the walks of life and the activities of today! I do not know how much is done in the saint during the

last minute of his lingering here, but this I *do* know—in a true Believer the conquest of sin is a matter to be begun as soon as he is converted and to be carried on throughout life. If the Spirit of God dwells in us, we walk not after the flesh but after the spirit and we mortify the corruptions and lusts of the old man. There must be, now, a treading under foot of lust and pride and every evil thing, or these evils will tread us under foot forever in the future state where character never changes. There must be, now, a rejection of the lie—a casting out of the evil—or we shall be cast out, ourselves, forever! There must be, now, a cry, “O Lord, 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.”

Beloved, it is to this we must come—to be washed in the water which flowed with the blood from Jesus’ side, for there must be a purging of nature as well as a removal of actual transgression or else the inevitable decree, like a fiery sword, will keep the gate of Paradise against us—“There shall in nowise enter into it anything that defiles, neither whatever works abomination, or makes a lie.” O my Hearers, suppose we should never enter there? No, start not, for the supposition will soon be a fact with many of you unless you repent! Suppose we should be in the next world what some of us are now, defiled and untruthful—what remains?

That is an awful text in the parable of the virgins—“And the door was shut.” You read of those who said, “Lord, Lord, open to us,” to whom He answered, “I know you not.” You have read of them—will any of us be among them? Will any of us who has a lamp and is thought to be a virgin soul be among the shut out ones on whose ears shall fall the words, “I know you not from where you are”? You see you cannot be anywhere else but *out* unless you are in! And you must be shut out if you are defiled and defiling. Dear Heart, this is a question I beg you to look to at once! You do not know how short a time you have left to you in which you may look into it. Some who were here but a Sabbath or so ago are now gone from us. Eleven deaths were reported at one Church Meeting among our members!

We are a dying people! We shall all be gone within a very short time. I charge you by the living God and as you are dying men and women—see to it that you are not shut out so as to hear the fatal cry—“Too late, too late, you cannot enter.” There shall be no “Purgatory,” in eternity and no possible way of entering in among the perfected, for it is written, “There shall in nowise enter into it anything that defiles.” No crying, “Lord! Lord!” No striving to enter in! No tears, no, not even the pangs of Hell, itself, shall ever purge the soul so as to make it fit to join with the holy Church above should it pass into the future state uncleansed! Shut out! Shut out!

O God, may that never be true of anyone among us, for Christ’s dear name’s sake, Amen.

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HEALING LEAVES

NO. 1233

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MAY 9, 1875,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.
(ON BEHALF OF THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY).**

***“The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”
Revelation 22:2.***

WE have in the 21st and 22nd chapters of the Book of Revelation a very wonderful description of Heaven upon earth. I shall not attempt to go into any prophetic explanations as to when this will be fulfilled, but we know this for certain, for we have it in so many words, that the holy city, New Jerusalem, will descend out of Heaven from God, and that, in a word, there will be, for a time at least, a Heaven on earth. But inasmuch as Heaven, be it where it may, is still Heaven, the description of Heaven on earth sufficiently benefits us to reveal, in some measure, the present joys and blessings of the celestial state.

We shall not make any mistake if we read the passage as hundreds of thousands have done before us, and as all common readers will always persist in doing, as a description of the heavenly state as it is at *present*, for what can come down from Heaven but that which is in Heaven? The results of the revealed Presence of the God of Love must be, to His saints, very much the same at all times. The same Glory will be revealed, the same happiness bestowed, the same occupations followed, the same fellowship enjoyed. We may, therefore, consider that we have before us a description of what Heaven now is and shall be, world without end, save only that the bodies of the saints are not yet raised and, therefore, all the minute details may not be fully developed.

The glowing metaphors here employed, for we must, to a large extent, regard the language as figurative, is evidently taken from the Garden of Eden. That was man's first inheritance and it is a type of his last. That Paradise which the first Adam lost us, the second Adam will regain for us, but with added bliss and superior joy! We shall dwell where a river rolls with placid streams and compasses a land where there is gold, “and the gold of that land is good, there is myrrh and the onyx stone.” The river is watering every tree that is pleasant to the sight and flows hard by the Tree of Life in the middle of the garden.

Yet, though there is a likeness between Heaven and Eden, there is a difference, too, for the earthly Paradise with all its perfections was still of the earth, earthy. And the second Paradise is, like the Lord from Heaven, heavenly and Divine! The fatal Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, hedged about by a solemn threat, grows not in the garden of the immortals. They

have known evil, but they now, “know the Lord,” and know evil no more. Everything in the Divine Paradise is fuller and more abundant. The gold, which in Eden lay in the soil, is used in the heavenly Paradise to pave the streets. The river has no earthly source, but is “a pure river of the Wafer of Life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb.”

The Lord, who in Eden walked only at solemn intervals, “among the trees of the garden in the cool of the day,” has, in Heaven, His Tabernacle among men and dwells among them, while the trees which grew in Eden, and ripened their fruits only in autumn, are succeeded by trees with 12 fruitages in the year. It has been thought that man would have preserved the immortality of his body by eating of the Tree of Life in Eden and that, therefore, when he sinned he was shut out from it, “lest he put forth his hand and take also of the Tree of Life and eat, and live forever.” Some even go so far as to think that the extreme longevity of the antediluvians may have been helped by the remaining influence of that wondrous food upon the constitution of man for many generations.

Of that we know nothing, it is all conjecture. It is, however, very customary for expositors to speak of the Tree of Life in the Garden as the sacrament of the primeval age, the eating of whose fruit they conceive to be the grand means of preserving Adam from death. Now, there is a Tree of Life in Heaven, but there is this difference, that it is more accessible—more accessible even than when Adam was in perfection—for if there were but *one* Tree of Life in the Garden, the Garden was certainly divided by the river which flowed in several streams through it. Therefore the tree could not always be easily reached from all parts of the garden.

In the passage before us we have the Tree of Life on either side of the river, which, I suppose, means that there were many such trees—though there was only one tree as to its kind, yet many in number. The picture presented to the mind’s eye would appear to be that of a wide street with a river flowing down the center, like some of the broader canals of Holland, with trees growing on either side, all of them of the same kind, all called the Tree of Life. I do not know how we can make the figure out in any other way. Some have represented the tree as only one and growing in the *bottom* of the river, rising out of the water, and so sending boughs on either side, being, itself, so large as to shade all the city. Such a conception is almost monstrous!

But to conceive of many Trees of Life, all one tree as to quality and nature, growing all along the street, is to present a beautiful image which can very readily be conceived by the mind. At any rate, to all the inhabitants of Heaven the Tree of Life is equally and perpetually accessible. They may come at it when they may. No cherub’s flaming sword stands there to keep them back, but they may always come and eat of its 12 fruitages and pluck its healing leaves—

***“Joy here holds court within its own metropolis!
And through its midst the crystal river flows***

***Exhaustless from the everlasting Throne,
Shaded on either side by Trees of Life
Which yield in still unvarying interchange
Their ripe vicissitude of monthly fruits
Amid their clustering leaves medicinal.”***

We are about to speak only of the *leaves* of this true *arbor vitae*, “the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” Of what can this tree be but a type but of our Lord Jesus Christ and His salvation? What can it signify but that the Presence of Christ preserves the inhabitants of Heaven forever free from sickness, while beyond Heaven, the precincts among the nations, the saving influence is scattered?

As the leaves fall from the trees, so does sacred influence descend from our Lord Jesus in Heaven down to the sons of men! And as the leaves are the least precious products of a fruit-bearing tree, so the least things that have to do with Him and come from Him have a healing virtue in them. I shall handle the text very briefly *in reference to Heaven* and then, at full length, endeavor to bring out its relation *to earth*, as the Holy Spirit may enable me.

I. In REFERENCE TO HEAVEN. If you read the passage you will see that the heavenly City is described as *having an abundance of all manner of delights*. Do men rejoice in wealth? “The very streets are paved with gold exceedingly clear and fine.” The gates are pearls and the walls are built of precious stones. No palace of the Caesars or of the Indian Moguls could rival the gorgeous riches of the city of the Great King—

***“That city with the jeweled crest
Like some new-lighted sun!
A blaze of burning amethyst,
Ten thousand orbs in one.”***

In our cities we feel greatly the need of light. It must have been a dreary age when our ancestors groped their way at night through unlighted streets, or gathered poor comfort from the feeble, struggling rays of a poor candle placed over each householder’s door. The heavenly City knows no night at all and, consequently, needs no candle. Indeed, its endless day is independent of the sun, itself, “for the Glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb is the Light thereof.” Conveniences for worship are terribly needed in many of our great cities and it is a good work to erect temples in which worshippers may assemble. But, speaking paradoxically, Heaven is well-supplied in this respect, because of an utter *absence*, both of the *need* of such places and of the places themselves!

“I saw no temple therein,” for, indeed, the whole place is a temple! And every street is, in the highest sense, hallowed ground. O blessed place, where we shall not need to enter into our closet to worship our Father who is in Heaven, but shall, in the open street, behold the unveiled vision of God! O blessed time, when there shall be no Sabbaths, but one endless Sabbath! O joy of joys when there shall be no breaking up of happy congregations, but where the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn shall be met for an everlasting service and spend it all in glorifying God!

Cities on earth should, more and more, strive after purity. I am glad that more attention is being paid to cleanliness. Too long has the age of filth made the crowded populations the prey of disease and death. Up yonder in Heaven the sanitary measures are perfection, for, “there shall by no means enter into it anything that defiles, neither whatever works abomination or makes a lie.” There, every inhabitant is without fault before the Throne of God, having neither spot nor wrinkle! There, everything healthy, everything holy and the thrice Holy One, Himself, is in their midst! As for the necessities under which glorified beings may be placed, we know but very little about them, but certainly, if they need to drink, there is the river of the Water of Life, clear as crystal! And if they require to eat, there are abundant fruits ripening each month upon that wondrous tree!

All that saints can possibly need or desire will be abundantly supplied. No pining need or grim anxiety shall tempt them to ask the question, “What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or, with what shall we be clothed?” “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters.” Nor is there merely provision made for bare necessities—their love of beauty is considered. The City, itself, shines “like a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.”

And her glorious foundations are garnished with all manner of precious stones, insomuch that her Light, as seen afar by the nations, gladdens them and attracts them to her. A city whose streets are lined with trees laden with luscious fruits must be lovely beyond all expression! They said of the earthly Jerusalem, “Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion.” But what shall we say of you, O Jerusalem above? Zion! Zion! Our happy home where our Father dwells! Where Jesus manifests His love! Where so many of our Brothers and Sisters have wended their happy way, to which our steps are evermore directed! Blessed are the men that stand in your streets and worship within your gates! When shall we, also, behold your fitness and drink of the river of your pleasures?

Thus in all respects the new Jerusalem is furnished. Even with medicine it is supplied and though we might suppose it to be no more needed, yet it is a joy to perceive that it is there to prevent all maladies in those whom before it has healed. Leaves for health are plentiful, above, and therefore the inhabitant shall no more say, “I am sick.” As everything good is present, our text hints that *nothing ill is there*. One of the worst ills that can happen to a man is sickness, for, if he is suffering from disease, his gold is cold and cheerless metal. If he is languishing, the light is dark in his tabernacle. If he pines away with pain, he cannot enjoy his food—neither is beauty any longer fair to him.

But there can be no sickness in Heaven because the Tree of life bestows immortal health on all beneath its shade! Its leaves extract a balmy influ-

ence, fostering the vigor of immortality! Sickness and suffering are banished by this Tree of Life. “There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.” As need is banished, as darkness is unknown, as infirmity is shut out, as anxiety and doubt and fear and dread are far away, so will all bodily and spiritual disease be forever removed!

It is, in Heaven, according to our text, again, that there grows the tree which is not only health to Heaven, but which *brings healing to the nations here below*. Heaven is the abode of Jesus and Jesus is the Tree of Life. If any man would be healed of the guilt of sin, he must look to the eternal merits of the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world, who is now upon the Throne of God! If any man would be saved from daily temptation and trial, he must look to our Advocate in Glory who intercedes for us and pleads that, when sifted as wheat, our faith may not fail! If any of us would be saved from spiritual death we must look to Jesus, for He lives at the right hand of the Father—and because He lives, we shall also live.

“He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.” I say that Jesus Christ, my Lord and Master, is in Heaven and is there comparable to a tree planted in the very center of the City! Under His broad shadow, the redeemed delight to sit, and His leaves, as they are wafted down to earth, bring health with them! If we would be healed, we must gather those leaves and apply them to the wounds and bruises of our souls and we shall surely recover. Look upward, then, by means of the Scripture before us, to Heaven, and see it full of every good! See it purged of every evil and see in it the great conduit Head, from which abundant streams of healing flow down to men below!

II. Now let us come practically to the text IN REFERENCE TO OURSELVES BELOW. “The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” There is, then, an abundance of healing power in Jesus Christ and His salvation. Not only is His fruit sweet and nourishing, but the leaves, the little things, as it were, about Christ, are full of healing virtue. We will begin our meditation upon the truth of the text by noticing that *all the nations are sick*. Leaves are provided for their healing which would be superfluous if they did not require to be healed.

We have, in our time, heard great talk about discovering pure, unsophisticated tribes, beautiful in native innocence, untainted with the vices of civilization. But it has turned out to be all talk. Travelers have penetrated into the heart of Africa and they have found these naked innocents—but they have turned out to be “hateful and hating one another.” Voyagers have landed upon lovely islets of the sea and found unsophisticated innocents eating each other! They have gone into the backwoods and discovered—

***“The poor Indian, whose untutored mind
Sees God in clouds, and hears Him in the wind,”***

but they have found him cunning as a fox and cruel as a wolf. Though Pope tells us that the true God is—

***“Father all in every age,
In every clime adored,
By saint, by savage, and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord,”***

yet we find neither sages nor savages so worshipping unless the Gospel has instructed them! No, the savage nations have been found so morally sick that their customs have shocked humanity and men have turned from them with horror! Alas, poor human nature, even apart from the many evil inventions of civilization, your disease is terrible!

Neither have nations been delivered from the dread malady of sin by refinement and culture. They tell us a great deal about the wonderful perfection of the ancient Greeks and, certainly, they did understand how to draw the human form. And for delineating physical grace and beauty, we cannot rival their sculptors. But when we come to look at the Greek *moral* form, how graceless and uncomely! The ordinary morals of a Greek were too horrible to be described. When Paul felt it absolutely necessary to speak of them, he was obliged to write that terrible first chapter of Romans, which no man can read without a blush, or close without a sigh that such an indictment was so sadly just.

God forbid that the filthiness which the ancients tolerated should ever be revived among us, their very sages were not clear from unmentionable crimes! The Hindus and Chinese, those polished nations of modern times, do they excel? Is it not a fact that India reeks with lasciviousness which will not endure to be thought upon? Ah, Lord God, you know! All the nations need healing, our own among them! If you doubt it, open your eyes and ears. Do not iniquities abound? Are not profanities to be heard in our very streets? Go to the west end and see its fashionable sin, or to the east end and see its more open wickedness!

Or stay on this side the Thames and mark the degradation of thousands! Overwhelming evidence will come before you to show that our nation needs healing if you traverse the streets beneath the pale light of the moon, or even pass the doors of those haunts of gaiety which have, of late, been so enormously multiplied. And all individuals in every nation need healing. It is not that *some* of us are sick and some whole by nature—we are altogether fallen—and all of us born in sin! The evil is in our *nature* from the very beginning and nothing within the reach of mere man can purge away the evil, let him dream as he may!

There is but one cure for the nations—the leaves of the tree. There grows no healing herb but the one plant of renown. There is one sacred Fountain, to wash, therein, is health—there is but one, it was opened on Calvary! There is one great Physician who lays His hands on men and they are restored—there is but one! Those who pretend that their hands can minister salvation, and that drops of water from their fingers can bring regeneration are accursed! No, there is no balm in Gilead, there is no physi-

cian there, the balm is at the Cross! The Physician is at the right hand of God!

Jesus is pictured, here, as a blessed tree whose leaves heal the nations. Now the point of the text is this, that *the very leaves are healing*, from which I gather that the least thing about Christ is healing. It is said of the blessed man in the first Psalm, "His leaf, also, shall not wither." God takes care of the little things, the trifles, of Believers, and here, of our Lord, it is said, "The leaves are for the healing of the nations." That is to say, even His common things, His lower blessings of Divine Grace are full of virtue!

Many know but very little about Jesus Christ, but if they believe on Him, that little heals them! How very few of us know much of our Lord. Some only know that He came into the world to save sinners. I wish that they knew more, so that they could feed upon the fruits of the Tree of Life. But even to know that is salvation to them, for the leaves heal the nations! Do you know yourself a sinner? Will you have Christ to be a Savior? Soul, will you rely upon His precious blood to make expiation for your sin? Then, though you have not yet reached up to the golden apples, yet since a *leaf* has fallen upon you, it will save you!

The touch of His hand opened deaf ears! The spit of His lips enlightened blind eyes! The look of His eyes softened hard hearts. The least fragment of this Sovereign remedy has Omnipotence in it! We may also learn that the most humble and most timid faith in Jesus Christ will save. It is a grand thing to believe in Jesus Christ with all your heart, soul and strength. It is delightful never to doubt, but to go from strength to strength until you come to full assurance of understanding. But if you cannot thus mount up with wings as eagles, you will be saved if you come *limping* to Jesus! If you have but a mustard-seed of faith, you are saved! She who in the great crowd touched but the hem of the Savior's garment found that virtue flowed out of Him and came to her. Pluck a *leaf* of this Tree by your poor trembling faith and if you dare not take more than that, yet shall it make you whole!

Beloved, after we have been saved from our sin by faith in Jesus Christ, it is very wonderful how everything about Christ will help to purge the blood, which as yet is not cleansed. Study His example and as you look at the lovely traits of His Character—His gentleness and yet His boldness, His consecration to our cause and His zeal for the Glory of God—you will find, as you value His excellences, they will exercise a curative power over you. You will be ashamed to be selfish, you will be ashamed to be idle, you will be ashamed to be proud when you see what Jesus was! Study Him and you will grow like He.

If we take His precepts, and I hope we prize them as highly as we do His doctrines, there is not a command of our Lord but what possesses a sacred power, by the application of the Holy Spirit, to cure some fault or other of our character. Do as He bids you and you shall be made whole! Why, there is not a Word that ever fell from those dear lips but what bears healing in it for some one or other of the thousand ills that have befallen

our humanity! It is a sweet thing to get even a broken text from His mouth. His least Words are better than the best of others! Lay a Word from him, like a grain of medicine, upon your tongue and keep it there all day—with what a flavor it fills the mouth! How sweetly it perfumes the breath!

It is a grand thing to bind a promise round your arm—how strong it makes each sinew! How forceful for the battle of life. It is a blessed thing to take His cheering words, which are as fragrant as “a cluster of camphire,” and carry them in your bosom, for they chase away sadness and inspire dauntless courage. A word of His, being *His*, and recognized as *His* and coming home to the heart as *His*, brings healing to head and heart, conscience and imagination, desire and affection! A leaf of the Tree of Life is a medicine fitted to raise the dead! Do you not know its power by a joyful experience? Blessed be God, some of us know it right well, and can bear glad witness to its matchless power!

Then, too, *this medicine heals all sorts of diseases*. The text puts it, “The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” It does not say of this or that malady, but by its silence it teaches us that the medicine is universal in its curative power. Take this medicine, then, dear Friends, to any man, whoever he may be, and let it be applied by the Spirit of God, and it will heal him of whatever disease he has because the Gospel strikes at the root of *all* diseases. Truly it exercises power over all the different branches of the upas tree of evil, but it does so by laying the axe at the root, for it deals with sin, the sin of unbelief, the sin of not loving God. No medicine can ever heal all maladies unless it eradicates the root of the evil and creates a fountain of health.

Now, the Gospel applied by the Spirit of God is radical. It goes to the root of the matter, operates upon the heart and purifies the issues of life. Human precepts and methods of morality lop the branches, but leave the trunk of the deadly tree untouched—but this cuts the taproot and tears away the evil growth from beneath the soil! For this cause it is able to remove all diseases. This medicine heals disease because it searches into the innermost nature. Some medicines are only for the skin—others will only touch a few organs and those not vital. But the leaves of the Gospel Tree, when taken as medicine, penetrate the mind and search the heart. Their searching operations divide between the joints and the marrow, and discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.

A wondrous medicine is this! It searches the soul through and through and never ceases its operations till it has purged the entire manhood of every relic of sin and made it completely clean. Lord, give us these leaves! Lord, give us these leaves continually! Create in us a clean heart and renew a right spirit within us. “Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom.” But this can never be unless You give us to drink of this most potent medicine! These leaves prevent the recurrence of disease by enabling the man, from then on, to find good in all that comes to him. A person diseased, if healed,

may, by the food which he shall afterwards receive, bring on the disease again.

Place a man under certain conditions which cause him an illness—you may heal him—but if you lead him back to those conditions, he may soon be ailing again. And here, in such a world as this, even if Christ healed us today, we should be sick to death tomorrow if the medicine had not some wondrous continuance of power. And so it is! For all things that come to us after conversion are changed, because *we* are changed. All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose. Have we earthly joy? We no longer idolize it, but it now points us to God, the Giver. Have we earthly sorrow? We dare not despair because of it, for we know who has ordained it!

Why should a child of God complain who knows that there is love in every chastening stroke of his Father's rod? What we once called good is now *really* good to us! What we called ill is no longer ill to us, for the leaves of the Tree of Life are an Infallible antidote. What would have been our poison is now our food, and what might have destroyed us, now builds us up! This wondrous medicine abides in the system as a source of health. "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." Other medicine taken into the system acts in its own manner and that is an end of it, but this stays. These healing leaves change the life blood, affect the spirits and make the nature other than it was before. Yonder in Heaven, those faces which look so bright and comely, fresher than new born babes, owe their freshness to these healing leaves! And so until the Glory life begins, the abiding power of the healing leaves keeps the soul of the Believer in perpetual health and will keep him so, world without end!

I have shown that the leaves will heal all diseases. I will occupy a minute with the glad Truth of God that *these leaves heal whole nations*. They are suited to the peculiarities of differing nations. The Gospel has never been carried to a people who did not need it, or whom it did not suit. It has been found equally applicable to the ignorant Hottentot and the subtle Hindu. No man has been found too degraded for its operation, nor too civilized for its benefits. The Gospel has such abundant power that it heals nations and, "nations," is a large word, comprehending millions! But the leaves of this tree can heal countless armies of men, and it will—

***"...Never lose its power
Till all the ransomed Church of God
Are saved to sin no more."***

It is a happy circumstance that an agent of such potency is diffusible by the simplest means. A medicine consisting of leaves may be carried by the apothecary where he wills—it is no cumbrous matter. So may we carry the Gospel to the utmost ends of the earth—and we will carry it and send it to every habitation! The winds shall waft it, the waves shall bear it wherever man is found. These leaves are not cumbrous like the stage properties of Popery, but are readily scattered, and wherever they go, no

climate injures them. The cold of Greenland has not been too severe to prevent the Greenlander rejoicing in the Savior's blood! And the heat of the torrid zone has not been too intense to prevent Believers from rejoicing in the Sun of Righteousness. No, Beloved, the Gospel heals nations wherever the nations may be and readily heals them of the direst miseries and the blackest crimes.

It is the cure for poverty, by making men wise and economical. It is the cure for slavery, teaching men to love their fellows and respect the rights of all. It is the cure for drunkenness, weaning the drunk from his filthy appetite, saving him from the spell which binds him. The Gospel is the only preventive for war. We shall need no blood-red soldiery when once the warriors of the Cross have won the day! This is the cure for those foul evils which are the curse of our social economies, which human laws too often increase instead of remove. This shall purge us from every form of knavery, rebellion and discontent, and this only. God grant that its healing influences drop upon the nations thick as leaves in Vallambrosa, till that golden age shall dawn in which the world shall be the abode of moral health!

I must remind you, before I pass from this, and it is a very sweet thing to remind you of, *that this medicine is given and appointed for the very purpose of healing*. I draw your attention to this for the comfort of any who feel their sickness this morning—"The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." You look up to this Tree and say, "I am sick at heart. I know that here is my cure, but may I dare to partake of it?" Partake freely, for the Tree was planted on purpose for *you*! In the eternal purpose and decree of God, Christ was given to heal the nations. In actual fulfillment He has healed nations—many nations already enjoy a partial health because multitudes of individuals in those nations have been healed.

Great works have been done in the Isles of the Sea. When I think of England, and of the gems of the Southern Sea, and of Madagascar, the Lord seems to have a peculiar favor towards the isles, for in the islands the Gospel has spread more abundantly than elsewhere—"Let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof." The Tree is planted with intent that its leaves should heal—you need not, then, hesitate and enquire, "May I be healed?" It grows for the sick! Are you sick? It grows for you! The other day I was thirsty and passed a drinking fountain. I never paused to ask whether I might drink, for I knew it was placed there for the thirsty, and being thirsty, I drank.

Who hesitates, for a moment, when he is in a lonely spot upon the beach and finds that there is health in every billow, to strip himself and plunge into the wave? Does he ask if he may? Surely God has spread the ocean that man may bathe! If I want to breathe, being in the air, I ask no man's liberty to breathe, nor do I sigh for God's leave, either, for did not He give me liberty when He gave me lungs and bade the breezes blow? Since you see Christ before you, Brothers and Sisters, take Christ! You need not ask any man's liberty, nor pine for Divine permission! Has He

not said, "Whoever will, let him take of the water of life freely"? He bids you receive! He *commands* you to believe and He threatens you if you do not! He says to His servants—"Compel them to come in." And as to those who refuse to come, He says, "He that believes not shall be damned." What fuller leave or license can be imagined?

These words to close with. Are you sick this morning? Take these leaves freely! Are you very sick? The more the reason you should take them! You are sinful. Past guilt troubles you—take the leaves again and again. Worse than that, tendencies to evil afflict you. You want to be rid of them—feed on the purging leaves as long as you live and they will prove an antidote! You need not think that you will exhaust the merit or power of Christ, for if the fruit is described as coming 12 times in the year, how abundant must the leaves be? There is enough in Christ for every sin-sick sinner! If the sinner does but come to Jesus, he shall find no stint in Jesus' healing power! Though the sick soul is full of leprosy, the Savior is full of Grace. Put forth your finger, Sister, and touch the hem of Jesus' garment now! Lift your eyes, Sinner, look to Christ on the Cross! Though He seems far away from you, there is life in a glance, however dim the eyes or distant the view. Come to this Tree—its very leaves will heal you!

Last of all, are you healed? Well, then, scatter these leaves! Are you saved? Speak of Jesus Christ to everybody! I wish you to teach others a whole Christ, if you can. I desire, always, to make my ministry like Simeon's action when he took the Redeemer altogether into his arms, and said, "Lord, now let You Your servant depart in peace." There was a long span of time between Simeon, with the Son of the Highest in his arms, and the woman who touched the hem of the Master's garment—yet both have gone to Heaven—and there is a good span of time between the Christian who can embrace a whole Christ, and a poor timid one who can only tremblingly *hope* in Him.

If you cannot tell others all about Christ, and give them the fruit of the Tree, go and give them the leaves! And one very convenient way of doing so is that which you may help today, by aiding the Religious Tract Society, the friend of us all, on whose behalf I will add a word or two. "The leaves of the tree"—that is to say, even little portions and single pages about Christ will do good. It is a rule of the Tract Society that every tract shall have enough of Christ in it to save a soul if God shall bless it. Do not despise a mere leaf, or, as you say, "a leaflet," for if *Christ* is in it, it is a leaf of the Tree and He will bless it. Scatter, then, the Gospel leaflets!

Perhaps you have not the means to distribute Bibles and larger books—cover, then, your pathway with tracts! Large portions of our country still need wide distributions of tracts and all the world outside our country needs the Gospel, and needs the Gospel in the printed form. Scatter the leaves! Let them fall as thickly as leaves descend in the last days of autumn. Scatter them everywhere, since they are for the healing of the nations! The Tract Society, however, not only provides us with very excellent tracts, but it brings out books upon common subjects written in a reli-

gious tone. And this class of literature I hope will be multiplied, because people will not always read books on religious topics, but will read works on other subjects—and when these are written in a religious spirit they will exercise the most healthful influence.

These books are not exactly the fruits of the life-giving Tree, but they are leaves, and Life is in them. I am glad to see the Society bringing out pictures to hang on cottage walls and little illustrative texts done in colors, and the like, for anything about Christ will do good. It is wonderful how a little thing may save a soul, if Christ is in it. “A verse may strike him from whom a sermon flees,” and a picture on a wall may awaken a train of thought in a man who would not listen to that same thought if spoken in words.

Remember Colonel Gardiner and his remarkable conversion by looking at a picture of Christ upon the Cross. While waiting to fulfill an engagement of the most infamous kind, he saw a picture of our dying Lord, and under it written—“I did all this for you, what have you ever done for Me?” The engagement was never kept and the colonel became a brave soldier for Jesus Christ. Possibly we may not think well of representations of the crucifixion, which is a theme beyond the painters’ art, but there can be no question that it is our duty to set forth Christ among the people by our *speech*, so that he may be seen by their mind’s eye, evidently crucified among them.

Make the passing throng see the Gospel in every corner of the streets if you can. Paste up texts of Scripture among business announcements! Hang them up in your kitchens, in your parlors and in your drawing rooms. I hate to see Christian men hang up abominable Popish things, as they sometimes do, because they happen to be works of art. *Burn* every one of such artful works, whether prints or paintings! I would take the hammer and administer it with an iconoclastic zeal on all images and pictures of saints and virgins, and the like, which do but tempt men to idolatry!

Do not degrade your houses by anything which insults your God, but let your adornments be such as may lead men’s thoughts aright. And never let a man say, in Hell, “I was misled by a work of art on your wall which was also a work of the devil and suggested evil thoughts.” Everywhere bring Christ to the front and scatter His Words, like leaves from the tree. If you cannot do more, do this and show your gratitude to your Lord.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Revelation 21, 22:1-5.*
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—145, 867, 539.**

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CHRIST THE TREE OF LIFE

NO. 3251

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 25, 1911.

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

***“In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the Tree of Life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”
Revelation 22:2.***

[Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same text is #1233, Volume 31—HEALING LEAVES—read/download the entire sermon free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org> .]

You will remember that in the first Paradise, there was a Tree of Life in the midst of the garden. When Adam had offended and was driven out, God said, “Lest he put forth his hand and take of the Tree of Life and eat, and live forever, therefore the Lord God drove out the man.” It has been supposed, by some, that this Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden was intended to be the means of continuing man in immortality—that his feeding upon it would have supported him in the vigor of unfailing youth, preserved him from exposure to decay and imparted, by a spiritual regeneration, the seal of perpetuity to his constitution. I do not know about that. If it were so, I can understand the reason why God would not have the first man, Adam, become immortal in the lapsed state he was then in, but ordained that the old nature should die, and that the immortality would be given to a new nature which would be formed under another leadership and quickened by another Spirit.

The text tells us that in the center of the new Paradise, the perfect Paradise of God, from which the saints shall never be driven, seeing it is to be our perpetual heritage, there is also a Tree of Life. But here we translate the metaphor—we do not understand that tree to be literal. We believe our Lord Jesus Christ to be none other than that Tree of Life whose leaves are for the healing of the nations! We can scarcely conceive of any other interpretation, as this seems to us to be so full of meaning and to afford us such unspeakable satisfaction!

At any rate, Beloved, if this is not the absolute purpose of the sublime vision that John saw, it is most certainly true that our Lord Jesus Christ is life from the dead, and life to His own living people. He is All-in-All to them. And by Him and by Him, alone, must their spiritual life be maintained. We are right enough, then, in saying that Jesus Christ is a Tree of Life and we shall so speak of Him in the hope that some may come and

pluck of the fruit and eat and live forever! Our desire shall be so to use the sacred allegory that some poor dying soul may be encouraged to lay hold on eternal life by laying hold on Jesus Christ!

First, *we shall take the Tree of Life in the winter with no fruit on it.* Secondly, *we shall try to show you the Tree of Life budding and blossoming.* And, thirdly, *we shall endeavor to show you the way to partake of its fruits.*

I. And first, my Brothers and Sisters, I have to speak to you of JESUS CHRIST, THE TREE OF LIFE IN THE WINTER.

You will at once anticipate that I mean, by this figure, to describe *Jesus in His sufferings*, in His dark winter days when He did hang upon the Cross and bleed and die. When He had no honor from men and no respect from anyone—when even God the Father hid His face from Him for a season and He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. My dear Friends, you will never see the Tree of Life aright unless you first look at the Cross. It was there that this tree gathered strength to bring forth its later fruit. It was there, we say, that Jesus Christ, by His glorious merits and His wondrous work achieved upon the Cross, obtained power to become the Redeemer of our souls and the Captain of our salvation!

Come with me, then, by faith, to the foot of the little mound of Calvary, and let us look up and see this thing that came to pass. Let us turn aside as Moses did when the bush burned and see this great sight! It is the greatest marvel that ever earth, or Hell, or Heaven beheld—and we may well spend a few minutes in beholding it.

Our Lord Jesus, the ever-living, the immortal, the eternal, became Man and, being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and died the death of the Cross. That death was not on His own account. His Humanity had no need to die. He might have lived on and have seen no death if so He had willed. He had committed no offense, no sin and, therefore, no punishment could fall upon Him—

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

Every pang upon the Cross was substitutionary! And for you, you sons of men, the Prince of Glory bled, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring you to God! There was no smart for Himself, for His Father loved Him with an Ineffable love. He deserved no blows from His Father’s hand, but His smarts were for the sins of His enemies—for *your* sins and *mine*—that by His stripes we might be healed and that through His wounds, reconciliation might be made with God!

Think, then, of the Savior’s death upon the Cross. Mark you well that *it was an accursed death.* There were many ways by which men might die, but there was only one death which God pronounced to be accursed. He did not say, “Cursed is he that dies by stoning, or by the sword, or by a millstone being fastened about his neck, or by being eaten of worms.”

But it *was* written, “Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” By no other death than that one, which God did single out as the death of the accursed, could Jesus Christ die! Admire it, Believer, that Jesus Christ should be made a curse for us! Admire and love—let your faith and your gratitude blend together.

It was a death *of the most ignominious kind*. The Roman law subjected only felons to it and I believe not even felons unless they were slaves. A freed Roman must not so die, nor a subject of any of the kingdoms that Rome had conquered—only the slave who was bought and sold in the market could be put to this death. The Jews counted Jesus worthy to be sold as a slave and then they put Him to a slave’s death for *you*.

Besides, they added to the natural scorn of the death *their own ridicule*. Some passed by and wagged their heads. Some stood still and thrust out their tongues at Him. Others sat down and watched Him there and satisfied their malice and their scorn. He was made the center of all sorts of ridicule and shame. He was the drunkard’s song and even they that were crucified with Him reviled Him. And all this He suffered for us! Our sin was shameful and He was made to be a shame for us. We had disgraced ourselves and dishonored God and, therefore, Jesus was joined with the wicked in His death—and made as vile as they.

Besides, *the death was exceedingly painful*. We must not forget the pangs of the Savior’s body, for I believe, when we begin to depreciate the corporeal sufferings, we very soon begin to drag down the spiritual sufferings, too. It must be a fearful death by which to die, when the tender hands and feet are pierced—and when the bones are dislocated by the jar of erecting the Cross. And when the fever sets in and the mouth becomes hot as an oven, and the tongue is swollen in the mouth, and the only moisture given is vinegar mingled with gall. Ah, Beloved! The pangs that Jesus knew, none of us can guess. We believe that Hart has well described it when he said that He bore—

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

You cannot tell the price of griefs, groans, sighs, heartbreaking, soul tearing and rending of the spirit which Jesus had to pay that He might redeem us from our iniquities!

It was a lingering death. However painful a death may be, it is always satisfactory to think that it is soon over. When a man is hanged, after our English custom, or the head is taken from the body, the pain may be great for the instant, but it is soon over and gone. But in crucifixion a man lives so long that when Pilate heard that the Savior was dead, he marveled that He was already dead! I remember hearing a missionary say that he saw a man in Burma crucified, and that he was alive two days after having been nailed to the cross. And I believe there are authenticated stories of persons who have been taken down from the cross after having

hung for 48 hours and after all that have had their wounds healed and have lived for years. It was a lingering death that the Savior had to die.

O my Brothers and Sisters, if you put these items together, they make up a ghastly total which ought to press upon our hearts—if we are Believers, in the form of grateful affection—or if we are unbelievers, provoking us to shame that we do not love Him who loved the sons of men so much!

And *the death of the Lord Jesus Christ for us*, we must also add, *was penal*. He died this death of the condemned. Perhaps most men would feel this to be the worst feature, for if a man shall die by ever so painful a death, if it is accidental, it misses the sting which must come into it if it is caused by law—and especially if it is brought by sin and after sentence has been passed in due form. Now, our Lord Jesus Christ was condemned by the civil and ecclesiastical tribunals of the country to die. And what was more, “it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, He has put Him to grief.” Jesus Christ died without any sin of His own, yet He died a penal death because our sins were counted as His! He took upon Him our iniquities as though they were His own and then, being found in the sinner’s place, He suffered the wrath that was due for sin as if He had been a sinner!

Beloved, I wish it were in my power to set forth Christ Crucified—Christ visibly Crucified among you! Oh, that I could so paint Him that the eyes of your heart could see Him! I wish that I could make you feel the sorrow of His griefs, and sip that bitter cup which He had to drain to the dregs. But if I cannot do this, it shall suffice me to say that *that death is the only hope for sinners*. Those wounds of His are the gate to Heaven! The smarts and sufferings of Immanuel are the only expiatory Sacrifice for human guilt! O you who would be saved, turn your eyes here! Look unto Him and be you saved, all the ends of the earth. There is life in a look at Him, but there is life nowhere else! Despise Him and you perish. Accept Him and you shall never perish, neither shall all the powers of Hell prevail against you! Come, guilty Souls! Jesus wants not your tears or your blood—His tears can cleanse you—His blood can purify you! If your heart is not as broken as you would have it, it is His broken heart, not yours, that shall merit Heaven for you! If you cannot be what you could, He was for you what God would have Him to be! God is contented with Him, so be you also contented with Him and come and trust Him! Oh, now may delays be over and difficulties all be solved—and just as you are, without one plea, but that the Savior bled—come to your heavenly Father and you shall be “accepted in the Beloved.”

Thus, then, Jesus Christ hanging on the Cross is the Tree of Life in its winter time.

II. And now let me show you, as I may be enabled, **THAT SAME TREE OF LIFE WHEN IT HAS BLOSSOMED AND BROUGHT FORTH FRUIT.**

There He stands—Jesus—still the same Jesus—and yet how changed! The same Jesus, but clothed with honor instead of shame, able now to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him. My text says of this tree that it bears “twelve fruits.” I suppose that is intended to signify that a perfect and complete assortment of all supplies for human necessities is to be found in Christ—all sorts of mercies for all sorts of sinners—all kinds of blessings to suit all kinds of necessities. We read of the palm tree, that every bit of it is useful, from its root to its fruit. So is it with the Lord Jesus Christ. There is nothing in Him that we could afford to do without. There is nothing about Jesus that is extraneous or superfluous. You can put Him to use in every part, in every office, in every relationship!

A Tree of Life is for food. Some trees yield rich fruit. Adam in the garden lived only on the fruit of the garden. *Jesus Christ is the food of His people*—and what dainties they have! What satisfying food, what plentiful food, what sweet food, what food precisely suitable to all the needs of their souls is Jesus! As for manna, it was angels’ food, but what shall I say of Christ? He is more than that, for—

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

Oh, how richly you are fed! The flesh of God’s own Son is the spiritual meat of every heir of Heaven. Hungry souls, come to Jesus if you would be fed!

Jesus also gives His people drink. There are some tropical trees which, as soon as they are tapped, yield liquids as sweet and rich as milk, and many drink and are refreshed by them. Jesus Christ’s heart blood is the wine of His people. The Atonement which He has perfected by His sufferings is the golden cup out of which they drink and drink again, till their mourning souls are made glad and their fainting hearts are strengthened and refreshed. Jesus gives us the Water of Life, the wines on the lees well refined, the wine and milk, without money and without price. What a Tree of Life to yield us both meat and drink!

Jesus is a Tree of Life yielding clothing, too. Adam went to the fig tree for his garments and the fig leaves yielded him such covering as they could. But we come to Christ and we find not fig leaves, but a robe of Righteousness that is matchless for its beauty, comely in its proportions, one which will never wear out, which exactly suits to cover our nakedness from head to foot and when we put it on makes us fair to look upon, even as Christ Himself! O you who would be dressed till you shall be fit to stand among the courtiers of the skies, come to Jesus and find garments such as you need upon this Tree of Life!

This Tree also yields medicine. “The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” Lay a plaster upon any wound and if it is but the plaster of King Jesus, it will heal it! But one promise from His lips, but

one leaf from this tree, but one word from His Spirit, but one drop of His blood and this is Heaven's court-plaster indeed. It is true that there was no balm in Gilead, there was no physician there and, therefore, the hurt of the daughter of Israel's people was not healed. But there *is* balm in Jesus, there *is* a Physician at Calvary—and the hurt of the daughter of God's people shall be healed if she will but fly to Jesus Christ for healing!

And what more shall I say? Is there anything else your spirits can need? O children of God, Christ is All! O you ungodly ones who have been roaming through the world to find the tree that should supply your needs, stop here! This "apple tree [See Sermon #1120, Volume 19—THE APPLE TREE IN THE WOODS and #3249, Volume 57—UNDER THE APPLE TREE—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] among the trees of the woods" is the tree which your souls require! Stay here and you shall have all that you need. For, listen—*this tree yields a shelter from the storm*. Other trees are dangerous when the tempest howls, but he that shelters beneath the tree of the Lord Jesus shall find that all the thunderbolts of God shall fly by him and do him no injury. He cannot be hurt who clings to Jesus! Heaven and earth should sooner pass away than a soul be lost that hides beneath the boughs of this Tree. And oh, you who have hidden there to shelter from the wrath of God, let me remind you that in every other kind of danger it will also yield you shelter! And if you are not in danger, yet still in the hot days of care you shall find the shade of it to be cool and genial. The spouse in Solomon's Song said, "I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste." Get Christ and you have got comfort, joy, peace and liberty—and when the trouble comes, you shall find shelter and deliverance by coming near to Him.

He is the Tree of Life, then, yielding twelve fruits, those fruits being always ripe and always ready, for they ripen every month, all being free to all who desire them, for the leaves are not for the healing of some, but "for the healing of the nations." What a large word! Then there are enough of these leaves for the healing of all the nations that shall ever come into the world. Oh, may God grant that none of you may die from spiritual sickness when these leaves can heal you! And may none of you be filling yourselves with the sour grapes of this world, the poisonous grapes of sin, while the sweet fruit of Christ's love are waiting which would refresh you and satisfy you.

III. And now I have to show you HOW TO GET AT THE FRUIT OF THIS TREE OF LIFE.

That is the main matter. Little does it matter to tell that there is fruit unless we can tell how it can be obtained. I wish that all here really wanted to know the way, but I am afraid many care very little about it. Dr. Payson had once been out to tea with one of his people who had been particularly hospitable to him, and when he was leaving, the doctor said, "Well, now, Madam, you have treated me exceedingly well, but how do you treat my Master?" That is a question I should like to put to some of

you. How do you treat my Master? Why, you treat Him as if He were not Christ! As if you did not need Him! But you *do* need Him. May you find Him soon, for when you come to die, you will need Him then, and perhaps then you may not find Him.

Well, *the way to get the fruit from this Tree is by faith.* That is the hand that plucks the golden apples! Can you believe? That is the thing. Can you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that He died upon the Cross? “Yes,” you say, “I believe that.” Can you believe that in consequence of His sufferings, He is able to save? “Yes,” say you. Can you believe that He will save you? Will you trust Him to save you? If so, you are saved! If your soul comes to Jesus, and says, “My Lord, I believe in You, that You are able to save to the uttermost, and now I throw myself upon You.” That is faith!

When Mr. Andrew Fuller was going to preach before an Association, he rode to the meeting on his horse. There had been a good deal of rain and the rivers were very much swollen. He got to one river which he had to cross. He looked at it and he was half afraid of the strong current, as he did not know the depth. A farmer who happened to be standing by, said, “It is all right, Mr. Fuller, you will get through it all right, Sir. The horse will keep its feet.” Mr. Fuller went in and the water got up to the girth, and then up to the saddle—and he began to get uncomfortably wet. Mr. Fuller thought he had better turn round and he was going to do so when the same farmer shouted, “Go on, Mr. Fuller! Go on! I know it is all right!” And Mr. Fuller said, “Then I will go on. I will go by faith.” Now, Sinner, it is very like that with you. You think that your sins are so deep that Christ will never be able to carry you over them! But I say to you—“It is all right, Sinner. Trust Jesus and He will carry you through Hell, itself, if that is necessary! If you had all the sins of all the men that have ever lived, and they were all yours—if you could trust Him, Jesus Christ would carry you through the current of all that sin! It is all right, Man! Only trust Christ. The river may be deep, but Christ’s love is deeper. It is all right, Man! Do not let the devil make you doubt my Lord and Master! He is a liar from the beginning and the father of lies, but my Master is faithful and true! Rest on Him and all will be well. The waves may roll, the river may seem to be deeper than you thought it to be—and rest assured it *is* much deeper than you know it to be—but the almighty arm of Jesus—that strong arm that can shake the heavens and the earth and move the pillars thereof as Samson moved the pillars of Gaza’s gates—that strong arm can hold you up and bear you safely through if you do but cling to it, and rest on it. O Soul, rest in Jesus and you are saved!”

Once again. *If at the first you do not seem to get the fruit from this Tree, shake it by prayer.* “Oh,” you say, “I have been praying.” Yes, but a tree does not always drop its fruit at the first shake you give it. Shake it again, Man! Give it another shake! And sometimes, when the tree is

loaded and is pretty firm in the earth, you have to shake it to and fro and, at last, you plant your feet and get a hold of it, and shake it with might and main till you strain every muscle and sinew to get the fruit down! And that is this way to pray. Shake the Tree of Life until the mercy drops into your lap! Christ loves for men to beg hard of Him. You cannot be too importunate! That which might be disagreeable to your fellow creatures when you beg of them, will be agreeable to Christ! Oh, get to your chambers! Get to your chambers, you that have not found Christ! Get to your bedsides, to your little closets and “seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near!”

May the Spirit of God compel you to pray. May He compel you to continue in prayer! Jesus must hear you. The gate of Heaven is open to the sturdy knocker that will not take a denial. The Lord enable you so to plead that at the last, you will be able to say, “You have heard my voice and my supplication. You have inclined Your ear unto me. Therefore will I pray unto You as long as I live.”

May God add His blessing to these rambling thoughts, for Jesus sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
GENESIS 2:1-17; REVELATION 22.**

Genesis 2:1-8. *Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made. These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. Everything was ready for man’s use. Every fruit-bearing tree for his nourishment, every creature to do his bidding, for it was the will of God that he should “have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” God did not place the man formed in His image, after His likeness, in an unfurnished house or an empty world and leave him to provide for himself all that he required, but He prepared everything that man could possibly need, and*

completed the whole plan by planting “a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed.”

9. *And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the Tree of Life also in the midst of the garden, and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.* That Tree of Life in the midst of the earthly Paradise was to be symbolic of another Tree of Life in the Paradise above, from which the children of God shall never be driven as Adam and Eve were driven out of Eden.

10-14. *And a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasses the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasses the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goes toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.* That river in Eden also reminds us of the “pure river of Water of Life clear as crystal, proceeding out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb,” of which we read almost at the end of the Revelation that was given to John in Patmos. Thus the beginning and the end of the Bible call our attention to the Tree of Life and the river of life in the Paradise below and the better Paradise above.

15. *And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.* There was to be occupation for man even in Paradise, just as they who are before the Throne of God in Glory “serve Him day and night in His temple.” Idleness gives no joy, but holy employment will add to the bliss of Heaven.

16, 17. *And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden, you may freely eat: but of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.* Apparently Adam was not forbidden to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Life, though, after his fall, he was cast out of Eden, as God said, “lest he put forth his hand and take also of the Tree of Life, and eat and live forever.” He might freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden except one—“of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, you shall not eat of it.” It was a slight prohibition, yet the test was more than man, even in a state of innocence, was able to endure and, alas, his failure involved all his descendants, for he was the federal head of the human race, and “by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men.” Happily, there is another federal Head and, therefore, we read, “For if through the offense of one, many are dead, much more the Grace of God, and the gift by Grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, has abounded unto many.”

Revelation 22:1. *And He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb. Rivers*

partake of the character of the source from which they come. That which proceeds “out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb “may well be “a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal.” What but good and perfect gifts can come down from the Throne of God? What but pure streams of mercy can flow from the Throne of the Lamb?

2. *In the middle of its street*—For Heaven is a place of sacred and hallowed communion—“In the middle of its street”—

2. *And on either side of the river, was the Tree of Life, which bore twelve fruits.* Every variety of joy and blessedness!

2. *And yielded her fruit every month.* For the felicities of Heaven are always fresh and always new, we shall never be satiated or wearied with that heavenly fruit!

2. *And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.* Everything in Heaven is the very best of the best. The leaves of the trees in earthly gardens are blown about by the wind and we take but little note of them. But the leaves of the Tree of Life are “for the healing of the nations.” O happy place, where even the leaves on the tree have such virtue in them!

3. *And there shall be no more curse.* No more thorns or thistles, no more pangs of child-bearing, no more sickness, or sorrow, or death.

3. *But the Throne of God and of the Lamb* [See Sermon #1576, Volume 27—THE THRONE OF GOD AND OF THE LAMB—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] *shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him!* They shall have nothing else to do, and it shall be their supreme delight to serve Him perfectly and unceasingly.

4. *And they shall see His face.* [See Sermon #824, Volume 14—THE HEAVEN OF HEAVEN—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] **Not** through a glass darkly, but face to face shall they behold their God! Surely that will be the very Heaven of Heaven!

4. *And His name shall be on their foreheads.* Aaron was to wear upon his forehead a plate of pure gold, with HOLINESS TO THE LORD engraved upon it, that the children of Israel might be accepted before the Lord. But the saints in Glory are to have the name of their God “on their foreheads.” In the very forefront of their glorified personalities there shall be the marks to declare that they are the children of God!

5. *And there shall be no night there.* The saints in Glory will have no need of sleep, so “there shall be no night there,” but one perpetual day of holy, unwearying service. There shall be no night of ignorance, of sorrow, of sin, of death—there shall be no powers of darkness there, and no darkness in which they might work their evil deeds.

5. *And they shall need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God gives them light.* Directly and distinctly, without using any means, by His own immediate Presence, “the Lord God gives them light”—

5. *And they shall reign forever and ever.* Earthly kings die, or their empires on earth are taken from them. But as for us whom God has cho-

sen, by His Grace, our Kingdom is like that of our Lord and Savior—it is an everlasting Kingdom!

“They shall reign forever and ever.” I wonder that some wise man does not try to prove that this means that the saints shall reign only for a short time! They have whittled “everlasting punishment” down to next to nothing—why do they not try to reduce the duration of Heavenly bliss in the same way? The same words are used concerning the one as concerning the other, so we shall always hold to the eternity both of the one and the other, the bliss and the woe are equally “forever and ever.”

6, 7. *And He said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy Prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keeps the sayings of the prophecy of this Book.* You have the witness of God. You have the witness of the angel of God, you have the witness of Christ you have the witness of John, and all of them agree that “these sayings are faithful and true,” and that they relate to facts that shall in due course be established.

8. *And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things.* And, according to the Church of Rome, he was quite right. But according to the Word of God, he was quite wrong!

9. *Then said he unto me, See you do it not: for I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this Book: worship God.* Worship none but God! Take care not to break the first two of the Ten Commandments either by worshipping another God or by worshipping the true God under any form of similitude whatever!

10. *And he said unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this Book: for the time is at hand.* “There is no need to roll it up, and set a seal to it, as it is so soon to be fulfilled, leave it open.”

11. *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.* The Lord’s messenger speaks as if “the time” were so nearly come that there was no opportunity left for any charge to be made. And this is what will happen, sooner or later, to all men. When they die, their characters will be fixed forever. The wax will cool, and the impression that it bears will be retained eternally.

12, 13. *And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.* [See Sermon #546, Volume 9—ALPHA AND OMEGA—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] These must be the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself! No mere messenger, however high his rank, would have dared to say, “I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.”

14, 16. *Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have the right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For outside are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. We thank God that they are shut out of Heaven, for, albeit that we wish all men could be there, yet we would wish none to be there whose characters are of such a kind as this, unless they were washed and cleansed. Heaven would not be Heaven if such men could be admitted there! They shall not be. They must, by Infallible Justice, be excluded from the realms of bliss.*

16. *I Jesus have sent My angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star. So Glory is dawning, for Christ, the Bright and Morning Star has risen,*

17. *And the Spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that hears say, come. And let him that is thirsty, come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* [See Sermons #279, Volume 5—COME AND WELCOME; #1331, Volume 22—THE TWO “COMES”; #1608, Volume 27—THE DOUBLE “COME” and #2685, Volume 46—THE OFT-REPEATED INVITATION—Read/download all these sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Here we have the last invitations in the Word of God—may all who have not yet accepted them do so now, lest they should never again be uttered in their hearing!

18-21. *For I testify unto every man that hears the words of the prophecy of this Book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this Book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the Book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this Book. He which testifies these things says, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. So the blessed Book closes appropriately with Grace, for ‘tis Grace that—*

***“All the work shall crown
Through everlasting days;
It lays in Heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise.”***

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

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

THE THRONE OF GOD AND OF THE LAMB NO. 1576

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

***“The Throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it.”
Revelation 22:3.***

WE shall take these words as referring to Heaven. Certainly it is most true of the Celestial City as well as of the millennial city, that the Throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it. This theme of surpassing interest intimately concerns all of us who are Believers, for to the eternal rest at the foot of the Throne we are constantly looking. Were it otherwise, I fear there would be little prospect of our ever passing the heavenly portals. We do not suppose that a man is shooting at a target if he does not look that way. Nor can we imagine that a man's ambition is fixed on Heaven if he has no thoughts or aspirations toward Heaven.

The pilgrim turns his steps towards the place he is desirous to reach. Though he cannot catch a glimpse of the distant spot which is the goal of his hope, yet his eyes are in that *direction*. Let him climb a hill on a clear day and you will see how he strains his eyes to catch a glimpse of tower or spire, minaret or battlement of the city he is seeking. When he descends the valley and the outlook is dreary, he solaces his soul with songs in the night that tell of “a day's march nearer home.” The anticipated greetings of friends gladden his heart. After a noble fashion the prospect of Heaven lights up our sad days with gleams of Glory, while our happy Sabbaths here, below, have often made us long for the sanctuary on high.

In the crowded courts of this Tabernacle our fancy has pictured the Temple above of living stones and countless worshippers. Bunyan speaks of Mount Clear from which, with aid of telescope, the Celestial City might be seen in the distance. We have enjoyed intervals when no clouds or mists have obstructed our outlook and these have usually come to us on the Lord's days. A friend of mine, when he went to reside in Newcastle-on-Tyne, was looking over a newly-built house that was to let and as he looked out of the window in the top room, the landlord said to him, “You can see Durham Cathedral from here on a Sunday.” My friend, failing, at first, to catch his meaning, said, “Why on Sunday more than any other day?” “Well,” said he, the furnaces are not going and the smoke is not rising to darken the atmosphere.”

I was not surprised to hear that the passing incident supplied my friend with a parable the next time that he preached. On special Sabbaths we peer into the city of which our text says—“The Throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it.” God grant that our meditations may stir your longings upward and that our discourse may excite your desires towards

Heaven! Come, then, let us think about the Throne of God and of the Lamb and of the place where it is. But stop a moment—I want you to look round and take a preliminary survey of the scene. Do you notice that this Throne is the “Throne of God and of the Lamb”?

Doubtless you know where John got that phrase, that title for Christ—“the Lamb.” It is almost peculiar to Himself. You catch the note in Isaiah—Jesus is celebrated as a Lamb in his prophecies. You hear the name in an Epistle of Peter and in the Acts of the Apostles as a quotation from the evangelical Prophet. But with John it is a most familiar term. John, the best beloved of all the disciples of Jesus, loves this sweet symbol and delights to speak of his Lord as “the Lamb.” This John had been a disciple of that other John, the Baptist, whose chief and choicest sermon, which lingered most in his mind and memory, was couched in words like these—“Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.”

John the Baptist struck a note which vibrated throughout the whole life of John the Divine. In Patmos John recalls his early impressions, for old men delight in the scenes and sayings of their youth. When John began his Gospel, he was absorbed in, “the Word.” Now that he unfolds the wondrous scroll of vision, he portrays “the Lamb.” As the keynote of Redemption, the name recurs frequently in his writings and, in his closing book, the name comes back to him with all its music and he dwells upon it with evident delight. The word, “arnion,” as used in the Book of Revelation, might be translated, “a little lamb.” It is a diminutive in the Greek text, expressive, as Dean Woodhouse observes, of tenderness and love. And in such sense our Savior, Himself, used it in addressing Peter after His resurrection—“Do you love Me? Feed My lambs.”

I refer to the idiom without any wish to see the common rendering altered, but it seems to show a marvelous degree of familiarity in John’s mind with his blessed Master, when he looks upon Him as the little Lamb to be loved, for you know how apt we are to express affection in diminutive terms. “My little dear,” or, “my little darling,” are expressions that trip sweetly from our tongues. On the other hand, were we to say, “my dear big daughter,” or, “my dear tall son,” the words would sound awkward. We naturally give diminutive names to our favorites. Thus you will observe, dear Friends, that while our Divine Lord has names of infinite majesty which appeal to our loftiest homage, He also has names of pure simplicity like, “the Holy Child Jesus” and “the Little Lamb,” when He appears to us innocent as a babe, or suffering, as a Sacrifice.

I. The sublime adoration of the heavenly host is offered to the Lamb that was slain and has redeemed us to God by His blood out of every kindred and tongue, people and nation. In order to behold the Throne of God and of the Lamb, you must, first of all, get a sight of the Lamb. I invite you, therefore, in the words of John the Baptist, to “BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD, which takes away the sin of the world.” Look at Him in the dawn of His ministry, when first He comes within the range of mortal vision—a Man, a lowly Man, one chosen out of the people. About Him there is neither form nor comeliness to make Him at all remarkable! He is one who

did not strive, or cry, or cause His voice to be heard in the streets. He was not a pretentious, nor an ambitious Man, but one who could say of Himself, and nobody could dispute it, "I am meek and lowly in heart."

He was born in Bethlehem. He grew and waxed strong in spirit. He increased in wisdom and stature. I suppose that when He was a child He spoke as a child, understood as a child and thought as a child—I know that He lived with His parents and was subject to them. In His mature years, when He was manifested to Israel, we behold Him, the Sinless One, endowed with the common faculties and afflicted with the common infirmities of our mortal race. He suffered the breath of slander. He wept with mourners. He groaned beneath the burden of care and smarted under the pangs of pain. He lived and He died in the presence of many witnesses—what further evidence could be desired that Jesus was a Man and not a myth—a lamb-like Man—and none of your pretenders to greatness?

His Character, too, is so purely natural that the example of excellence He sets needs no explanation. The gentle disposition that drew little children around Him; the kindly temper that bore reviling without anger; the love He showed to the poor and destitute; the respect He paid to the outcasts of society and, above all, His kindly notice of publicans and harlots as sheep gone astray who were capable of being restored, claim our gratitude and cause us to regard Him as the model of goodness for all generations. Such is the Man whom all the kindreds of this earth must ultimately acknowledge as "the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world."

How lamb-like He is! Thus you see the Lamb of God among men—will you track His footsteps still farther on till He becomes the Lamb of Sacrifice and actually takes the sin of man upon Himself that He may bear its penalty? What an extraordinary night that was when He rose up from the supper table and said to His disciples, "Let us go." He went to a certain garden where He had been accustomed to spend nights in meditation. He went there to pray. And oh, what a prayer it was! It was such surely as Heaven never heard before or since. In an agony He prayed more earnestly and yet more earnestly, till, "He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood, falling to the ground."

He cried to the Father, "If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me." Then did the heavy cloud of human sins overshadow His soul and the ghastly terrors of all His people's guilt brood over His spirit! He proved the hour of dread and the power of darkness. Arrested by one who had eaten bread with Him, He was betrayed into the hands of conspirators. By an Apostle who turned apostate, He was sold for a few paltry pieces of silver. From the place of private retreat and of secret prayer, He was hurried off to prison and to judgment. Before Herod and Caiaphas and then before Pontius Pilate He was arraigned. All through the night He was falsely accused and foully mocked, scourged, spit upon and treated with the utmost contempt.

So was His heart broken within Him because of the reproaches of them that reproached God which fell upon Him. Deserted by His disciples, de-

nounced by the priests, despised by the populace, He was, at last, delivered up to the malice of His foes and sentenced by Pilate. He was led away to be crucified—still His patience was conspicuous and when He was led as a lamb to the slaughter He opened not His mouth. Now you shall see the full weight of sin pressing upon “the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.” Every morning and every evening there had been a lamb sacrificed in the Tabernacle as the type and emblem of this Lamb of God who was yet to come. A pretty little innocent lamb that a child might fondle was brought up to the priest and its warm blood was made to flow in pain and it was offered as a sacrifice upon the altar.

But now *He* comes—the last of all lambs! The first, too—the real lamb, the Lamb of God, of which the others were but types. He they took silent, passive, submissive—and nailed Him to the Cross. There He hung in the glare of the sun till the torture of tender nerves in His hands and feet produced such fever in His flesh that He said, “My strength is dried up like a potsherd and My tongue cleaves to My jaws and You have brought Me into the dust of death.” Such was the dissolution of His entire frame. It seemed as if He had no longer a solid body—it was melted with bitter pain. There He hung, men jeering Him till, at last, the sun could bear the sight no longer and veiled his face! The earth could no more endure to be the stage for such a tragedy and began to rock and reel!

The very dead were stirred as though they could not slumber in their graves while such a deed was done, so tombs were opened and many arose! Oh, it was a wondrous spectacle! Those that saw it smote upon their breasts and went upon their way. It was the Son of God “bearing, that we might never bear, His Father’s righteous ire.” Behold Him bruised between the upper and nether millstones of Divine Justice in your place and mine, that God, without the violation of His holy Law, might turn to us in infinite mercy and blot out our transgressions and quench the devouring fire of His wrath! Say, then, Beloved, have you ever seen this sight? Have you so seen it as to sing with our poet—

***“My soul looks back to see
The burdens You did bear,
When hanging on the cursed tree,
And hopes her guilt was there”?***

Do you trust Him? Are you believing Him? His cry from the Cross is, “Look unto Me and be you saved, all the ends of the earth.” Have you looked? If so, then you have had the preliminary sight and I pray God to so strengthen the eyes of your understanding that you may gaze more intently on this vision of the Apocalypse—“The Throne of God and of the Lamb.”

II. BEHOLD THE THRONE! Let us see it, first, from the Lamb’s side of it. Of course there is only one Throne—God and the Lamb are not divided. The Lamb is God and the interests of God and the Lamb are one. The one kingdom of God, even the Father, is identical with the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Acknowledging the oneness of the Throne, we proceed to inspect it from the point of view in which the Lamb chiefly

challenges our notice. You will remember that He is portrayed to us as, “the Lamb in the midst of the Throne.” So John beheld Him, as you read in the 5th chapter of Revelation and the 6th verse.

But I would not have you make any mistake about the meaning of that phrase. Dr. Watts constructed a poor paraphrase of the passage when He said—

**“Our Jesus fills the middle seat
Of the celestial Throne.”**

There is no such idea in Holy Scripture. “The midst of the Throne” means the *front* of the Throne, according to the Greek. The Lamb was not *on* the Throne in that vision, but standing immediately before it. That is a position in which our Lord Jesus Christ would have us see Him. I will show you, presently, that He *is* on the Throne, according to our text, but not according to the passage which I have just now quoted. In the previous narrative of the 5th chapter, where the Lamb is said to be in the midst of the Throne, it means in the *front* of it—in the center—standing there that we might draw near and approach the Throne of God through Him.

To the awful Throne of God there could be no access except through a Mediator—He stands, therefore, in the front of the Throne between us and the invisible Sovereign God, as Interposer and Interpreter, one of a thousand, the Daysman who can lay His hand upon both. This is a beautiful thought. Jesus, according to the former vision of this revelation, is in the *front* of the Throne where God always sees Him before He sees us. I cannot endure the sight of God until I see Him in Christ—and God cannot bear the sight of me till He sees me in Christ! Wonderful is that text in the book of Exodus, “When I see the blood I will pass over you.” He does not say, “When you Israelites see the blood I will pass over you.”

Why, they were not in a position to see it, for they were *inside* the house and the blood was outside, on the lintel and on the two side posts. It is true, they had seen the lamb as it was slain, for you remember that the whole assembly of the congregation was to kill it between the two evenings and they also saw much upon their having seen it as upon God’s continually seeing it—“When I see the blood I will pass over you.” In like manner, the Covenant security of the saints arises from God the Father looking to His Son Jesus Christ as their Surety and Sacrifice, rather than from the constant exercise of their faith. Hence we rightly plead in our hymn—

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

There, then, our Lord Jesus stands in front of the Throne of God interceding for us, interposing for us, opening the way for us to approach to God, even the Father! I have drawn your attention to this previous vision as a preliminary to that of our text in which the position of Jesus Christ is *upon* the Throne, reigning there, clothed bodily with all the power of the Godhead. Do not forget that it is so. The Lamb is on the Throne of God—co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, very God He is, very God He always was! We do not forget the Glory which He had with the Father before

the earth was, but it is as God-Man Mediator that He is now, in His complex Person, invested with heavenly honors—

***“This is the Man, the exalted Man,
Whom we unseen adore.
But when our eyes behold His face,
Our hearts shall love Him more.”***

The full glory of His Person as Son of God and Son of Man shall be manifested when He shall be beheld upon the Throne of God. He who once appeared as the sacrificed and slaughtered Lamb shall reign with supreme authority—the blessed and only Potentate, King of kings and Lord of lords! It is the Throne of God and of the Lamb. The power thus conferred upon Him, the Lamb, not only possesses by right and title, but He exercises it in deed and in truth. “All power,” said our risen Redeemer, “is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth.” He rules now with unlimited sway and the scepter of His kingdom is a right scepter.

As Joseph was exalted in Egypt and Pharaoh said, “See, I have set you over all the land and the people cried before him and bowed the knee; and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt,” even so we read of Jesus, “God also has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord in the glory of God the Father.” The rebellious are not exempted from His rule! Though they conspire against Him, they shall be utterly confounded. One might fancy that there was a slight strain of language in Pharaoh’s fiat, that, “without Joseph no man shall lift his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt”—but there is no exaggeration if we apply the words to Christ—for it is a fact that every man living is responsible to Jesus for the thoughts and imaginations of his heart.

Jesus Christ is King forever! The Throne of Heaven is the Throne of God and of the Lamb! His dominion over Nature always appears, to me, a delightful contemplation. I like to think of the sea roaring and the floods clapping their hands in His praise. He it is who makes the fields joyful and the trees of the forest glad. His pencil paints the varied hues of the flowers and His breath perfumes them. Every cloud floats over the sky blown by the breath of His mouth. Lord of all the realms of life and death, His Providence runs without knot or break through all the tangled skeins of time. All events, obvious or obscure, great or small, are subject to His influence and fostered or frustrated by His supremacy! The Lord reigns and of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end!

Your royal prerogative, O Lamb of God, extends over all the realms of Grace! You, O Lord Jesus, dispense mercy as seems good in Your sight. As the Father raises up the dead and quickens whom He will, even so He has given to the Son to have life in Himself and to quicken whomever He pleases. As Head of the Church, His benign control is absolute among the members of His body. In the bestowment of spiritual gifts and in the appointment to sacred offices, He rules and regulates—and *nothing* is too minute to escape His notice! How pleasant to my poor heart to think that

He who bowed His head to shame is now exalted as God Over All to such a seat of honor! I feel that no disgrace I could incur; no injury I could sustain in preaching His name and publishing His fame, could be of any account in comparison with my joy in seeing Him exalted!

Let me starve in a prison or die in a ditch, if only Christ is glorified! The old soldiers of Napoleon, rank and file, reveled in the triumphs of their general. When they fell on the battlefield with shouts of victory ringing in the air, they seemed to think light of death so long as the Emperor had won renown and the eagles of France were in the ascendant! Live forever, royal Lamb! Reign forever, victorious Lord! As for us, who or what are we? Brothers and Sisters, let us follow Him in the tribulation of the hour while the fight is fierce and so shall we find ourselves in His train when His triumph is trumpeted forth before the assembled universe. "Blessing and honor, and glory and power be unto Him that sits upon the Throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever." What lowly reverence we owe to Him who occupies such a Throne of boundless empire! Approach Him, then, with profound humility, but mingle with it the most childlike confidence.

Beloved, we see before us the grandeur of God and the gentleness of a lamb! The infinite Creator and the innocent creature are linked together in lovely union. He who is God over all, blessed forever, has resources amply sufficient to meet your utmost needs. You do not come to a finite helper when you draw near to Christ. In trusting to the merit of His blood, you have an all-prevalent plea and full security for pardon, peace and acceptance. You come to the Throne of the Lamb and that Throne of the Lamb is the Throne of God! "My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus." There is no stinted provision in such a treasury! All the riches of the Glory of God are treasured up in Christ Jesus and Christ has all this wealth to bestow upon His redeemed family.

I do not know what hope and expectations the Socinian can cherish with a man-Christ, or an Angel-Christ, or a semi-divine Christ as a guide to immortality. They may honor Jesus of Nazareth for the purity of the life He lived on earth, but I need God, in human flesh, to save my soul and the death of the Son of God to wash away my sin! I find the fight of life so fierce that no hand but that which made the heavens can ever give me the victory! I place myself on the Incarnate God who bled and died, is gone into the excellent Glory and sits down, there, upon the Throne, Lord over all! I trust His saving strength to bear me through! Let me challenge you, my Hearers. Are you trusting Him and placing yourselves only and wholly upon Him? Could you be content with anyone less than a Divine Savior? If you are born from above you could not! Magnify His name, then, and worship Him in the quiet of your hearts at this good hour.

Well, that is the aspect of the Throne from the side of the Lamb. Let us now take another look and behold the Throne of God. The Throne of God is the Throne of the Lamb! But the Throne of God, if we view it as sinners with a sense of guilt upon our conscience, is an object of terror, a place to flee from. Our poet was right when He said—

"Once 'twas a seat of burning wrath,

***And shot devouring flames!
Our God appeared, consuming fire
And vengeance was His name.”***

I remember when I had such terrible apprehensions of God and I know that they were founded upon the Truth of God, for the Lord is terrible to unforgiven men. Now I do not disdain, as some do, to sing, “Though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away and You comforted me.” Not that there has been a change in God. It is the *view* of God which the sinner is able to take which has been changed—and that change has been effected by Christ!

From everlasting to everlasting Jehovah is the same—in Him there is no variableness! Jesus did not die to make the Father love us, or to melt His aversion into affection. No, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, He loved us with an eternal love and chose us in the Person of Christ before the foundation of the world! Still, His justice was outraged by the transgressions we committed and, as a holy and just Sovereign, His anger was kindled against us as sinners—and that anger was no less justly appeased by the death of Christ when He put away our sins by the sacrifice of Himself. By His precious blood a full Atonement was made. Henceforth, eternal praises to His name, the Throne of God is the Throne of the Lamb!

It is a throne of righteousness, but no less a throne of Grace. There, on the Throne of the Almighty, mercy reigns. According to the merit of the Sacrifice and the virtue of the Atonement, all the statutes and decrees of the kingdom of Heaven are issued. The Altar and the Throne have become identical. From that Throne no fiery bolt can ever again be hurled against the Believer, for it is the Throne of the Lamb as well as the Throne of God. Oh, what comfort there is for suffering saints in this conjunction of Majesty and Mercy on the Throne of the Highest! The Sovereignty that is signified by this Throne must certainly be unlimited. The Throne of God is the Throne of an absolute Monarch who does as He wills among the armies of Heaven and among the inhabitants of this lower world.

From that Throne the proclamation comes like a peal of thunder, “The Lord reigns! Let the people tremble!” God’s Throne of Sovereignty is not a Throne of arbitrary power, for the Lord is perfect and holy and His will is just and right. In acting according to the purpose of His own will, He abounds towards us in all wisdom and goodness. The sternness of law is linked with the sweetness of love because, while the Throne of Heaven is the Throne of God, it is still the Throne of the Lamb. I fear that I fail to find the words that will express my thoughts, but this empire of God and the Lamb endears itself to our hearts. There is about it a kingly kindness and a majestic mercy most charming to the mind. Do any ask, What throne is that? To whom does it belong? We answer—it is the Throne of the great and glorious God and it is the Throne of the lowly lovely Lamb.

The glorious Lord is gentle as a child. The lamb is lordly as a lion. Referring to the Book sealed with seven seals, described in the 5th chapter, St. Bernard said, “John heard of a lion and saw a Lamb; the Lamb opened

the Book and appeared a Lion.” But, behold, here it is, “the Throne of God and of the Lamb.” Take off your shoes, O Seer; the place where you stand is holy ground, for God is here! Come, little children, there is charm enough to entice you, for the Lamb is here. It is the Throne of God! Therefore fall down before it with awe and self-abasement! But it is the Throne of the Lamb—therefore you may stand up before it without fear.

Does not a rich blend of splendor and tenderness dawn on your apprehension? Are you not sensible of some present effect on your souls? Do you not feel the charming sweetness and the overpowering light? John tells us in the first chapter what his own sensations were, when the Son of Man appeared to him in the midst of the seven candlesticks, vested with the insignia of Priest and King. First, he says, “When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead.” Then he adds, “And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, ‘Fear not; I am...’”—Ah, when you recognize who He is, fear gives place to faith and trust succeeds to trembling! Be of good courage, then, you faint and timid disciples! Why do you come creeping with bated breath to the Throne of heavenly Grace? Will you always cry in the same strain, “Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners”?

Such you *were*, but you are not so now! You are washed in the blood of the Lamb! You are His dear children. You have received the spirit of adoption. When you pray, say, “Our Father which are in Heaven.” Let it be your pleasure, as it is your privilege, to hold nearer communion with God than Israel did, for no bounds are set about the mount. They had to stand at a distance. They dared not draw near lest they should die. They did even entreat that the terrible words might not be spoken to them any more—but you are a people near to Him and dear to Him and the Throne to which you owe allegiance is the Throne of God and of the Lamb! I am painfully conscious, as I proceed, that the subject is too much beyond my grasp to mold it into a sermon. This is not preaching. I have been merely holding up the text and trying to suggest thought after thought as the Glory of my Lord’s kingdom occurred to my mind.

But what can any of us say in the Presence of God and of the Lamb? Our proper position is to fall down upon our faces and worship! Isaiah saw the Lord sitting upon a Throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the Temple! Above it stood the seraphim—pure and sinless as they were, their homage was lowly and obeisant! Each one had six wings. With two he covered his face; with two he covered his feet and with two did he fly. In the Presence of the Eternal, language fails us except the one adoring cry, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts! The whole earth is full of His Glory!” The only other exclamation appropriate to utter would be, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.”

III. One fact remains to be noticed—it is this—the Throne of God and of the Lamb is in Heaven. BEHOLD, THEN, THE THRONE IN HEAVEN. We must pass beyond this earthly region and join the company of those who people the celestial realm before we can see the Throne of God so as to obtain a complete view of it. Is not this among the chief joys of Heaven?—

***“I’d part with all the joys of sense,
To gaze upon Your Throne.
Pleasures spring fresh forever thence,
Unspeakable, unknown.”***

There are many ideas of Heaven and I suppose, according to each man’s character, will be the prospects he cherishes and the answer he gives when the question is asked—“What must it be to be there?” So abundant are the joys which the Lord has prepared for them that love Him, that there is ample scope for imagination. There is the great wall, with its 12 glittering foundations—and there are the 12 gates and the 12 pearls.

There, too, is the Tree of Life with its 12 manners of fruits. Who shall ever understand all the meaning of the symbols used by holy men to set forth the Paradise of God? Nor are the Scriptures our only source of information, for our sighs below are prophecies of the blessings laid up for us. The toil-worn laborer thinks of Heaven as a land of rest and he shall find it so. On the other hand, the relish that we have for religious worship and the delight we take in Christian work leads us to think of Heaven as a sanctuary where the servants of God can serve Him day and night—we shall find it so. For my part, I sympathize with both expectations, for though they sound contrary, they need not clash. The rest of glorified spirits, so far from being a sort of suspended animation, will rather consist of a joyous refreshment in enthusiastic service.

And the ministry of ransomed hosts, instead of wearying them, will awaken them to fly more swiftly, to sing more loudly and to serve God more diligently as they see His face! Are there not tempted ones among you who smile as they think that there shall be no *sin* in Heaven? To Paul, when in prison, knowing that the hour of His departure was at hand after a life of preaching the Word of God and enduring persecution—the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the Righteous Judge gave him was, just then, the most welcome anticipation! As the warriors look for a crown, so on the other hand friends look for communion. To loving hearts, great is the bliss of Heaven’s unbroken fellowship of saints—it will, indeed, be a great joy in Heaven to see all who loved the Lord below. How happy we shall be when these blessed reunions take place!

Still, I think that all of you will agree with me that the Heaven of Heaven is that we shall be “with Christ, which is far better”—that we shall behold His face and partake of His Glory. The Throne of God and of the Lamb will be the center of our delights! To have reached Home in the heavenly Father’s House; to have seen our elder Brother and to be sure that we shall abide with Him and go out no more—oh, that is what we pant for! We long to hear His voice welcoming us to our new abode—

***“Come in, you blessed, sit by Me!
With My own life I ransomed thee!
Come, taste My perfect flavor.
Come in, you happy spirit, come!
You now shall dwell with Me at home!
Yon blissful mansions, make him room,
For he must stay forever.”***

Beloved, our song will be to Him who loved us and yet we shall need to tell others of our love to Him. You cannot wash His feet with your tears because He will wipe all your tears away! You cannot honor Him with your substance there as you can here, for there will be no widows and orphans whom you can relieve, no poor and needy ones whom you can feed and clothe and visit—doing to His disciples as you would do unto Him.

But oh, to fall before Him and then to gaze upon Him! He looks like a lamb that has been slain and still wears His priesthood. Oh, for a sight of Him! One said, “See Naples and die.” But oh, if we could only see *Christ*—even on earth for a minute—we would be content to die and go Home with Him straightway! Nor would we ask leave, first, to go and bid them farewell which are at our house. What hallowed communion with Him we shall enjoy there. In His Church below He has given us some pleasant foretaste of His sweet converse, but there the Lamb that is in the midst of the Throne shall always feed them and shall lead them to living fountains of water!

There is a text that I have been turning over in my mind for many years. I need to preach from it, but I cannot understand it clearly enough at present. I hope to preach from it one day before I go to Heaven. If not, I will preach from it up there when I shall have realized its full significance. Ah, do not smile! We shall have some opportunities in Heaven to testify of Christ, for we shall make known unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God! It is difficult to imagine that we will be able, always, to explore the whole of the unsearchable riches of Christ! The passage I am referring to is that in which Jesus says, “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.”

Like Thomas, I am prone to ask questions. What is there to be prepared and in what respect does Heaven, as a place, need to be made ready? I do not like to think of Heaven as a half-built habitation, or as fully built, yet only partly furnished. What does this mean—this preparing of a place for us? Perhaps our Lord’s going there made Heaven ready and its mansions meet for the occupation of His disciples. Heaven would hardly be a home for saints in the absence of the Savior. As I do not know the angels and never was acquainted with any of them, I doubt very much whether I should feel at home in their company if Jesus were not there, too. There are a few saints up yonder whom I once knew and dearly loved. But one needs to be introduced to the whole of the residents, to the general assembly and Church of the First-Born in Heaven. How can this happy familiarity be brought about?

Now that Jesus is there we have a Friend on high whom we have known and who has known us who can introduce us to all its inhabitants and acquaint us with all its joys. His Presence is the Light and the Glory of the Celestial City. My place will be prepared when I am safe in His arms, leaning on His gentle breast. There may be much work for the Builder before all the plans and purposes of the eternal Architect are completed. Of that I do not know—of that, therefore, I cannot speak. Je-

sus has gone to prepare a place for His people and we very distinctly perceive that He is preparing His people for the place.

Listen, now. Lend me your ears and hearken to this concluding word that I have to say to you. We are now hastening our steps heavenward. We long to reach the happy plains because there is not only a rest to be enjoyed, but a festival to be celebrated. The marriage supper of the Lamb draws near. His Church shall be prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. We that are with Him, following in His train, called, chosen and faithful, are only engaged to Him as yet, but we are going to that place where the Voice shall be heard, "The marriage of the Lamb is come and His bride has made herself ready."

I halt. I dare not advance a step farther! I bring you to the margin of this blessed ocean of infinite delight! Oh, for a plunge into it—into the Godhead's deepest sea of love! Is there a more intimate relation into which our Lord Jesus Christ shall hereafter take His beloved people whereby we shall be forever united to Him? Shall we know the fullness of His love in a communion of which it were not lawful for a man to speak? Was this one of the unspeakable words which Paul heard when he was caught up into Paradise? Can it be that this marriage scene is the last act of the new creation, as it was of the old creation when the Lord God found and formed a helpmeet for Adam? "This is a great mystery. I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

Till the day breaks and the shadows flee away, let us wait for the Bridegroom's appearing and the bringing home of the bride. As virgins that look forward to the marriage day, let us keep our lamps trimmed and see to it that there is oil in our vessels, lest when the cry is heard, "The Bridegroom comes," any of us should need to nurse the dimly-burning spark or despairingly cry, "Our lamps are gone out!" Let us all be ready that we may go in through the gates into the city. Some of you, alas, are not able to feel the joy which this subject excites in our breasts. You cannot take delight in the Throne of God and of the Lamb. God grant you may.

Come, now, to the Throne of Grace with open confession and secret contrition. It is the Throne of God who knows the nature of your sin! It is the Throne of the Lamb who bore the penalty of sin and can put it away! Come to the Throne of the Lamb that was slain! I entreat you to come now! And so shall you find peace and reconciliation—and you shall be made meet to enter into the joy of your Lord! I pray God to bless this whole congregation, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

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THE HEAVEN OF HEAVEN

NO. 824

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 9, 1868
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“And they shall see His face.”
Revelation 22:4.

THE Italians so much admire the city of Naples that their proverb is, “See Naples and die,” as if there remained nothing more to be seen after that fair bay and city had been gazed upon. To behold the far fairer sight mentioned in the text, men might well be content to die a thousand times! If it shall please God that we shall depart this life before the Master’s appearing, we may laugh at death and count it to be *gain*, seeing that it introduces us to the place where we shall see His face. “You cannot see My face and live,” said the Lord of old. But that was true of *mortals* only, and refers not to *immortals* who have put on incorruption!

In yonder Glory they see the face of God and yet live! Yes, the sight is the essence and excellence of their life! Here, that vision might be too overpowering for the soul and body, and might painfully separate them with excess of delight and so *cause* us death. But up yonder the disembodied spirit is able to endure the blaze of splendor, and so will the body, also, when it shall have been refined and strengthened in its powers by resurrection from the dead. Then these eyes, which now would be struck with blindness should they look upon the superlative Glory, shall be strengthened to behold eternally the Lord of angels who is the brightness of His Father’s Glory and the express image of His Person.

Brothers and Sisters, regard the object of our expectations! See the happiness which is promised us! Behold the Heaven which awaits us! Forget, for awhile, your present cares—let all your difficulties and your sorrows vanish for a season—and live for awhile in the future which is so certified by faithful promises that you may rejoice in it even *now*! The veil which parts us from our great reward is very thin—Hope gazes through its gauzy fabric. Faith, with eagle eyes, penetrates the mist which hides eternal delights from longing eyes.

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love Him; but He has revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.” And we, in the power of that Spirit, have known, believed and anticipated the bliss which every winged hour is bringing nearer to us. While our Lord was here below it would have been a great delight to spiritual minds to have seen His face. I can scarcely imag-

ine, but perhaps some of you mothers can, what must have been the joy that flooded the heart of Mary, when, for the first time, she gazed upon the lovely face of the holy Child Jesus.

I suppose the infant Jesus to have possessed an extraordinary beauty. A soul, absolutely perfect as His was, must surely have been enshrined in a body perfect in its symmetry and attractive in its features. The overshadowing Spirit, by whose miraculous agency He was conceived of the Virgin, would scarcely have created an uncomely body, and much less would He have fashioned an unlovely body for so delightful a Person as the only Begotten of the Father! I think, as His virgin mother looked upon Him, and as the wise men and the shepherds gazed into that dear face, they might all have said with the spouse of old, "You are fairer than the children of men."

That manger held an unrivalled form of beauty! Well may painters strain their art to paint the mother and her wondrous Child, for the spectacle brought shepherds from their flocks, sages from the far-off land, and angels from their thrones—Heaven and earth were alike intent to see His face! It would have been no small joy, I think, to have seen the face of Jesus of Nazareth in the years of His maturity when His Countenance beamed with joy. "At that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, Father, I thank You."

One would like to have basked in the radiance of a *sinless* smile—it was a vision fit only for the pure in heart to have traced the fair marks of joy upon the face of Jesus—and such a joy, so spiritual, so refined, so heavenly, so Divine! "Father, I thank You," blessing God for that eternal decree of election by which He has hidden the things of the kingdom from the wise and prudent, and has revealed them unto babes, and saying, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight."

Equally rare must have been the vision which Peter and James, and John beheld when they looked into that Savior's face and saw it Transfigured—beams of light flashing from its every feature—and His whole Person made to glow with a superhuman splendor! The favored spectator might well be content to die at that moment! It was enough to have lived to have beheld His Glory so Divinely revealed. Beloved, have you not sometimes felt as I have, that you could have wished to have seen the Well-Beloved's face even in its grief and agony? It was not long before the beauty of Jesus began to be marred by His inward griefs and His daily hardships.

He appears to have looked like a man of 50 when He was scarcely thirty. The Jews said, "You are not yet 50 years old, and have You seen Abraham?" His visage was more marred, we are told, than that of any man. And His form more than the sons of men—for He took upon Himself our sickness and bore our sorrows—and all this substitutionary grief plowed deep furrows upon that blessed brow and made the cheeks to sink

and the eyes to become red with much weeping. Yet gladly would I have gazed into the face of the Man of Sorrows! Gladly would I have seen those eyes which were “as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk and fitly set.”

Gladly would I have seen those founts of pity, wells of love and springs of grief! Gladly would I have adoringly admired those cheeks which were as beds of spices, as sweet flowers, and those lips like lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh! All the suffering that He suffered could not take away from that marred visage its majesty of Grace and holiness, nor withdraw from it one whit of that mental, moral and spiritual beauty which were peculiar to the perfect Man. O how terribly lovely that beloved face must have looked when it was covered with the crimson of the bloody sweat! When the radiant hues of His rosy sufferings suffused the lily of His perfection!

What a vision must that have been of the Man of Sorrows when He said, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death”! What must it have been to have looked into His face when His brow was girt about with the crown of thorns! When the ruby drops followed each other adown those bruised cheeks which had been spit upon by the shameful mouths of the scorers! That must have been a spectacle of woe, indeed! But, perhaps, yet more ghastly, still, was the face of the Redeemer when He said, “I thirst!” Or when, in bitterest anguish, He shrieked, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

Then, indeed, the sun of the universe suffered a horrible eclipse! Then the light of Heaven, for awhile, passed under a black tempestuous cloud! That face in such a condition we have not seen, nor shall see. But, Beloved, we shall see His face. I could have wished to have been with Mary and the holy women, and Joseph, and Nicodemus when they took His blessed body from the Cross and laid it in the tomb. O for one gaze into that poor pale dead face—to have seen how death looked when mirrored in that matchless clay! And to see how Jesus appeared when conquered and yet *conquering*—vanquished and yet the Victor—yielding up His body to the spoiler to be laid, for awhile, in the treasure house of the tomb and yet bursting all the bars of the spoiler’s den!

But, Brothers and Sisters, there was a glorious change, no doubt, in the face of our Lord when it was seen by several brethren after the resurrection. It was the same face, and they knew Him to be the same Christ. Did they not put their fingers into the nail prints and thrust their hand into His side? Did they not know Him to be veritable flesh and bone as they saw Him eat the piece of fish and honeycomb? But the face was restored to its former majesty and radiance, for I suppose it to have beamed with the dawn—flashes of that light which now flames forth from it, of which John says—“His face was as the sun shining in its strength.”

There were, we believe, some soft unveilings of that unexampled Glory which glorified saints, day without night, are perpetually beholding in Heaven. That face was for the last time seen when He ascended and the clouds concealed Him. Then, gazing downward, and scattering benedictions with both His hands, He appointed His disciples to be His witnesses and bade them go and preach His Gospel, for He would be with them always, even unto the end of the world. Such was the face of Christ on earth—and the remembrance may serve to inspire in us a holy panting after the Beatific Vision which the Lord has promised us, and of which we are now about to speak as the Holy Spirit may graciously give us utterance.

First, this morning, I purpose, Brothers and Sisters, to bring before your minds the Beatific Vision itself—“They shall see His face.” Then, secondly, we shall dwell, for a moment, upon the surpassing clearness of the vision. “They shall see His face”—in a sense more than usually emphatic. Then thirdly, upon the privileges, choice and precious, which are involved in the vision. And lastly we shall have a word or two upon those favored ones who shall enjoy the sight—“*They*,” and none other—“*They* shall see His face.”

I. First, then, THE BEATIFIC VISION. “They shall see His face.” It is the chief blessing of Heaven, the cream of Heaven, the Heaven of Heaven, that the saints shall, there, see Jesus! There will be other things to see. Who dares despise those foundations of chrysolite and chrysoprasus and jacinth? Who shall speak lightly of streets of glassy gold and gates of pearl? We would not forget that we shall see angels, and seraphim and cherubim—nor would we fail to remember that we shall see Apostles, martyrs, and confessors—together with those whom we have walked with and communed with in our Lord while here below.

We shall assuredly behold those of our departed kindred who sleep in Jesus, dear to us here and dear to us still—“not lost, but gone before.” But still, for all this, the main thought which we now have of Heaven, and certainly the main fullness of it when we shall be there, is just this—we shall see Jesus! We shall care little for any of those imaginary occupations which have such charms for a certain class of minds that they could even find a Heaven in them. I have read fanciful periods in which the writer has found celestial joys to consist in an eternal progress in the knowledge of the laws of God’s universe. Such is not *my* Heaven!

Knowledge is not happiness, but on the contrary, is often an increase of sorrow. Knowing, of itself, does not make men happy nor holy. For mere knowing’s sake, I would as soon not know as know, if I had my choice—better to love an ounce than to know a pound! Better a little service than much knowledge. I desire to know what God pleases to teach me, but beyond that, even ignorance shall be my bliss! Some have talked of flitting from star to star, seeing the wonders of God throughout the universe—

how He rules in this province of His wide domain—how He governs in that other region of His vast dominion.

It may be so, but it would be no Heaven to me! So far as I can at present judge, I would rather stay at home and sit at the feet of Christ forever than roam over the wide creation—

***“The spacious earth and spreading flood
Proclaim the wise and powerful God,
And Your rich glories from afar
Sparkle in every rolling star.
Yet in Christ’s looks a Glory stands,
The noblest wonder of God’s hands;
He, in the Person of His Son,
Has all His mightiest works outdone.”***

If Jesus were not Infinite we should not speak so, but since He is, in His Person, Divine, and as to His Manhood, so nearly allied to us that the closest possible sympathy exists between us, there will always be fresh subjects for thought, fresh sources for enjoyment for those who are taken up with Him.

Certainly, Brothers and Sisters, to no Believer would Heaven be desirable if Jesus were not there, or, if being there, they could not enjoy the nearest and dearest fellowship with Him! A sight of Him first turned our sorrow into joy! Renewed communion with Him lifts us above our present cares and strengthens us to bear our heavy burdens! What must *heavenly* communion be? When we have Christ with us we are content with a crumb, and satisfied with a cup of water! But if His face is hidden, the whole world cannot afford a solace—we are widowed of our Beloved, our sun has set—our moon is eclipsed, our candle is blown out!

Christ is All in All to us here, and therefore we pant and long for a Heaven in which He shall be All in All to us forever—and such *will* the Heaven of God be! The Paradise of God is not the Elysium of imagination, the Utopia of intellect, or the Eden of poetry—it is the Heaven of intense *spiritual* fellowship with the Lord Jesus—a place where it is promised to faithful souls that “they shall see His face.” In the Beatific vision it is Christ whom they see! And further, it is His face which they behold! They shall not see the hem of His robe as Moses saw the back parts of Jehovah. They shall not be satisfied to touch the hem of His garment, or to sit far down at His feet where they can only see His sandals—no, they “shall see His face”!

By this I understand two things. First, that they shall literally and physically, with their risen bodies, actually look into the face of Jesus. And secondly, that *spiritually* their mental faculties shall be enlarged so that they shall be enabled to look into the very heart, and soul, and Character of Christ—so as to understand Him, His work, His love—as they never understood Him before. They shall literally, I say, see His face, for Christ is no phantom! And in Heaven, though Divine, and therefore *spiri-*

tual, He is still a Man, and therefore *material* like ourselves. The very flesh and blood that suffered upon Calvary is in Heaven! The hand that was pierced with the nail, now, at this moment, grasps the scepter of all worlds!

That very head which was bowed down with anguish is now crowned with a royal diadem! And the face that was no marvel is the very face which beams resplendent amidst the thrones of Heaven! Into that same Countenance we shall be permitted to gaze. O what a sight! Roll by, years! Hasten on, you laggard months and days, to let us but for once behold Him—our Beloved, our hearts' care, who “redeemed us unto God by His blood.” Whose we are, and whom we love with such a passionate desire, that to be in His embrace we would be satisfied to suffer 10,000 deaths! We shall actually see Jesus!

Yet the *spiritual* sight will be sweeter, still. I think the text implies that in the next world our powers of mind will be very different from what they are now. We are, the best of us, in our infancy as yet and know but in part. But we shall be men then—we shall “put away childish things.” We shall see and know even as we are known. And among the great things that we shall know will be this greatest of all—that we shall know Christ! We shall know the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths of the love of Christ that passes knowledge!

O how delightful it will be, then, to understand His everlasting love! How, without beginning, or ever the earth was, His thoughts darted forward towards His dear ones whom He had chosen in the sovereignty of His choice, that they should be His forever! What a subject for delightful meditation will the Covenant be, and Christ's surety engagements in that Covenant when He undertook to take the debts of all His people upon Himself, and to pay them all, and to stand and suffer in their place!

And what thoughts shall we have, then, of our union with Christ—our federal, vital, conjugal oneness! We only *talk* about these things now—we do not really *understand* them. We merely plow the surface and gather a topsoil harvest, but a richer subsoil lies beneath! Brothers and Sisters, in Heaven we shall dive into the deepest depths of fellowship with Jesus. “We shall see His face,” that is, we shall see clearly and plainly all that has to do with our Lord—and this shall be the topmost bliss of Heaven. In the blessed vision the saints see Jesus, and they see Him clearly.

We may also remark that they see Him always, for when the text says, “They shall see His face,” it implies that they never, at any time, are without the sight. Never for a moment do they unlock their arm from the arm of their Beloved! They are not as we are—sometimes near the Throne, and then afar off by backslidings—sometimes hot with love, and then cold with indifference. They are not as we are—sometimes bright as seraphs, and then dull as clods—but forever and ever they are in closest association with the Master, for, “they shall see His face.”

Best of all, they see His face as it is now in all its Glory. John tells us what that will be like. In his first chapter he says, "His head and His hair were white like wool, as white as snow," to mark His antiquity, for He is the Ancient of Days. "And His eyes were as a flame of fire. And His Countenance was as the sun shines in his strength." Such is the vision which the redeemed enjoy before the Throne! Their Lord is all brightness and in Him there is nothing to weep over, nothing to mar His Glory!

Doubtless there are traces, there, upon that wondrous face, of all the griefs He once endured, but these only make Him more glorious! He looks like a lamb that has been slain and wears His priesthood still—but *all* that has to do with the shame, and the spit and slaughter, has been so transformed that the sight is all blissful, all comforting, all glorious! In His face there is nothing to excite a tear or to beget a sigh. I wish my lips were unloosed and my thoughts were free, that I could tell you something more of this sight, but, indeed, it is not given unto mortal tongues to talk of these things! I suppose that if we were caught up to see His face and should come back again, yet should we have to say like Paul that we had heard and seen that which it was not lawful for us to utter.

God will not as yet reveal these things fully to us, but He reserves His best wine for the last. We can but give you a few glimpses, but O Beloved, wait a little while—it shall not be long before you shall see his face!

II. Secondly, we turn to another thought—THE SURPASSING CLEARNESS OF THAT VISION. "They shall see His face." The word, "see," sounds in my ears with a clear, full, melodious note. I think we see but little here. This, indeed, is not the world of sight—"we walk by faith, not by sight." Around us all is mist and cloud. What we *do* see, we see only as if men were trees walking. If ever we get a glimpse of the spirit-world, it is like yonder momentary lightning flash in the darkness of the tempest which opens, for an instant, the gates of Heaven, and in the twinkling of an eye they are closed again. And then the darkness is denser than before, as if it were enough for us poor mortals to know that there is a brightness denied to us as yet.

The saints see the face of Jesus in Heaven because they are purified from sin. The pure in heart are blessed—they shall see God, and none others. It is because of our impurity which still remains that we cannot as yet see His face, but *their* eyes are touched with eye salve, and therefore they see. Ah, Brothers and Sisters, how often does our Lord Jesus hide Himself behind the clouds of dust which we, ourselves, make by our unholy walking! If we become proud, or selfish, or slothful, or fall into any other of our besetting sins, then our eyes lose their capacity to behold the brightness of our Lord.

But up yonder they not only do not sin, but they *cannot* sin—they are not tempted, for there is no space for the Tempter to work upon, even could he be admitted to try them! They are without fault before the Throne

of God, and, surely, this alone is a Heaven—to be rid of inbred sin and the plague of the heart—and to have ended, forever, the struggle of spiritual life—the crushing of the fleshly power of death! They may well see His face when the scales of sin have been taken from their eyes and they have become pure as God Himself is pure! They surely see His face more clearly because all the clouds of care are gone from them.

Some of you, while sitting here today, have been trying to lift up your minds to heavenly contemplation, but you cannot! The business has gone so wrong this week. The children have vexed you so much. Sickness has been in the house so sorely. You, yourself, feel in your body you are quite out of order for devotion—these enemies break your concentration. Now *they* are vexed by none of these things in Heaven, and therefore they can see their Master's face! They are not cumbered with Martha's cares—they still occupy Mary's seat at His feet. When you and I have laid aside the farm, and the merchandise, and the marrying, and the burying which come so fast upon each other's heels, we shall, then, be forever with the Lord—

***“Far from a world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in”!***

Moreover, as they have done with sins and cares, so have they done with sorrows. “There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying. Neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.” We are none of us quite strangers to grief. And with some of us pain is an inseparable companion—we still dwell in the smoky tents of Kedar. Perhaps it is well that we should be so tried while we are here, for sanctified sorrow refines the soul! But in Glory there is no affliction, for pure gold needs not the furnace. Well may they, then, behold Christ when there are no tears to dim their eyes, no smoke of this world to rise up between them and their Beloved—they are, alike, free from sin, and care and sorrow! They see His face right gloriously in that cloudless atmosphere, and in the light which He Himself supplies!

Moreover, the glorified see His face the more clearly because there are no idols to stand between Him and them. Our idolatrous love of worldly things is a chief cause of our knowing so little of spiritual things. Because we love this and that so much we see little of Christ. You cannot fill your life cup from the pools of earth and yet have room in it for the crystal streams of Heaven. But they have no idols there—nothing to occupy the heart—no rival for the Lord Jesus. He reigns supreme within their spirits and therefore they see His face. They have no veils of ignorance or prejudice to darken their sight in Heaven.

Those of us who most candidly endeavor to learn the Truth of God are, nevertheless, in some degree, biased and warped by education. Let us struggle as we may, yet still our surroundings will not permit us to see things as they are. There is a deflection in our vision, a refraction in the

air, a something everywhere which casts the beam of light out of its straight line so that we see, rather, the *appearance* than the *reality* of Truth. We see not with open sight. Our vision is marred. But up yonder, among the golden harps, they “know, even as they are known.” They have no prejudices, but a full desire to know the Truth—the bias is gone, and therefore they are able to see His face.

O blessed thought! One could almost wish to sit down and say no more but just roll that sweet morsel under one’s tongue and extract the essence and sweetness of it! “They see His face.” There is no long distance for the eye to travel over, for they are near Him—they are in His bosom—they are sitting on His Throne at His right hand. No withdrawals there to mourn over—their sun shall no more go down. Here He stands behind our wall. He shows Himself through the lattices. But He hides not Himself in Heaven! O when shall the long summer days of Glory be ours and Jesus our undying joy forever and ever?

In Heaven they never pray—

**“Oh may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide You from Your servant’s eyes,”**

but forever and forever they bask in the sunlight, or rather, like Milton’s angel, they live in the Sun itself! They come not to the sea’s brink to wade into it up to their ankles, but they swim in bliss forever! In waves of everlasting rest, in richest, closest fellowship with Jesus, they disport themselves with ineffable delight!

III. The third part of the subject which commands our attention this morning is THE MATCHLESS PRIVILEGE WHICH THIS VISION INVOLVES. We may understand the words, “they shall see His face,” to contain five things. They mean, first, certain salvation. The face of Jesus Christ acts in two ways upon the sons of men—with some it is a face of terror—“Before His face Heaven and earth fled away.” It is written concerning Him, “Who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap.” A sight of Christ’s face will be, to the *ungodly*, eternal absence from the Presence of the Lord.

But if there are some men who shall see His face, who shall sit down and delight themselves in gazing upon the face of the great Judge upon the Throne, then those persons are assuredly saved! They are awaiting the day of His coming! They are dwelling with the eternal flame without being consumed! They are resting on the bosom of our God who is a consuming fire! And yet, like the burning bush of old, though glowing with the Glory, they are not consumed by the heat! O happy men who can live where others must expire—who can find their Heaven where a carnal world must eternally find its Hell! This is the first thing in the text. “They shall see His face”—then they are everlastingly safe.

The second privilege is they shall have a clear knowledge of Him. I have dwelt upon that thought before, and merely mention it to complete the summary. To look into the face of Christ signifies to be well acquainted with His Person, His office, His Character, His work. So the saints in Heaven shall have more knowledge of Christ than the most advanced below. As one has said, the babe in Christ admitted to Heaven discovers more of Christ in a single hour than is known by all the divines of the assemblies of the Church on earth. O yes, our Catechisms and our creeds, and even our Bible—all these reveal but very little of what we shall discover when we shall see His face!

Our text implies, also, conscious favor. Was not that the old benediction, “The Lord lift up His Countenance upon you”? He *has* lifted it up upon the *glorified*, and they see it world without end! Here it is our joy of joys to have the Lord smiling upon us, for if He is with us, who can be against us? If we know that He loves us, and that He delights in us, it matters not to us though earth and Hell should hate us and men cast out our names as evil! In Heaven, then, they have this to be their choice privilege. They are courtiers who stand always in the Monarch’s palace, secure of the Monarch’s smile. They are children who live unbrokenly in their Father’s love, and know it, and rejoice to know it evermore!

The fourth privilege involved in the text is that of close fellowship. They are always near to Jesus. They are never *hoping* that they are with Him and yet fearing that they are not. They have none of those inward struggles which make life so unhappy for some of us. They never say—“ ‘Tis a point I long to know.” They see His face and are in hourly communion with their Lord. Perfect spirits are always walking with the Lord, for they are always agreed with Him. In Glory they are all Enochs, walking with God! There, forever and forever they lie in the bosom of Jesus, in the nearest possible place of communion with Him who redeemed them with His blood.

And this involves a fifth privilege, namely, complete transformation, “They shall be like He, for they shall see Him as He is.” If they see His face they shall be “changed from glory to glory” by this face to face vision of the Lord. Beholding Christ, His likeness is photographed upon them—they become in all respects like He as they gaze upon Him world without end!

Thus have I very briefly mentioned the privileges involved in seeing Christ face to face.

IV. We must conclude by noting WHO THEY ARE TO WHOM THIS CHOICE GIFT IS AFFORDED BY DIVINE MERCY. “They shall see His face.” Who are *they*? They are all His elect, all His redeemed, all His effectually called ones, all the justified, all the sanctified. They are the tens of thousands and myriads who have died in Jesus, of whom the Spirit says, “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.”

Thank God we are not strangers to those who now behold His face. As we look back to the associations of our youth, and to the friendships of our manhood, we remember many whose privilege it has been to precede us and to know long before us the things which we desire and expect so soon to learn. Some are taken away to see His face while yet young. We bless God that our babes shall have the same Heaven as our holy parents—they shall not be placed in the back settlements of Canaan—but they shall, with equal clearness, see the face of Jesus!

Those dear boys and girls who learned to love Christ and made a profession of His name in their youth—who were never spared to reach the ripeness of manhood and womanhood—they shall equally see His face with the gravest and most reverend fathers of the Church! I read of no secondary joys. Whoever may have invented the doctrine of degrees in Heaven I do not know, but I believe there is as much foundation for it in Scripture as there is for the doctrine of “purgatory,” and no more! All the saints shall see their Master’s face. The thief dying on the cross was with Christ in Paradise, and Paul could be no more!

I like, sometimes, to think of Heaven in the same way as old Ryland did when he wrote his rhyming letter from Northampton—

**“They all shall be there,
The great and the small:
For I shall shake hands
With the blessed St. Paul.”**

Doubtless we all shall. Whether dying young or old, whether departing after long service of Christ, or dying immediately after conversion as the thief—of all the saints shall it be said in the words of the text, “They shall see His face.” What more can Apostles and martyrs enjoy? Do you regret that your friends have departed? Do you lament that wife, and husband, and child, and father, and grandparents have all entered into their rest? Be not so unkind, so selfish to yourself, so cruel to them! No, rather, soldier of the Cross, be thankful that another has won the crown before you, and you press forward to win it, too. Life is but a moment—how short it will appear in eternity!

Even here Hope perceives it to be brief, and though Impatience counts it long, yet Faith corrects her and reminds her that one hour with God will make the longest life to seem but a point of time, a mere *nothing*, a watch in the night, a thing that was and was not, that has come and gone!

So we will close our sermon by observing that they who see His face already make only a part of the great “they” who shall see His face—for many of us here below are on the way to the same reward! As many as have felt the burden of sin and have come to the foot of the Cross and looked to those five crimson founts—the wounds of Jesus! As many as can say, “He is all my salvation and all my desire.” As many as can serve Him feeling that for them to live is Christ. As many as shall fight, day by day, against sin, and shall overcome through the blood of the Lamb! As many

as, by the eternal Spirit's power, shall be kept by faith unto salvation—they shall all see His face! It is mine to hope to see it, and it is yours, too. Beloved, the hope shall not be disappointed! It makes not ashamed! We shall see His face and that vision shall yield us perfect bliss!

I fear my text is not true of all here assembled. Just this word for the unconverted—I am afraid you may almost say with Balaam, "I shall see Him but not now. I shall behold Him but not near." For every eye *shall* see Him, and they, also, which crucified Him—and what will *they* say when they see Him? These ungodly ones—what will *they* do? They shall cry to the rocks, "Hide us!" And to the mountains, "Cover us from the face of Him that sits on the Throne." Ah, my dear Hearer, what a dreadful thing it will be if that very face which is the Heaven of your mother, and the Heaven of your husband, or the Heaven of your wife and of your child, should be the Hell to *you* from which you shall desire to be *hidden*!

Now it will be the case unless, first of all, you seek His face on earth. Certain Greeks said to the disciples, "Sir, we would see Jesus." I wish *you* had that same desire this morning in a *spiritual* sense, for He Himself has said, "Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth." If you see Him, now, by simple faith, as your Savior, you shall see Him at the last as your King, your Friend, your Beloved! But you must first see Him to trust Him *here*, or you shall not see Him to rejoice in Him hereafter—

***"You sinners, seek His face,
Whose wrath you cannot bear!
Fly to the shelter of His Cross,
And find salvation there."***

May God, even our own God, bless you for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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ALPHA AND OMEGA

NO. 546

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 27, 1863,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.”
Revelation 22:13.***

EVERY Sunday school child knows that there is no great mystery hidden in the words, “Alpha and Omega.” We have here the names of the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, so that the sense would be, “I am A and great O,” in the Greek, or in plain English, “I am A and Z.” “Jesus is the Alpha and Omega: A and Z: the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.”

Our text demands no preface. Indeed, I do not know how I could venture to put a single letter before Alpha. Let us therefore come to our subject at once. In three ways I shall talk of the text. First, I shall *bring certain doctrines to it*. Secondly, *we will look at the doctrines which are really in it*. And then thirdly, *at the lessons which naturally flow from it*.

I. At the outset, WE SHALL BRING CERTAIN TRUTHS OF GOD TO THE TEXT. This is a much too common method of preaching and one which I am very far from admiring as a custom. When some preachers get a text, the enquiry is not what Truth is in the passage, but what sense shall they thrust upon it. Full often the poor text is served as a cook treats a bird. It is first killed and then stuffed with any kind of fancies that the preacher may have chopped up ready to hand. By frankly stating that my first observations are not in the verse before us, I shall avoid sanctioning such methods of abusing God’s Word. The thoughts to which I now give utterance have been suggested by many commentators and certainly, if they are not the legitimate offspring of the text, are closely connected with it.

1. Of things which we may fairly bring to the text, let us notice first that *our Lord may well be described as the Alpha and Omega in the sense of rank*. He is *Alpha, the First, the Chief, the Foremost, the First-Born* of every creature, the Eternal God. Man by nature is not the first even among creatures, for angels excel him by far. Nor are angels the chief, for our glorious Lord infinitely transcends them. He who made is greater than they who are made. And He who sends is greater than those who are sent. Jesus Christ stands Alpha in honorable degree—no angel can vie with Him.

“Being made so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.” “For unto which of the angels said He at any time, you are My Son, this day have I begotten you”? “And again, when He brings in the first begotten into the world, He says, And let all the angels of God worship Him.” As for the Son, He has appointed Him heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds, but of the angels it is asked—“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”

Alpha was frequently used by the Hebrews to signify the best, just as we are accustomed to use the letter A. We say of a ship, for instance, that it is "A-1." So Jesus Christ may truly be said to be the Alpha, the First in this sense. Call Him by whatever title Scripture has affixed to Him and He is the First in it. Is He a Prophet? Then all the Prophets follow at a humble distance, bearing witness of Him. Is He a Priest? Then He is the Great High Priest of our profession. He is the fulfillment of all that which the priest did but typically set forth. Let Him mount His Throne as King, then he is King of kings and Lord of lords.

"His dominion is an everlasting dominion and His kingdom is from generation to generation." If He is the builder of His Church, He is the wise Master-Builder. If a Shepherd, He is the Great Shepherd who shall appear. If the cornerstone, He is the Chief Cornerstone—in fact, it matters not what title, or which character He bears, He is in all these respects the Alpha, as much surpassing all things that may be compared to Him—as the sun excels the stars, or as the sea exceeds the drops of the dew.

But, Beloved, though our blessed Lord is thus Alpha—the First—He was once in His condescension made *Omega, the Last*. How shall I describe the mighty descent of the Great Savior? Down from the loftiness of His Father's Glory and from the grandeur of His own Divine estate, He stooped to become Man. There is a vast distance from the Alpha of Deity, down to that letter which stands for manhood. But to this He came, He was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death. But this is not enough. He stoops lower than man. Yes, there is a verse in which He seems to put Himself on a level with the least of all creatures that have life—He says, "I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised of the people."

His Father forsook Him—the wrath of Heaven rolled over Him. He was so utterly crushed and broken that He was poured out like water and brought into the dust of death. Marshal the creatures of God in their order, in the dread day when Jesus hangs upon the Cross, and you must put Him for misery, for weakness, for shame as the Last, the Omega. How marvelous is this tremendous sweep of His humiliation, that from the highest Throne in Glory He should descend into the lowest depths of the tomb!

Death brings the creature to its very lowest degradation and makes it as though it were nothing. Jesus died and as I see the incorruptible Body lying in Joseph's sepulcher, I can but marvel that ever the great Alpha should come so low as to yield up the ghost, being subjugated beneath the power of the last Adversary. Now, this is not in the text, but it may be fairly brought to it, I think, and without any compulsion, it may shake hands with the passage as being near of kin to it.

2. We will make another observation which is not in the text, but which is still a very precious Truth of God, namely, that Jesus Christ is Alpha and Omega *in the Book of Holy Scripture*. Open the first page and a discerning eye will see Jesus Christ in Genesis. We know that the worlds were made by Him, and as we hear that majestic sentence, "Let Us make man in Our own Image after Our likeness," we at once discern Him as one

of the sacred Trinity. We go onward to the Fall and at the gates of Eden the promise of the woman's Seed consoles us.

We advance to the days of Noah and lo, we see the Savior typified in the ark, which bears a chosen company out of the old world of death into the new world of life. We walk with Abraham, as he sees Messiah's day. We dwell in the tents of Isaac and Jacob, feeding upon the gracious promise. We leave the venerable Israel talking of Shiloh on his deathbed. We see his seed brought out of Egypt and eating the Lamb of God's Passover. We reach the age of the Law and here the types crowd in upon us. But time permits not even a glance—suffice it to say, in brief, that we view the face of Jesus in almost every page and behold His Character painted to the life in nearly every Book.

Prophets and kings, priests and preachers, all look one way—they all stand as the cherubs did, over the ark, desiring to look within and to read the mystery of God's great Propitiation. In the New Testament we find our Lord the one constant theme of every page. It is not an ingot here and there, or dust of gold thinly scattered—but here you stand upon a solid floor of gold—for the whole substance of the New Testament is Jesus crucified. What would be left of the Evangelists if you could remove Christ from them? What are Paul's Epistles if Jesus is taken away? The whole of the Pauline literature sinks in a moment if Jesus is withdrawn. And what have Peter, James, Jude, or John to write upon but the same Subject? Is it not Jesus still?

Do not shut the Book too hastily, for see its closing sentence is bejeweled with the Redeemer's name. "Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." Brethren, we should always read Scripture in this light. We should consider the Word to be as a mirror into which Christ looks down from Heaven. And then, looking into it, we see His face reflected as in a glass—darkly, it is true, but still in such a way as to be a blessed preparation for seeing Him as we shall see Him face to face.

This volume contains Jesus Christ's letters to us, perfumed by His love. These pages are the garments of our King and they all smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia. Scripture is the golden chariot in which Jesus rides and it is paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem. The Scriptures are the swaddling bands of the holy Child, Jesus—unroll them and you find your Savior. Talk not to us of bodies of divinity—the only body of Divinity is the Person of Christ. As for theology, Christ is the true Theology—the incarnate Word of God. And if you can comprehend Him you have grasped all Truth. He is made unto us Wisdom—getting Him you have the Wisdom of the Scriptures. The quintessence of the Word of God is Christ. Distill the Book—reach its essential quality and you have discovered Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God and the king of the Jews. He is the Alpha and Omega of Holy Scripture.

3. Another fact is also sweetly true, although not, perhaps, in our text. Jesus Christ is *the Alpha and Omega of the great Law of God*. Brethren, the Law of God finds not a single letter in human nature to meet its demands. You and I are neither Alpha nor Omega to the Law, for we have broken it altogether. We have not even learned its first letter—"You shall

love the Lord your God with all your heart,” and certain I am we know but very little of the next—“your neighbor as yourself.” Even though renewed by Divine Grace, we are very slow to learn the holiness and spirituality of the Law.

We are so staggered by the letter that we often miss its spirit altogether. But, Beloved, if you would see the Law fulfilled, look to the Person of our blessed Lord and Master. What love to God is there! O Brothers and Sisters, where shall we find anything to be compared to it? “The zeal of Your house has eaten Me up.” “Know you not that I must be about My Father’s business?” “My meat and My drink is to do the will of Him that sent Me.” What love to man you find in Him. Talk not of the good Samaritan. Here is One who is better than he—the Samaritan did but give his wine and his oil and his two-pence. Jesus gives Himself—gives His heart’s blood instead of wine and the anointing of the Holy Spirit instead of oil.

While for food He gives His own Flesh and Blood for poor humanity to feed upon. Jesus loved in such a way that, as we said on Thursday night, all the love that ever gleamed in human bosoms, if it could be gathered together, would be but as a spark—while His great love to man would be as a flaming furnace heated seven times hotter than human imagination can conceive. Do not, beloved Friends, if you are in Christ Jesus, permit legal fears to distress you at the remembrance of your failures in obedience, as though they would destroy your soul.

Seek after holiness, but never make holiness your *trust*. Seek after virtue—pant for it—but when you see your own imperfections, do not despair. Your saving righteousness is the righteousness of Christ—that in which God accepts you is Christ’s perfect obedience. And we say of that again, in the words of the text, Jesus Christ is “Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End.” There is not a precept which He has not fulfilled in its widest sense.

As for the spirit of the Law, it breathes through His whole life of holiness and service. And as for the letter of the Law, He has carried it out to its extremity. The Commandment may be exceedingly broad, but not broader than the life of Christ. The Law may ask perfection, but it could not ask and could not have a greater perfection than is found in the Person of Him whose name is “The Lord our Righteousness.”

Brethren, these three matters I cannot affirm to be in the text, but can you blame me for bringing them forward? They stand in such a near connection with the exact sense of the passage that they cannot well be omitted. May the Lord bless them to you.

II. Now we will take the text itself. And show what are THE TRUTHS WHICH WE ASSUREDLY BELIEVE TO BE IN IT

1. Our Lord Jesus is Alpha and Omega in the great *alphabet of being*. Reckon existences in their order and you begin—“In the beginning was the Word.” Proceed to the conclusion. Suppose that all the universe has melted like the hoarfrost of the morning—imagine that all worlds are extinguished as the sparks from the forge—conceive that, as a painted bubble passes away forever, so the whole creation has departed—What then? What is the Omega? Why assuredly Jesus Christ would still be “God over all, blessed forever. Amen.”

This we are quite sure is in the text, because the expression, “Alpha and Omega,” is only used four times in Scripture. And on the second occasion we find it in the eleventh verse of the first chapter of the Book of the Revelation, in a connection which leads us to conclude that it must relate to the eternity and self-existence of our Lord. For the seventeenth verse explains the eleventh thus, “Fear not. I am the First and the Last: I am He that lives and was dead. And, behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And have the keys of Hell and of death.”

Those expressions manifestly refer to the eternity of Christ. To His self-existence, His having life in Himself. To the fact that death did by no means destroy His self-existence and that now since His resurrection, He lives forevermore, death has no more dominion over Him. Beloved, this is a great theme. When we begin to talk of the eternity of the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are overwhelmed by the glory of our subject. We need the eagle eyes and the eagle wings of John to see and soar into heavenly things. I read the other day a word by an ancient author and in the chapter upon the eternity of God I could not help noticing that there was hardly a word of more than one or two syllables—sure sign of the sublimity of the theme and of the inability of man to see more than its most simple outline.

Will you go back six thousand years, when the world has newly emerged from darkness? Will you fly on, if you can, through all the ages of the geological periods, if such there were? Can you journey back millions of years? Can you, can you? Can you reach in spirit the time when as yet cherubim were not born, when the solemnity of silence had never been disturbed by song of seraph, when the un navigated ether had never been stirred by the wings of angels? There is no world, no sun, no stars—space alone exists. Can you go further back till space is gone? You cannot. It is impossible. You are lost. For you can only think of space and time.

But if you could by any stretch of imagination multiply the millions of years of which we dreamed just now, by another million times and that a million million million times more—and those on still as far as ever human arithmetic can go—yes, and beyond the possibilities of angelic computation, yet even then you have not begun to fathom the eternity in which God has dwelt alone. Certainly there was an age in which God was dwelling alone, not in solitude, for, as the fathers very rightly say, you must not use the term “solitude” in reference to God, since the three Divine Persons everlastingly delighted in each Other and so knew no solitude—yet there was and is an aloneness in our God, since He is before all things.

Can your thoughts attain to that age of God in lonely Glory—in that eternity we know that Jesus was? He, whom though we have not seen His face, unceasingly we do adore, was then the eternal Son. The Word was God. Jesus was Alpha. To fly as far in the other direction—when the little river of time shall have been absorbed into the deep ocean of eternity, when all the world shall have departed even as the motes which dance in the sunbeam are seen no more when the sunbeam is gone—still Jesus shall be the Omega. It has been well observed by Dr. Gill, that no doubt

the words, "Alpha and Omega," are comprehensive—they take in all the letters between.

Certainly God comprehends all creatures. God is that without Whom there is nothing and in Whom are all things. Philo, the Jew, compares the great God to a tree and all creatures to the leaves and fruits, which are all in the tree. But the metaphor is not complete because you may remove fruit from the tree, but there can be no creature out of the power and will of God by which alone it can exist at all. If you remove the fruit from the tree, the tree has at least lost something. But if all creatures were destroyed, yet still the Lord would be as infinitely God as He is now. If the creatures were multiplied, God were no more—and if diminished, He were no less.

The creatures may be likened to the waves and God to the great sea. The waves cannot exist apart from the sea, nor the creatures apart from God—but no earthly figure of the Divine can be complete. The waves are a portion of the sea, but the creatures are not God, nor do they contribute to His Essence or attributes. The sea would be diminished if the waves were gone. But if you could take all creatures away, God would be no less God nor less Infinite than He is now. In fact, the moment we begin to talk of infiniteness, we know nothing of diminishing or of increasing.

O Brothers and Sisters, we must leave this subject in the silence of reverent humility, for my little boat is out of sight of shore already. I must not venture further on this great and wide sea—

**"Great God, how infinite are You!
What worthless worms are we!
Let the whole race of creatures bow,
And pay their praise to You."**

A deaf and dumb man in one of the institutions in Paris was asked to write upon the slate his idea of God's eternity, and he wrote the following forcible lines: "It is *duration* without beginning or end. *Existence* without bounds or dimensions. *Present* without past or future. His eternity is youth without infancy or old age. Life without birth or death. Today without yesterday or tomorrow." "I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."

2. Another Truth of God is most certainly in the text, namely, that *Jesus Christ is Alpha and Omega in the alphabet of creating operations*. Who was it that began to make? Not an angel, for the angel must first be *made*. Did matter create itself? Was there an effect without a cause? It is contrary to our experience and our reason to believe any such thing. The first cause stands first. And the first cause is God in the Divine Trinity, the Son being one Person of that Trinity. He is Alpha because His hand first of all winged angelic spirits and made His ministers a flame of fire.

He first made all things out of nothing. He molded the clay from which man was made. All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that is made. As He alone began, so His power maintains the fabric of creation. All things consist by Him. Christ is the great iron pillar of the universe and the creatures twine about Him as the vine does about its prop. These things are not, they vanish like a dream if Jesus withdraws His power. He upholds all things by the word of His power.

Brethren, there may be creations going on at the present moment—fresh globes may even now be fashioned between the hands of Omnipotence. If so, in every one of these Immanuel has a share.

At this very moment new comets may be launched like thunderbolts upon their fiery way, but not without the Son of God. Human souls issue from the womb of creation every hour, but in their sustenance and sending forth, the mighty God is ever present. On, on, on, as the works of God shall be enlarged and extended, as the universe shall grow on every side, Christ shall be there still—His Father's delight, with whom He takes counsel—His equal, bearing with Him the name of Alpha and Omega. If this world shall be rolled up like a worn-out vesture, *He* shall roll it up. If the stars shall wither, it shall be at Jesus' bidding—if the sun shall be quenched, His breath shall blow out its coal. And if the moon shall be black as sackcloth of hair, Christ's hand shall extinguish the lamp. He shall do it all, even until the end shall come, for He is Omega as well as Alpha.

3. So again, beyond a doubt, our text intends that Christ is Alpha and Omega in *all Covenant transactions*. Beloved, here is a theme worthy of many discourses from the most eminent Divines. The thoughts of God, the eternal Decrees, the inscrutable purposes of Jehovah—these are deep things—but we know this concerning them, that from first to last they all have a relation to Christ. Concerning our race and the elect out of it, the whole matter is encompassed in the Person of the Redeemer.

Do you speak of election? "Mine elect in whom My soul delights," is Christ's name. We are chosen in Him from before the foundation of the world. Speak of our being predestinated to be sons—we are only made so in Him who stands as the elder Brother. Every separate individual of the chosen tribe stands only by virtue of an union which was established from of old between his person and the Person of the Redeemer. Search for the celestial fountain from which Divine streams of Divine Grace have flowed to us and you find Jesus Christ as the wellspring of Covenant love. If your eyes shall ever see the Covenant roll, if you shall ever be permitted in a future state to see the whole plan of redemption as it was mapped out in the chambers of eternity, you shall see the blood-red line of atoning sacrifice running along the margin of every page. And you shall see that from beginning to end one object was always aimed at—the glory of the Son of God.

The Father begins with exalting Jesus and concludes with glorifying Him with the Glory which He had with Him before the world was. How I do love the Doctrines of Grace when they are taken in connection with Christ! Some people preach the Calvinistic points without Jesus. But what hard, dry, marrow preaching it is. Oh, dear Friends, the letter kills. It breeds in men a controversial, quarrelsome spirit. But when you preach the Doctrines of Grace as they are in Christ, as Dr. Hawker would have preached them! When you talk of them as Rutherford would have talked of them—oh, then a holy unction rests upon them and they become inestimably precious!

And let every Believer remember he does not get these doctrines as he should get them unless he receives them in Christ. Everywhere the Lord

Jesus is to be considered! Not as the Friend of a day, or our Savior only in His life on earth—but as the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world—anointed Mediator set up from everlasting days. By faith I see Him as the eternal Son of God. I see Him standing in the purpose of the Father as the Covenant Head of the elect. I see Him in due time born of a woman, but I do not forget that His goings forth are of old from everlasting, and that before the daystar knew its place, His delights were with the sons of men.

I see Him. He cries, “It is finished!” He bows His head. I do not, however, forget that He is not dead, but that when the world shall die and time shall conclude its reign, then He who is the Ancient of Days shall live and shall flourish in immortal youth. Alpha and Omega is Jesus Christ, then, in the eternal purposes and in the Covenant transactions of God.

4. Jesus Christ is certainly Alpha and Omega in *all salvation-work as it becomes apparent in act and deed*. That this is the meaning of the text I am clear, because in the first passage where the Alpha and Omega occurs—namely, in the first chapter of the Revelation, eighth verse—you will see that all the works of salvation are ascribed to our Lord. Read the fifth verse, “Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness and the First-born of the dead and the Prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father. To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Behold, He comes with clouds. And every eye shall see Him . . . I am Alpha and Omega.”

Now, we have here a summary of the great transactions of Saving Grace. You have here that *He loved us*—loved us before the world was, with an everlasting love. You have next, that *He washed us* from our sins in His own blood, in which you have His redemption and our consequent pardon, justification and sanctification, all of which come to us through Him. As for our glory, it is the result of His second advent. Therefore, “Behold, He comes,” makes Him the Omega, as the, “Unto Him that loved us,” made Him the Alpha. I need not repeat to you who know so well that, “There is none other name given under Heaven whereby we must be saved,” and that in no part or portion of that salvation can any other name be admitted into partnership with His.

Jesus must begin. Jesus must conclude. It is very striking to observe the commencement and the perfection of the spiritual life both laid at Jesus’ door in the sixth verse of the twenty-first chapter—“I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.” So then, if you have any thirst, you must come to Jesus Christ at the beginning to get the water of life. If you have been led to know your own emptiness—if you have received from His Spirit a hungering and a thirsting after righteousness, go not to the Law—look not within. But come to the Alpha, drink and be satisfied.

If, on the other hand, life is near its close—if you have been preserved in holiness, if you have been kept in righteousness—remember still to trust in the Omega. For these words follow, “He that overcomes shall inherit all things. And I will be his God, and he shall be My son.” So that the inheriting of all things, the final overcoming of all spiritual foes comes

through Jesus, just as did the first drink of living water. The first breath which heaves the spiritual lungs, the first light which greets the newly-opened eyes, comes from Jesus who is the Beginning. And the last shout of faith, the last shout of holy joy which shall admit the saints into the Paradise of God shall proceed from Him who is the End.

Beloved, lay back upon Christ with all your strength—lean on Him with all your weight. He who began will finish—He never was Alpha yet without being Omega, too. Nothing shall change His purpose—neither Heaven, nor earth, nor Hell can afford a motive to turn Him from His way of love. “He is of one mind and who can turn Him? What His soul desires, even that He does.”

5. There is one more Truth of God which I conceive to be in the text. Jesus is Alpha and Omega not only in the individual salvation of every saint, *but in the whole chain of the Church’s history*. Where shall I say that the Church began? Why, very speedily after there was a seed of the serpent, there was also a Seed of the woman. Surely the line of demarcation began hard by the gates of Eden. There we see Abel worshipping God in faith and Cain who was of the Wicked One and slew his brother.

Do we not, thus early see in Abel’s sacrifice the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world? Follow the Church through all her varied fortunes and you will find her always bearing the banner of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah at her forefront. No matter if she wanders about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted, tormented. Christ is still the Daystar of her comfort in her victories. His name is the loudest note—others may have slain their thousands, but the Son of David his ten thousands. No name wakes up the songsters of Israel like the name of Messiah, the Coming One. Nothing can move the feet of Zion’s maidens so joyously in the sacred dance, nothing can make the daughters of Jerusalem smite their timbrels to a more joyful strain than this—“He comes—He comes who shall judge the world in righteousness and His people with Truth.”

Since the first advent of our Lord, has not the Church ever carried Jesus as her standard? Where will you find the Church without Christ? Jesus is yonder, among the snowy mountains of Switzerland, and His Church is with Him though her sons bear the names of heretics, schismatic, traitors, and worse. The Church of Rome has forgotten her first husband and played the harlot, committing fornication with the kings of the earth. But there was a faithful bride found for the Son among the Albigenses and the Waldenses, in whose homes Jesus dwelt. What was their battle cry? What was the note they chanted round the family hearth? What was the name they pressed to their bosom when they dared not sing for fear the foe should fall upon them? Was it not the name of Jesus?

And when the dark ages passed away, what light do I see gleaming yonder? What does Luther proclaim? What does Calvin teach? It is the great name of Jesus which is their common theme! What do you say, Brothers and Sisters? Do you not join hands in solemn covenant, and say today, “His name shall endure forever! His name shall be remembered as long as the sun”? Do you not long for the time when, “all nations shall be blessed in Him, all people shall call Him blessed”? Surely you yourselves

will help to fulfill the promise, “one generation shall praise His name to another and shall declare His mighty acts.”

But the end comes. Jehovah’s banner will soon be furled—His sword shall be sheathed forever—the unsuffering kingdom shall be proclaimed. Swords shall be broken and spears shall be snapped. The sun shall look upon no battlefield, but shall greet the reign of universal peace. What then? Jesus’ name shall then be known everywhere. Men shall talk of Him and think of Him by day and by night. Prayer, also, shall be made for Him continually, and daily shall He be praised. They who dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him and His enemies shall lick the dust. Then comes the end. The Judgment Throne is set. The wicked are summoned. The righteous on the right hand have received their rewards—from whose hands? From the hands of the Omega who closes the chapter with His benediction, “Come, you blessed of My Father.”

There are the wicked. Hell is gaping for them. The tongues of flames lick up the multitudes as the lion devours his prey. Who is this that pronounces the thundering sentence, “Depart, you cursed”? It is the Omega. That same Face which once was bedewed with tears, is now brighter than the sun with flashes of lightning. The Voice which said, “Come to Me, you weary,” now says, “Depart, you cursed.” He began—He ends—the Alpha is the Omega. But it is an end without end. Long, long through the ages of eternity, amid Heaven’s perfect inhabitants, His name shall be the perpetual theme of song.

Down there, amidst the howls of the damned, they shall, against their will, declare His awful justice—they shall proclaim, in their eternal moans, the power of the pierced feet which shall tread them as clusters in the winepress until their blood flows forth to the horses’ bridles in eternity. Heaven and earth and Hell shall adore Jesus as Alpha and Omega. Hallelujah, hallelujah! Jesus Christ reigns still as the Lord God omnipotent—Alpha and Omega!

III. By your patience we will notice A FEW THINGS WHICH FLOW OUT OF THE TEXT.

1. The first is this—Sinner, Saint, *let Jesus be Alpha and Omega to you today in your trust.* Poor Soul, are you willing to be saved? But do you say, “I have not *this* qualification, or *that* recommendation?” Ah, do not begin with *yourself* as the Alpha! Come to Jesus as you are and let Him be Alpha to you. Are you black with sin? Let Him wash you. Is your heart hard? Let Him soften it. Are you a dead good-for-nothing soul? Are you ragged and wretched? Are you lost, ruined and undone? Do not stop to write Alpha first. Do not stop to begin your own salvation.

Sinner, remember there is no preparation wanted for Christ. Just lean upon Him wholly. Take Him to begin with—no, let Him take you to begin with. Drop into His arms now, repose upon Him *now*. You will never get true salvation unless the first letter in it is Christ, for He is the Alpha. It will all have to begin over again if you begin with humblings, with repentings, with convictions, or with anything but Christ. It must all be done over again, I say, unless you begin with Jesus. There He is. His wounds are flowing, His heart is breaking, His soul is in anguish—there is the Alpha of your salvation.

Look and live. "Look unto Me and be you saved all you ends of the earth." Child of God, let Him be the Omega of your salvation. If you have begun with Him, do not now confide in yourself. Shall I say to you as Paul did to the Galatians, "Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect in the *flesh*?" "As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him." Your first hope was through looking to Jesus, will you now look to your sanctifications, to your prayers, to your evidences, to your humbling, to your communing? Away with all these if they pretend to be the ground of your soul's comfort! Remember, child of God, that to the end of the chapter it must be as it was in the beginning—

***"None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good."***

Up in that chamber of yours, with strong crying and tears you turned to God, and you never had any comfort till you looked to Jesus only. And in that other chamber where you shall lie dying with the dampness of death heavy on your brow—you shall have no comfort but Jesus only. You passed through the river of conviction and Jesus forbade your drowning. You shall go through the stream of death and He shall still keep your head above the waves. Alpha and Omega should Christ be to everyone of us as our trust this morning.

2. Beloved, if we have trusted Him, *let Him be Alpha and Omega in our love*. Oh, give Him the first place in your love. Young Woman, may the Holy Spirit win your young heart for my Lord and Savior. Let the flower of your heart be offered to Him in the bud. O you, young Children, who are your mother's delight and your father's care—I pray that your first dawning days may be consecrated to the Savior. Let him be Alpha with you. I trust He is Alpha to some of us and has been so for years. We can use the words of the Psalmist, "I was cast upon You from the womb. You have been my God from my youth up. Truly I am Your servant and the son of Your handmaid."

You who are growing old and gray-headed, let Him have the Omega of your love. As you lean upon your staff, bending downward as if to salute your grave, bear loving recollection of all the years of His patience and the days of His faithfulness to you. Breathe the prayer, "Now, also, when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not." See to it that you forsake Him not, but clasp Him with an expiring grasp as the Omega of your soul's delight.

3. But, surely, Brothers and Sisters, our Lord should be the Alpha and Omega *of our life's end and aim*. What is there worth living for but Christ? Oh, what is there in the whole earth that is worth a thought but Jesus? Well did an old writer say, "If God is the only Eternal, then all the rest is but a puff of smoke and shall I live to heap up puffs of smoke? And shall I toil and slave merely to aggrandize myself with smoky treasures that the wind of death shall dissipate forever?" No, Beloved let us live for eternal things and what is there of eternal things that can be chosen but our Lord? O let us give Him next year the Alpha of our labor.

Let us begin the year by working in His vineyard! Toiling in His harvest field this year is almost over. There is another day or two left—let us serve Him till the year is ended, going forward with double haste because the

days are now so few. “Lord teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” Let your time and your talents, your substance and your energies all be given to my Master, who is worthy to be your soul’s Alpha and Omega.

4. Lastly, Jesus crucified should be the Alpha and Omega of all our preaching and teaching. Woe to the man who makes anything else the main subject of his ministry. “God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.” Do not tell me you preach sound doctrine—you preach rotten doctrine, if you do not preach Christ—preach nothing up but Christ and nothing down but sin. Preach Christ! Lift Him up high on the pole of the Gospel, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, and you will accomplish your life’s end.

Preach orthodoxy, or any form of doxy—if you have left out Christ—there is no manna from Heaven, no water from the rock, no refuge from the storm, no healing for the sick, no life for the dead. If you leave out Christ, you have left the sun out of the day and the moon out of the night. You have left the waters out of the sea and the floods out of the river. You have left the harvest out of the year, the soul out of the body—you have left joy out of Heaven—yes, you have robbed all of its All. There is no Gospel worth thinking of, much less worth proclaiming in Jehovah’s name, if Jesus is forgotten. We must have Jesus, then, as Alpha and Omega in all our ministrations among the sons of men.

And now I am very conscious, this morning, that I have only plowed the surface. I wish I could drive into the subsoil of such a glorious text as this, but I suppose that the plowman who can do this had need to have been caught up to the third Heaven and even then would fail. Who shall know anything of God but those who have seen Him and have beheld His Glory in Heaven? As for us, our eyes are lacking. We have Jesus among us, but we perceive not His excellent Glory. Like Peter and James and John, we sleep while Jesus is transfigured.

The theme is far too high for me. Who can know God but God? Who can reveal Him but the Only-Begotten? And who can comprehend the fullness of Him who is the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last? It is enough if we have a saving acquaintance with the Redeemer, enough for our peace and joy, but gracious Lord, by Your Grace, teach us more. Amen.

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END OF VOLUME 9

THE TWO “COMES”

NO. 1331

[This sermon is the first sermon in Volume 23 in the original manuscripts.]

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 31, 1876,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say,
Come! And let him who thirsts come. And whoever will,
let him take the water of life freely.”
Revelation 22:17.*

OUR text stands at the end of the Bible even as this day stands at the end of the year—and it is full of Gospel even as we would make our closing Sabbath discourse. It would seem as if the Holy Spirit were loath to put down the pen while so many remained unbelieving, notwithstanding the testimony of the Inspired Word and, therefore,, before He closes the canon of Holy Scripture and guards it against all addition or mutilation, with most solemn words He gives one more full, free, earnest, gracious invitation to thirsty souls to come to Christ and drink! So on this last page of the year I would gladly write another Gospel invitation that those who have not, up to now, believed our report, may, even on this last day of the feast, incline their ears and accept the message of salvation!

Before yet the midnight bell proclaims the birth of a new year, may you be born to God! At any rate, once more shall the Truth of God, by which men are regenerated, be lovingly brought under your attention. I ask those of you who have the Master’s ear to put up this request to Him just now, that if the arrows have missed the mark on the previous 52 Sabbaths, they may strike the target this time, being directed by the Divine Spirit. Pray, also, that if some have kept the door of their hearts fast closed against the Lord Jesus till now, He may, Himself, come in the preaching of the Word, this morning, and put in His hand by the hole of the door, that their hearts may be moved for Him.

In answer to that prayer we shall be sure to get a blessing! Let us expect it and act upon the expectation and we shall see men flying to Jesus as a cloud, and as doves to their windows! Are not the Words of our text the Words of the Lord Jesus? Can they be regarded as the words of John? I think not, for they follow so closely upon the undoubted language of Jesus in the former verse. Thus runs the passage—“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come!”

We can hardly, I think, divide the paragraph, and we must, it seems to me, regard our text as the Words of the risen Jesus, that Morning Star whose cheering beams foretell the glorious day! The lover of men’s souls was not quite done speaking to sinners—there was a little more to say and here He says it. The Divine Redeemer, leaning from His Throne where He

sits as the reward of His accomplished work, and bending over sinners with the same love which led Him to die for them, says, "Let him who hears say, Come! And let him who thirsts come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Looking at the words, therefore, in that golden light as coming from the dear lips of the Well-Beloved, let us notice first, *the heavenward cry of prayer*—"The Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come!" These voices go upward to Christ. Then, secondly, let us hear the earthward cry of invitation—"Let him who thirsts come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely." That cry goes outward and downward towards needy and sorrowing spirits. Then, thirdly, we shall pause awhile to notice the relation between these two cries, for the coming of Christ is connected with the coming of sinners. And then, as best we can, we shall observe and expect the response to the two cries—both from Him who sits in the heavens and from souls thirsting here below.

O Divine Spirit, bless the Word!

I. First, then, our text begins with THE HEAVENWARD CRY OF PRAYER, "*The Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him that hears say, Come!*" I think it will be evident, if you read carefully, that this cannot be interpreted as being only the voice of the Spirit and the bride *to the sinner*. Surely the sense requires us to regard this cry of, "Come!" as addressed to our Lord Jesus, who in a previous verse had been saying, "Behold I come quickly, and My reward is with Me." We may see the second included in it, but it will never do to exclude the first. We shall not have dealt honestly with the words before us unless we regard them, first, as spoken upwards towards our Lord whose coming is our great hope.

The matter of this cry is first to be noticed—it is the coming of Christ. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come!" This is, and always has been, the universal cry of the Church of Jesus Christ! There is no one common theory about the exact meaning of that coming, but there is one common *desire* for it, in some form or other. Some of us are expecting the *bodily* coming because the angel said, when the cloud concealed the rising Christ, "This same Jesus who is taken up from you into Heaven shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven." We therefore look for His descent upon the earth in Person, to be here, *literally*, among us.

Some expect that when He comes it will be to reign upon the earth, making all things new and bringing to His people a glorious period of a thousand years in which there shall be perpetual Sabbath rest. Others think that when He comes He will come to judge the world and that the day of His appearing is rather to be regarded as the end of all things and the conclusion of this dispensation than as the commencement of the age of gold. There are some who think the millennium a dream and the coming of Christ in Person to be a mere fancy—they believe that He will come *spiritually*—and they are looking for a time when the Gospel shall spread very wonderfully and there will be an extraordinary power about the ministrations of the Word. They believe that nations shall run to Him and be converted to His Truth.

Now it would be very interesting to take up these various statements and speculations, but we do not want to do so, because, after all, in whatever way men look at it, all the true people of God still desire the coming of Christ, and so long as He draws near they are content! They may have, more or less light about the manner of it, but still the *coming* of Christ has been always, since the time when He departed, the great wish and desire, yes, and the agonizing *prayer* of the Church of God. "Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus," is the cry of the whole host of the Lord's elect!

It is true that some have not always desired this coming from motives of the most commendable kind. Many become more than ever earnest in this prayer when they have been in a state of disappointment and sorrow, but still, that which they desire is a right thing and a promised blessing to be given in its time. I suppose the trial of sorrow will always give a keener edge to the desire of Christ's coming. Luther, on one occasion, when much discouraged, said, "May the Lord come at once! Let Him cut the whole matter short with the Day of Judgment, for there is no amendment to be expected." When we get into this state of mind, the desire, though right in *appearance*, may not be quite as pure as we think.

Desires and prayers which grow out of *unbelief* and insolence can hardly be of the very best order! Perhaps when we more patiently wait and quietly hope, we may not be quite so feverishly anxious for the speedy coming. And yet our state of mind may be more sober and more truly watchful and acceptable than when we showed more apparent eagerness. Waiting must sit side by side with desiring—patience must blend with hope. The Lord's, "quickly," may not be my, "quickly," and if so, let Him do what seems good to Him!

It may be a better thing, after all, for our Lord to tarry a little longer, so that by a more lengthened conflict He may the better manifest the patience of the saints and the power of the eternal Spirit! It may be the Lord may linger yet a while, and if so, while the Church desires His speedy advent, she will not quarrel with her Master, nor dictate to Him, nor even wish to know the times and the seasons. "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly," is her heart's inmost wish, but as for the details of His coming, she leaves them in His hands.

Having noted the matter of the cry, let us next observe *the persons crying*. The Spirit is first mentioned—"The Spirit and the bride say, Come!" And why does the Holy Spirit desire the coming of the Lord Jesus? At present the Spirit is, so to speak, the vicegerent of this dispensation upon earth. Our Lord Jesus is gone into the heavens, for it was expedient for Him to go, but the Comforter, whom the Father has sent in His name, has taken His place as our Teacher and abides on earth continually as the Witness to the Truth of God and the Worker for it in the minds of men. But the Spirit of God is daily grieved during this season of long-suffering and conflict. How much He is provoked all the world over is not possible for us to know.

The 40 years in the wilderness must have become as nothing compared with 19 centuries of rebellious generations! The ungodly vex Him, they reject His Testimony and resist His operations. And, alas, the saints grieve Him, too. You and I have, I fear, grieved Him often during the past year

and so He desires the end of this evil estate and says to our Lord Jesus, "Come!" Beside, the Spirit's great objective and desire is to glorify Christ, even as our Lord says, "He shall glorify Me, for He shall take of Mine and show them unto you."

Now, as the coming of Christ will be the full manifestation of the Redeemer's Glory, the Spirit, therefore, desires that He may come and take to Himself His great power and reign. The Holy Spirit seals us "unto the day of redemption," having ever an eye to that great event. His work tends towards its completion in the day of the appearing of the sons of God. He "is the Earnest of our inheritance till the redemption of the purchased possession." Therefore does the Spirit have sympathy in the groans of His saints for the glorious appearing—and it is especially in this connection that He is described as helping our infirmities and making intercession for us with groans which cannot be uttered. In this sense the Spirit says, "Come!" Indeed, all such cries of, "Come!" in this world are of His prompting!

Our text, next, tells us that "the bride says, Come!" We all know that the bride is the Church, but perhaps we have not noticed the peculiarity of her name. It is not, "the Spirit and the Church say, Come!" But, "the Spirit and the *bride*," for she says, "Come!" always more fervently when she realizes her near and dear relationship to her Lord and all that it involves. Now, a bride is one whose marriage is near, either as having just happened or as close at hand. She is far more than merely *engaged*—either she is married or about to be—although the actual marriage feast may not have been celebrated yet. So is the Church very nearly arrived at the grand hour when it shall be said, "The marriage of the Lamb is come and His bride has made herself ready." And because of that, she is full of joy at the prospect of hearing the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom comes!"

Who marvels that it is so? It would be unnatural if there were no desire on the part of the Church to see her Beloved Lord and Head. Is it not as it should be, when the bride says, "Come!"? I wish to call your attention to the fact that while I have made two of the persons mentioned in the text for the purpose of discoursing upon them in due order, yet they are not divided in the passage before us. It does not say the Spirit says, "Come!" and the bride says, "Come!" but, "the Spirit and the bride say, Come!" That is to say, the Spirit of God speaks by the Church when He cries, "Come!" And the Church cries unto Christ for His coming because she is moved of the Holy Spirit!

True prayer is always a joint work—the Holy Spirit within us writes acceptable desires upon our hearts and then we present them! The Holy Spirit does not plead apart from our desiring and believing—we must, ourselves, desire and will and plead and agonize because the Spirit of God works in us so to will and to do. We plead with God because we are prompted and guided by His Holy Spirit! Our pleadings, which go up to Heaven for the advent of Jesus, are the Holy Spirit crying in the hearts of the blood-bought! The Church, herself, prays in the Holy Spirit, instantly crying day and night for the fulfillment of the greatest of all the Covenant promises—

***"Come, Lord, and tarry not!
Bring the long looked-for day!"***

***Oh, why these years of waiting here,
These ages of delay?
Come, for Your saints still wait!
Daily ascends their sigh.
The Spirit and the bride say, Come!
Do You not hear the cry?"***

The next clause of the text indicates that each separate Believer should breathe the same desire, "Let Him that hears say, Come!" Brethren, this will be the *index* of your belonging to the bride! This is the *token* of your sharing in the one Spirit and being joined unto the one body—if you unite with the Spirit and the bride in saying, "Come!" No ungodly man truly desires Christ's coming. On the contrary, he desires to get away from Him and forget His very existence! To delight in drawing near unto the Lord Jesus Christ is an evidence of our election and calling. To wish more and more fully to know Him and to dwell more near to Him is the token of our having been reconciled unto God by His death and of our having a new nature implanted in us!

To long to see Jesus Christ manifested in fullness of His Glory is the ensign of a true soldier of the Cross. Do you feel this? Do you desire to be better acquainted with the Lord Jesus? You have heard the Gospel—do you say, as the Church does, "Come, Lord Jesus"? Alas, to many, the Day of the Lord will be darkness and not light! They cannot desire it, for it will be a day of terror and confusion to them! But unto such as have heard and believed in the precious name of the Son of God, it will be joy and peace and, therefore,, the cry of their heart is, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" This utterance of "Come!" by him that hears it, is the mark of his joyful consent to the fact that Christ shall come!

It is well, my Friend, if when you hear that Christ will come, you say, "Let Him come." If He comes to reign, let Him, for, blessed be His name, who should reign but He? If He descends to judge the earth, let Him come, for we shall be justified at His bar! His ends and objectives in coming cannot but be loaded with infinite benefit to us and Glory to our God and, therefore,, we would not delay His chariot wheels by so much as an hour—

***"Hasten Lord, the promised hour!
Come in Glory and in power!
Still Your foes are not subdued—
Nature sighs to be renewed.
Time has nearly reached its sum,
All things with Your bride, say, 'Come!'
Jesus, whom all worlds adore,
Come and reign forevermore!"***

The saying of, "Come!" by each true hearer is the sign that his heart responds to the doctrine which he has been taught. We have received it by Revelation that Christ is to come and our souls say, "Even so, Come Lord Jesus! It is our happiness that it should be so."

Thus have we mentioned the persons by whom this cry is uttered and now let us add a word upon *the tense in which the cry is put*. It is in the *present* tense. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come!" The Spirit and the bride are anxious that Christ should come at once. And he that knows Christ and loves Him desires, also, that He

should not tarry. Look, my Brothers and Sisters, is it not time, as far as our poor judgments go, that Jesus should come? See how iniquity abounds! Behold our very streets, how foul they are with sin! See how errors are multiplied—do they not swarm in the Church of God, itself? Have not heresies come down like birds of prey upon the sacrifice, to pollute even the altars of the Most High?

See at this present time how skeptics defy the living God! They hiss out from between their teeth the question, "Where is the promise of His coming, for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were?" Behold how Antichrist stalks boldly through the land! Superstitions which your fathers could not bear are, again, set up among you! The graven images, crosses, crucifixes and sacraments—many gods and many lords of old Rome have come back to England—and they are worshipped in her national Church! In England, stained with the blood of martyrs, once again the mark of the Beast is to be seen on the foreheads of those whom she feeds to teach her people! Is it not time that the Lord should come?

O hoary systems of superstition, what else can shake you from your thrones! O gods that have long ruled over superstitious minds, who else can hurl you to the moles and to the bats? You know Him who made you quiver on your thrones on that night when He was born in Bethlehem's manger and you may well tremble, for when He comes it will be with an iron rod to dash you into shivers! "Even so," we cry, "Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly! Amen."

II. Now, secondly, let us listen to THE EARTHWARD CRY OF INVITATION TO MEN. I must confess I cannot quite tell you how it is that the sense in my text glides away from the coming of Christ to the earth into the coming of sinners to Christ, but it does! Like colors which blend, or strains of music which melt into each other, so the first sense slides into the second. This almost insensible transition seems, to me, to have been occasioned by the memory of the fact that the coming of Christ is *not* desirable to all mankind.

There are the unbelievers who have not obeyed Him and when they hear the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" straightway they begin to tremble and they say within themselves, "What if He should come! Alas, we rejected Him and His coming will be our destruction." I think I hear some such sinners weeping and wailing at the very thought of the Lord's coming, for they know that they, also, who have pierced Him must behold Him and weep because of Him! It seems almost cruel on the part of the bride and the Spirit to be saying, "Come!" when that coming must be for the overthrow of all the adversaries of the Lord!

And so Jesus, Himself, seems gently to turn aside the prayer of His people while He pleads with the needy ones. He lets the prayer flow towards Himself, but yet directs its flow towards you sinners, also. He, Himself, seems to say, "You bid Me come, but I, as the Savior of men, look at your brothers and your sisters who are yet in the far country, the other sheep which are not yet of the fold, whom I, also, must bring in. And in answer to your cry to Me to come I speak to those wandering ones, and say, 'Let him who thirsts come. And whoever will, let him take the water of

life freely." Is not that the way in which the sense glides from its first direction?

Now, *from whom does this cry arise?* It first comes *from Jesus*. It is He who says, "Let him who thirsts come." The passage so stands, as I have already said, that we cannot but believe this verse to have been the utterance of Him who is the Root and Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star. He, out of Heaven, cries to the unconverted, "Let him who thirsts come." Will they refuse Him that speaks? Shall Jesus, Himself, invite them and will they turn a deaf ear? But next, it is the call of *the Spirit of God*. The Spirit says, "Come!" This Book which He has written, on every page says to men, "Come! Come to Jesus!" This is the cry of the Spirit in the preaching of the Word.

What do sermons and discourses mean but, "Come Sinner, come!"? And those secret motions of power upon the conscience. Those times when the heart grows calm, even amid dissipation, and thought is forced upon the mind—those are the movements of the Spirit of God by which He is showing man his danger and revealing to him his Refuge—and so is saying, "Come!" All over the world, wherever there is a Bible and a preacher, the Spirit is saying, "Come!" And this is the speech of *the Church*, too, in conjunction with the Spirit, for the Spirit speaks *with* the bride and the bride speaks *by* the Spirit.

The Church is always saying, "Come!" This is, indeed, the meaning of her Sabbath gatherings, of her testimony in the pulpit, of her teaching in the schools, of her prayers and her exhortations. Everywhere, poor wandering Hearts, the Church of God is saying to you, "Come!" Or if she does not do so, she is not acting in her true character as the bride of Christ. For this purpose is there a Church in the world! If it were not for this, our Lord might take His people Home as soon as they have believed, but they are kept here to be a seed to keep the Truth of God alive in the world. And their daily earnest cry to you is, "Come, come to Jesus!" "The Spirit and the bride say, Come!"

The next giver of the invitation is spoken of as, "*Him that hears*." If you have had an ear to hear and have heard the Gospel to your own salvation, the very next thing you *have* to do is to say to those around you, "Come!" Go and speak to anybody that you meet! Speak to *everybody* that you meet according as opportunity and occasion shall be given you! And say what all the Church says and what the Spirit is saying—namely, "Come!" Give your Master's invitation! Distribute the testimony of His loving will and bid poor sinners come to Jesus! Your children and your servants—bid them come! Your neighbors and your Friends—bid them come! The strangers and the far-off ones—bid them come! The harlot and the thief—bid such come! Those that are in the highways and the hedges! Those who are far off from God by abominable works—say unto all these—"Come!"

Because you have heard the message and proved its truth, go and call in others to the feast of love! Oh, if there were more of these individual proclaimers, what blessings would descend upon London! I do not know how many Believers in Christ there are present here, but I do know that there are 5,000 of us associated in Church fellowship at this Tabernacle. And if the whole of these 5,000 would but begin to bear witness for Christ

with all their might, there would be salt enough even within this one Tabernacle to season all London, with God's blessing upon our efforts! My Brothers and Sisters, let us not be slow to address ourselves to those to whom the Spirit of God within us, the voice of Jesus from above and the cry of the whole Church is addressed! Let each individual member take up the note of invitation till all around, the trembling Sinner hears the encouraging cry of, "Come!"

Now, notice *the remarkably encouraging character of this, "Come!"* which is given by the Spirit of the bride. One part of it is directed to the thirsty—"Let him who thirsts come." By thirst is meant necessity and an appetite for its supply. Do you feel yourself guilty, and do you desire pardon?—you are a thirsty one! Are you disquieted and filled with unrest, and do you long to be pacified in heart?—you are a thirsty one! Is there a something, you know not, perhaps, what it is, for which you are sighing, and crying and pining? You are a thirsty one and to you is the invitation most positively and distinctly given, "Let him who thirsts come."

But how much I rejoice that the second half of the invitation does not contain even an apparent limit, as this first sentence has been thought to do! I regard the *thirst* here mentioned as by no means requiring of any man that he should have gone through a process of horror on account of guilt, or should have been overwhelmed with conviction and driven to despair of salvation. I believe that any desire and any longing will come under the description of, "thirst." But since some have stumbled at it and have said again and again, "I feel I do not thirst enough," see how sweetly the second clause of our text puts it—"Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Whether you are thirsty or not, yet have you a will to drink? Have you a will to be saved? Have you a will to be cleansed from sin? A will to be made a new creature in Christ Jesus? Do you will to have eternal life? Then thus says the Spirit to you, "Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Now, notice three vast doors through which the biggest and most elephantine sinner that ever made the earth shake beneath the weight of his guilt may go. Here are the three doors. "*Whoever*"—"Will"—"*Freely*."

"Whoever" is the first door. "Whoever"—then what man dares have the impudence to say that he is shut out? If you say that you cannot come in under, "*whoever*," I ask you how you dare narrow a word which is, in itself, so broad, so infinite? "Whoever"—that must mean *every* man that ever lived or ever shall live while yet he is here and wills to come! Well, then, the word, "*will*." There is nothing about past character, nor present character. There is nothing about knowledge, or feeling, nor anything else but the will—"Whoever will." Speak of the gate standing ajar! This looks to me like taking the door right off the hinges and carrying it away!

"Whoever will." There is no hindrance whatever in your way. And then, "*freely*." God's gifts are given without any expectation or recompense, or any requirements and conditions—"Let him take the water of life freely." You have not to bring your good feelings, or good desires, or good works—just come and take freely what God gives you for nothing! You are not even to bring repentance and faith in order to obtain Divine Grace—you

are to come and *accept* repentance and faith as the *gifts* of God and the work of the Holy Spirit. What broad gates of mercy these are! How wide the entrance which Love has prepared for coming souls! "*Whoever!*" "*Will!*" "*Freely!*"

Observe how the invitation sums up the work the sinner is called upon to do. First, he is bid to *come*. "Whoever will, let him come." Now, to come to Christ means simply for the soul to draw near to Him by trusting Him. You are not asked to bring a load with you, nor to work for Christ in order to earn salvation, but just to come to Him. Nothing is said about the *style* of coming—come running or creeping, come boldly or timidly—for if you do but come to Jesus, He will in no wise cast you out. A simple reliance upon the Lord Jesus is the one essential for eternal life!

Then the next direction is, "*take*." "Whoever will, let him take." That is all. That word, "take," is a grand word to express the Gospel. The world's gospel is, "bring." Christ's Gospel is, "take." Nature's gospel is, "make." Just change the letter and you have the Gospel of Divine Grace which is, "take." There is the water, dear Friends! You have not to dig a well to find it—you have only to *take* it. There is the bread of Heaven, you have not to grind the flour or bake the loaf, you have only to take it. There is a garment woven from the top throughout and without a seam—you have not to add a fringe to it—you have only to take it!

The way of salvation may be summed up in the four letters of the word, "take." Do you desire Christ? Take Him. Do you need pardon? Take it. Do you need a new heart? Take it. Do you want peace on earth? Take it. Do you want Heaven hereafter? Take it—that is all. "Whoever will, let him *take* the water of life freely." And there is one other word which I love to dwell on, and it comes twice over, "*Let him* who thirsts come, and whoever will *let him* take." It is graciously said, *let him*. It seems to me as if the Lord Jesus Christ saw a poor soul standing thirsty at the flowing crystal fountain of His Love and the devil, standing there, whispered to him, "You see the sacred stream, but it flows for others. It is what you need, but you must not have it, it is not for you."

Listen! There is a voice from beyond the clouds which cries aloud, "Let him take it!" Stand back, Satan, let the willing one come! He is putting down his lips to drink—he understands, now—but there comes rushing upon him hosts of his old sins, like so many winged bats, and they scream out to him, "Go back! You must not draw near! This fountain is not for you—this pure crystal stream must not be defiled by such leprous lips as yours!" Again there comes from the Throne of Love this blessed password, "Let him come and let him take."

It is as when a man is in court and is called to go into the witness box. He is standing in the crowd and his name is called. What happens? As soon as he hears his name he begins to push through the throng to reach his place. "What are you doing?" asks one. "I am called," he says. "Stand back! Why do you push so?" asks another. "I am called by the Judge," he says. A big policeman demands, "Why are you making such confusion in court?" "But," says the man, "I am called. My name was called out and I must come."

If he cannot come. If it is not possible for him to get through the throng, one of the authorities calls out, "Make way for that man—he is summoned by the court. Officers, clear a passage and let him come." Now the Lord Jesus calls the thirsty one and He says, "Whoever will, let him come!" Make way, doubts! Make way, sins! Make way, fears! Make way, devils! Make way, all of you, for Jesus Christ, the great King and Judge of all has said, "Let him come!" Who shall hinder when Jesus permits? He who is divinely called shall surely come to Jesus! Come he shall, regardless of whomever may stand in his way!

This morning I feel as if I could come to Jesus all over again and I will do so! Do you not feel the same, my Beloved Brothers and Sisters? Well then, dear Brothers and Sisters, after you have done so, turn round and proclaim this precious Gospel invitation to all around you! Say to them, "Come and take the water of life freely!"

III. The third point is THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THESE TWO COMINGS. Is there any relation between the coming of Christ from Heaven to earth, and the coming of poor sinful creatures to Christ and trusting Him? There is this relation, first, that they are both suggested in this passage by the closing of the Scriptural Canon. John is about to write, by the voice of the Lord, that none are to add to or take from the completed Book of God. The Church says, "If there are no more Prophets to proclaim the mind of God, no more Apostles to write with infallible authority and no more instructors to give forth new revelations, or bring new promises, then it only remains that the Lord should come.

"Then," she says, "Come, Lord Jesus!" And here are the sinners standing round and they hear that no other Gospel is to be expected, no more revelations are to be added to those which are in this Bible. They hear there will be no other Atonement, no other way of salvation. Therefore it is their wisdom to come at once to Jesus! It is because the Book was about to receive its *finis* that the Spirit and the bride unitedly cried to the sinners to come at once! No fresh Gospel is to be expected, therefore let them come at once! Why should they tarry any longer? The oxen and fatlings are killed, come to the supper! All things are ready, there is nothing more to be done or to be revealed! Upon us the ends of the earth have come. "It is finished" has rung through earth and Heaven, therefore—

"Come and welcome, Sinner, come!"

I think I perceive another connection, namely, that those people who, in very truth love Christ enough to cry to Him continually to come, are sure to love sinners, also, and to say to them, "Come!" Not that there are not some who talk a great deal about Christ's coming and yet manifest but small care for other men's souls. Well, it is talk—the profession of looking for the Second Advent is nothing but talk when it does not lead people to cry to perishing men, "Come to Christ!" He who loves Christ so very much that he is quite wrapped up in himself and forgets the dying millions around him. He who stands star-gazing into Heaven, expecting to see a sudden Glory to take himself away does not understand what he says! For if he really loved his Lord, he would set to work for Him and would show that he expected the King to come by endeavoring to extend His kingdom!

There is this connection, also, that before Christ comes a certain number of His elect must be gathered in. He shall not come until an appointed company shall have been brought to eternal life by the preaching of the Word. Oh then, Brothers and Sisters, it is ours to labor that the wanderers may come home, for so we are, as far as lies in us, hastening the time when our Beloved, Himself, shall come! Once more, there is a sort of coming of Christ which, though it is not the first meaning here, may be included in it, for it touches the center of the sinner's coming to Christ. Because, Brethren, when we cry, "Come, Lord Jesus!" if He shall answer us by giving us of His Spirit more fully, so that He comes to us *spiritually*, then penitent souls will assuredly be brought to His feet.

We know this, that wherever the Lord, Himself, is in a meeting, hearts are sure to be broken and repentance is certain to be manifested! Wherever Jesus Christ is in power, there must be a revival, for dead souls must come to life in Him. The great thing we need above all others is a grip of that glorious promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world," and as we, in this sense, obtain the coming of the Lord, we shall see sinners come and take of the water of life freely!

IV. Well then, lastly, WHAT ARE THE RESPONSES? We sent up a cry to Heaven and said, "Come!" The response is, "Behold, I come quickly." That is eminently satisfactory. You may have to wait awhile, but the cry is heard and if the Lord should not come in your lifetime, the same preparation of heart which made you look for His coming will be blessedly useful to you if He sends His messenger to take you Home by death. The same waiting and watching will answer in either case, so you need not be under any distress about which of the two shall happen!

Christ will descend to earth as surely as He ascended to Heaven! And when He comes there will be victory to the right and to the true—and His saints shall reign with Him! And now concerning this other cry of, "Come!"—we ask sinners to come. We have asked them in a fourfold voice—Jesus, the Spirit, the bride, and him that hears—they have all said, "Come!" Will they come? Brothers and Sisters, it is a question which I cannot answer. You must not ask *me*, for I do not know! You had better ask the persons, themselves! They are of age, ask *them*. Take care that you ask them *before* they get out of the Tabernacle this morning! They know and, therefore,, they can tell you whether they mean to come or not.

This I will say to them—my dear Friends, I trust that this last day of the year may be, to you, a day of mercy! The Jews had a Feast of Ingatherings at the end of the year and I earnestly pray that we may have a gathering in of precious souls to Christ before the year quite runs out—that would be a grand finish to this year of Grace and a sweet encouragement for the future! But suppose you do not come. Well, you have been invited. If a Christmas feast is provided for the poor and a number of beggars are standing shivering outside in the sleet and snow, but will not come in, though earnestly bid, we say, "Well, you have been invited. What more do you need?"

Remember, also, that you have been invited very earnestly. The Spirit, the bride and him that hears—and Jesus, Himself—they have all said to you, "Come!" I am as the man that hears and I have said, "Come!" I do not

know how to say it more earnestly than I have said it. Oh, how would my soul delight if everyone here came to Christ at this moment! I would ask no greater joy out of Heaven to crown this year with! You are invited and you are earnestly invited—what more do you need? If you never come, you will have this thought to haunt you forever—"I was invited and pressed again and again, but I would not come."

I want you to remember, too, that you are called to come *now*, at once! You may not be bid to come tomorrow for several reasons. You may not be alive, or there may be no earnest person near to invite you. Can there be a better day than today? You have always said, "Tomorrow," yet where are you now? Not a bit closer, some of you, than you were 10 years ago! Do you remember that sermon when you were made to tremble so and you said, "Please God, if I get out of this, I will seek Your face"? But you postponed it and are you any closer now?

You remember the story of the country man who would not cross the river just yet, but sat down and said he would wait until all the water had gone by? He waited a long time in vain and he might have waited forever, for rivers are always flowing. You, too, are waiting till a more convenient season shall come and all the difficulties shall have gone by. Forget about such supreme folly! There will *always* be difficulty! The river will always flow! O man, be wise! Plunge into it and swim across! Now is the accepted time and now is the day of salvation!

Oh that you would believe in Jesus Christ! May His Spirit lead you to do so now!—

***Only trust Him! Only trust Him!
Only trust Him now! He will save you!
He will save you! He will save you now!"***

Cast yourselves upon the blood and merits of the Lord Jesus and the great work is done! The Lord help you to do so. Amen.

***Portion Of Scripture Read Before Sermon—Revelation 22
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—917, 345, 509.***

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

THE DOUBLE “COME”

NO. 1608

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JULY 10, 1881,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let
him that hears say, Come.”
Revelation 22:17.*

WE have open before us the last page of the Word of God. The Spirit of God will not dictate a single fresh line of Truth. We have come to the last chapter and very soon we shall reach the Amen! We are also, according to Divine Revelation, approaching the last page of human history. So short a time will elapse before the present economy shall conclude that the angel says, “Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this Book: for the time is at hand.” How shall the Book finish? If we have come almost to its last verse, how shall it conclude? If we could have been asked by the great Spirit of God, “How shall it close?” what would have been our reply? We must certainly have left it entirely to His infinite wisdom, but what suggestions might we have made?

Shall it finish with a promise? It is well that it should and there is the cheering word for the righteous, “Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” But if we close with comfort for saints, what about the multitude outside? What about the tens of thousands who are perishing? Does not our love to sinners suggest that there should be a word to them? Shall it, then, be a word of threat, stern and vigorous, to awaken their consciences and convince them of sin? Here it is—“Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whoever loves and makes a lie.”

Yet one does not like to finish with a sentence of exclusion. The Old Testament closes with the word, “curse.” Let not the New Testament conclude in the same fashion. What, then, shall it be? Shall the last sentences be full of tender invitation and earnest entreaty to the sinner, bidding him come to Christ and live? Yes, let it be so! But shall we forget the Lord, Himself, while we are thinking of the *sinner*? He has told us that He will come—should not the very last word of Scripture have a reference to Him and to His glorious advent? Should not the Spirit, at the last, as well as at the first, bear witness to Jesus? Shall not the last word that shall linger in the reader’s ears speak of the approaching Glory of the Lord? Yes, let it be so!

But it would be best of all if we could have a word that would combine the four—a promise to the righteous, a threat to the wicked, an invitation to the poor and needy and a welcome to the coming One! Who could devise such a verse? The Holy Spirit is equal to the emergency! He can dictate such a verse—He *has* dictated it! Here it is in the words of our text—“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say,

Come." That, "Come," is a *promise* to the righteous, for, "at the coming of the Lord they shall have their portion and their glory, for His reward is with Him." That, "Come," is a word of *thunder* to the wicked, for when He comes He shall break them as with a rod of iron! He shall dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel!

That, "Come," is a word of *invitation* to the sinner—"Let him that is thirsty come. And whoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely." And yet it is a welcome to our Well-Beloved, for when the Spirit and the bride say, "Come," they invite the coming One, the Messiah whose Second Advent our heart desires, to whom we cry, "Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus!" I rejoice to find my text, set in the closing chapter of Scripture, closing Scripture in such a way as Wisdom, alone, could have dictated—comprehending all the things which are desirable in the finis of Holy Writ! Oh for Grace to gather from this remarkable portion the instruction which it contains! "Come," is the word of the Spirit and the bride—and our text urges us to let it be *our* word, too, if we have ever heard it. "Let him that hears say, Come."

In trying to open up this passage we shall notice, first, that here is a two-fold ministry—we are bid to say, "Come," but it is in a double sense—we say to Jesus, "Come," and we say to the sinner, "Come." Secondly, we shall notice how this two-fold ministry is secured—"The Spirit and the bride say, Come." This is actually and perpetually done according to the ordinance of God. Then, thirdly, we shall see how this two-fold ministry is to be increased—let him that hears add a new voice to that which is already speaking and let him say, "Come!" In conclusion, you who are hearing ones shall have this two-fold ministry urged upon you. May the Spirit of the Lord bless our discourse to him that hears!

I. First, then, let us consider THE TWO-FOLD MINISTRY. There is, in the text, a cry for the coming of the Lord. If you read the verse in connection with that which goes before it, you will be persuaded that the cry of the Spirit and the bride is addressed to the Lord Jesus concerning His Second Advent. As the echo of the Savior's previous words, "Behold, I come quickly," the Spirit and the bride say, Come. This cry is continually going up from the Spirit and from the Church of God and the more gracious the season, the more intense the prayer. Because we have the first fruits of the Spirit we groan within ourselves for the glorious manifestation of our Lord. Just as the 12 tribes, serving God day and night, looked for the *first* coming, so ought all the tribes of our Israel, day and night, without ceasing, to wait for the Lord from Heaven. We are looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" is the desire of every instructed saint.

I shall not go into any details about when He will come. I will not espouse the cause of the pre-millennial or the post-millennial advent—it will suffice me, just now, to observe that the Redeemer's coming is the desire of the entire Church and, "unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." The ministry of prayer for the coming of the Lord ought to grow more and more fervent as the years roll on—even as the watchers look for the morning the more eagerly as the

night wears away. Certainly the time draws nearer and the event can hardly be far removed. Therefore let the prayer be general and eager till our Lord hears it—

***"Hark how Your saints unite their cries,
And pray and wait the general doom!
Come, You, the soul of all our joys!
You, the Desire of Nations, come!"***

Let everyone that hears the prophecy of our Lord's assured coming join in the prayer, "Your Kingdom come."

But there is a second ministry of the Church which is the cry for the coming of *sinner*s to Christ. In this respect, "the Spirit and the bride say, Come." It is a very sad calamity when any Church ceases from its mission work. It is clearly out of fellowship with the Spirit of God and has ceased to work with Him. The cry of, "Come," should never cease at any time or in any place. It should be addressed to all men as we have opportunity. The world should ring with, "Come to Jesus! Come to Jesus! Come and welcome, Sinner, come!" For this purpose the Spirit of God dwells among men and for this purpose there is a Church left on earth! If it were not for this, the Holy Spirit might depart and Jesus Christ might bear His saints away to dwell with Him above.

The Spirit abides here and the Church abides here that together they may continually cry, "Let him that is thirsty come; and whoever will, let him take of the Water of Life freely." This, then, is the double ministry and I want you to notice that the first call is not opposed to the second. The fact that Christ is coming ought never to make us any the less diligent in pressing sinners to come to Christ! I deeply regret when I see persons so taken up with prophecy that they forget evangelism. Trumpets and vials must not displace the Gospel and its invitations. By all means, pray fervently for the Advent and search the roll and see what the Spirit says concerning it—but still, look on the world that lies in the Wicked One and let its sorrows command your tears—let its sins excite your zeal. Go out into the world and cry, "Come," and the Spirit of God will cry with you and by your cry many shall be brought to Christ that they may live! A desire for the personal coming of the Lord is by no means antagonistic to the resolve to labor on in His absence in the hope of subduing the world to His gracious reign.

Again, take heed that the second call never obscures the first. Albeit we are to seek sinners with all our might and to compel them to come in to the marriage supper, yet we must not forget whose marriage it is, nor cease to pray for the majestic appearing of our Lord, the Prince of Life. Despise not prophesying. Be taken up with evangelical work—let it fill your heart, your hands and all your mouth—but, at the same time, watch for that sudden appearing which, to many, will be as unwelcome as a thief in the night! Let the two comes leap at the same moment from your heart, for they are linked together. Christ will *not* come until He has gathered unto Himself an elect company! Therefore when you and I go forth and say to sinners, "Come," and God blesses us to the bringing in of them, we are doing the best we can to hasten the advent of the Son of Man.

Jesus will not descend till He has borne long with the ungodly. Until, indeed, His Word shall have been preached throughout all nations for a testimony against them and then shall the end be. Brethren, the two Truths of God work together as a matter of fact and we are not to dissociate them. Look for the Lord's coming and then work towards that coming by bidding sinners come to Christ and live! To my mind the doctrine of the coming of Christ ought to inflame the zeal of every Believer who seeks the conversion of his fellow men. How can he be a Believer if he does not seek this end? The Lord comes quickly—O Sinner, come quickly to the Lord, or it may be too late for you to come! We who call you may soon be silenced by His Advent and mercy may have no more to say to you.

"The oxen and the fatlings are killed, all things are ready, come to the supper before the wrath of the King shall be awakened by your delays." We beseech you come at once, for the day of judgment will soon be ushered in. I am sure that everybody who is eager to save souls will soon be driven to desire the Advent. If we vehemently cry, "Come," to the ungodly and see their rejection of the Gospel, we shall, at times, become so cast down that we shall cry, "Come, Lord, and end this dreary age. Men reject and despise You and Your servants are distressed! It is time for You to interpose, for they make void Your Laws." Go into a heathen land and see their images and preach to them concerning the *true* God! And when they reject your testimony you will be driven to cry, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

Stand in a Popish country and see them altogether given to their idols and worshipping crosses and relics—and you will soon cry, "Come, Lord Jesus. Let Antichrist be hurled like a millstone into the flood, never to rise again!" The vehemence of your desire for the destruction of evil and the setting up of the kingdom of Christ will drive you to that grand hope of the Church and make you cry out for its fulfillment! There is no need to say more about this two-fold ministry. Only let its two parts be evenly balanced. Let there be prayer *to* our Lord—"Come quickly!" and an equal measure of *entreaty to sinners*—"Come to Christ!" Blend the two in wise proportion and set both on fire. Tell of Christ's coming for judgment and then invite men to come to Christ for mercy. Warn them that He is on the way, but tell them that He waits to be gracious and that while He lingers they have space for repentance!

You will thus both drive and draw, both convince and comfort—and your testimony will have two hands with which to bear men to their Savior!

II. And now, secondly, let us note that THIS TWO-FOLD MINISTRY IS SECURED. According to our text, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." They *always* say it and always will say it till Jesus comes! The Spirit says it. What a cry must this be which comes up from the Spirit of God, Himself! Given at Pentecost, He has never returned nor left the Church, but He dwells in chosen hearts, as in a temple, even to this day. With groans that cannot be uttered He makes intercession for us and this is one of His intercessions, "Come, Lord Jesus." We are sure that Christ will come, if for no other reason than from this fact—the Spirit cries, "Come"—for the Spirit cannot plead in vain.

This ministry of the Spirit is, in part, carried on by the Word of God. This Book tells us that Christ will come and gives a thousand pleas for the Lord's coming and for the sinner's coming to Him. This is done by the Spirit, also, in His operations upon the human heart—He bears witness of judgment to come and He persuades men to come to Jesus. He is always moving men to pray that Christ may come and moving men to come to Christ! He dwells with us and shall be in us—and in both the senses of the Word, the Spirit of God is evermore crying, "Come!" This also is certainly fulfilled by the Church wherever she is a *true* Church. Note that here she is called, "the bride." A bride is one that has been chosen from among others and set apart by love to be specially dear to him who chose her.

So is the Church chosen by God's eternal election and by the love of Christ to be Christ's Beloved forever. A bride is one that, being chosen, is espoused. The Covenant is an espousal of the Church to Christ and every conversion—every regeneration of each person making up the Church—is, so to speak, a renewal of the espousal of the chosen to the Bridegroom. A bride, however, is more than espoused—she is expectant of the marriage. It is not long before the wedding day will come to one who is called, "the bride," and even so it is with the Church. She is, today, beloved of Christ, chosen of Christ, espoused of Christ—and the time comes when the marriage shall be consummated—"Blessed are they that shall sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb."

Joy, joy, joy awaits the elect Church Of Christ. Before long shall Heaven and earth be filled with the splendor of the nuptials of the King of Kings when He shall take to Himself His great power and reign and take to Himself His bride who shall then be called the Lamb's wife! Even today the Church is the bride of Christ, reserved unto Him, alone. She has no Head but Christ. She acknowledges no rule and sovereignty but that of Christ. This Church, which deserves to be called, "the bride," is always fulfilling the double ministry which lies in the cry of, "Come." Her prayers rise to Heaven incessantly for her Bridegroom's appearing—

***"Come, Lord, and tarry not!
Bring the long-looked-for day!
Oh, why these years of waiting here,
These ages of delay?"***

And then she turns round to an ungodly world and she cries, "Ho, everyone that thirsts, come to the waters, and he that has no money, let him come!"

So, you see, the Church speaks up to her Lord that she may bring Him down and she speaks down to the world that she may bring sinners up to Christ! Thus our God secures the ceaseless double ministry, for while the Spirit is upon the earth and the Church is yet among men, the two, together, will continually say, "Come." Many things make it certain that the Spirit of God and the bride of Christ will always maintain their two-fold ministry. For, first, the sin of man grieves the Holy Spirit and moves Him to say, "Come, Lord," while He says to sinners, "Turn you, turn you and come to Jesus." The Church, also, is vexed with abounding sin. She is sorrowful to be compelled to dwell in the tents of Kedar and the wicked-

ness of men makes her cry aloud, "Come, Lord Jesus," while in pity to guilty man she cries, "Come and be cleansed from your iniquities."

Thus *sin* provokes the double cry which will yet secure its overthrow. The character of the two pleaders guarantees this perpetual ministry, for the Spirit of God is such a lover of holiness that He cannot but cry, "Come, Lord, and end the reign of sin!" He cannot but cry to men, "Flee away from your sins and come to Jesus!" The true bride of Christ has, also, such a delight in purity that from force of holiness she must always cry, "Come, Savior, and end the reign of evil," and she must cry to men, "Come to Jesus, that you may live by His salvation!" Brethren, the love which the Spirit bears both to Christ and to men and the love which the Church bears both to Christ and men are combined in one force and lead to the one cry! Because of this common love, the Spirit and the bride must unitedly say, "Come," in the two-fold sense.

There is also the desire for Christ's Glory which is in the heart of the Spirit of God. He delights to glorify Christ! It is His *office* to do so and, therefore, He never will stay from the double work of crying, "Come, Lord," and, "Come, sinner!" The true Church also desires Christ's Glory. What a throne she would make for Him! What a crown would she put upon His head! Therefore does she cry, "Come, Lord, and reign!" And then she exhorts sinners to come and submit at His feet. There is also the longing for Christ's Presence which the Spirit of God has and which the bride has. Should not the bride long for the coming of the bridegroom? There are secret bonds of unity that bind both the Spirit and the bride to the great Bridegroom and while there are these bonds, we cannot wonder that they unitedly cry, "Come! Come!"

There is, moreover, before the Spirit's eyes and before the eyes of the Church, the future victory—the day when all things shall be under the feet of Christ and He shall reign forever and ever! The Spirit works to this same end. All His operations of conviction, of regeneration, of comforting, tend towards the glorious triumph of the right and the true in the Person of Jesus! The Church laughs for joy of heart as she thinks of the splendor of the latter days and, like the spirits before the Throne of God, in the prospect of the conquest of the world by her glorious Husband! This prospect leads both the Spirit and the bride to say to Christ with groans, "Come"—and to say to sinners with accents of entreaty, "Come unto Him, that He may give you rest."

I think I have sufficiently shown the character of this two-fold ministry and how our God has provided for its continuance.

III. I need your practical attention and your prayers while we speak upon the way in which THIS TWO-FOLD MINISTRY IS INCREASED. "Let him that hears say, Come." The hearing man is to say, "Come," but the *unconverted* man is not bid to do so. I want you to notice the gradations. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come"—that is *actually* done. The man that "hears" is bid to say, "Come"—this *should* be done. But the man who is thirsting is not told to say, "Come." No, he cannot say, "Come," till he has first come for himself! The exhortation, then, to say, "Come," is only addressed to those who drink of the Water of Life. You that are not saved

cannot invite others. How can you? You do not know the way! You do not know the blessing to be found in that way!

A more pitiable being than a man who tries to preach before he is converted, I can hardly imagine, and it is lamentable that there are in England hundreds of men ordained to the Christian ministry who, themselves, do not know what it is to be born again! They are preaching mysteries in which they have no fellowship! This is unhappy work and *unlawful* work. "Unto the wicked God says, What have you to do to declare My statutes?" Yet all of you who have really heard the Gospel with open ears and received the Truth of God, by faith, into your souls are called upon to cry, "Come!" Every man that has really heard and learned the Word of God is to go forth and bid others come to Christ!

See, Brothers and Sisters, how this perpetuates the cry. I have cried, "Come," but my voice will be hushed in the grave before long. Younger men who have heard through my voice, will cry, "Come," when I am silent, and those that hear them shall cry, "Come," when that generation shall have passed away. As in the old Greek games the athletes ran with torches and one handed the light to another and thus it passed along the line, so is it with us. Each man runs his race, but he passes the torch on to another, that the Light of God may never go out from generation to generation. "Let him that hears say, Come."

Let the fathers teach the children and the children their children. And while the sun and the moon endure, let the voice that cries, "Come," to Christ, go up to Heaven and let the voice that cries, "Come" to sinners, be heard in the chief places of concourse! This precept secures the swelling of the volume of the cry, for if every man that hears the Gospel is to cry, "Come," then there will be more voices and yet more! What a feeble few they were who stood up at Pentecost and by the mouth of Peter began to say, "Come!" When each man went out to preach, though they spoke in all kinds of voices, they were but a few that said, "Come," but before the sun went down there were 3,000 baptized into Christ—every one ready to say, "Come." Before centuries had passed, all Europe had heard the voice of those who said, "Come."

The Lord gave the Word—great was the company of them that published it. If at this time we could only awaken all that hear the Gospel to say, "Come," what a chorus it would be! All the world would hear it! If all who go down to the sea in ships knew the Lord and would say, "Come"—yes, if every Christian traveler would take care to proclaim the Gospel wherever he went—what holy voices would be heard in nations that as yet are ignorant of Christ! The volume swells, the sound rolls like thunder along the heavens when all that hear it say, "Come." And how the force of it is strengthened! When one man says, "Come," and tells out the Gospel tale, men may doubt it. Another steps in and says, "Come," and in the mouth of two witnesses the whole shall be established. If another and another shall say, "Come." If each one shall bear witness to the sweetness and the love of Christ, many will be driven to Christ by the power of such repeated testimonies!

There is a young man whose sister has been saved. He laughs at her. His mother is converted. He smiles at her. His father is converted. He be-

gins to think. His brother is converted—one after another all in the house are renewed. They all beseech him; they pray for him; they tell him the way of salvation and at last he must yield. When so many surround him, the testimony is so strengthened that the Spirit of God blesses it to his conversion! Consider, moreover, that not only does the testimony gain in strength, but the adaptation of it is remarkable! I may preach as long as I live and I shall never do good to certain of you. It may be that I am not the man that God is likely to bless to certain peculiar persons. But if all that hear me would say, Come, some man among you would fit *them*, or some woman, at least, would reach their case. If all would say, Come, though the sinner is like leviathan, some weak place in his scales would be found out and the sword of the Gospel would come at him!

The adaptation of the testimony is half the battle. Thus, dear Friends, you see that there are great reasons why everyone that hears should say, "Come." Then would the Word of God travel into strange places. The waiter at the inn and the sergeant at the barracks would become a blessing. The warden of the jail would bear the Gospel to his prisoners. The nurse in the hospital would speak of Jesus to the sick. Places that never will be reached by the most earnest city missionaries or ministers will be open to the Church if everyone that hears will say, "Come!" Down in the heart of the earth the miners sing and praise God when their fellow miner tells of Christ! In the palace, Christ is made known when the humble porter at the gate talks of Jesus! Every place would be accessible to the Gospel if all who heard it would say, "Come." We should then be as irresistible as the locusts when they go forth in swarms.

I have seen those creatures invade a land! They climb up the walls and down them! They march across the roads and pass over the rivers and none can stand against them! If once the Church of Christ were full of the Spirit of God and all that heard the Gospel would say, "Come," we should be perfectly irresistible! The Spirit of God being with us, nation after nation would yield! Popery would be swept away and errors would vanish! But because we forget this command, therefore the Church languishes, the darkness thickens and the gloom threatens to deepen into everlasting night. In all this I fall back upon the Divine guarantee in the first part of the text, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come"—but, oh, that God would move His entire Church to fulfill her mission and cause every one of her members to say, "Come!"

IV. I may not linger longer over this, for I must advance to the fourth part which is the most practical. This is my point—THIS TWO-FOLD MINISTRY IS URGED UPON ALL WHO HAVE HEARD THE WORD OF GOD. I will leave the point of saying, "Come, Lord Jesus," till the close of the sermon and, as it is not easy to ride upon two horses at once, I will keep to that part of our ministry which consists in bidding the thirsting ones come to Jesus. First, dear Brother, dear Sister, you who have with the ear of your inner nature heard the Word of God, *you* are called to cry to others, "Come to Christ." You are called to this work by an *obligation*—the fact that you have received a very gracious privilege.

Somebody else brought the Gospel to *you*, for faith comes by hearing and you heard the report and, therefore, you live. Are you not under a

moral obligation to carry the Gospel to others that they, also, may hear it and be saved? Remember how many lived and died to bring you the Gospel! Had it not been for men who burned at the stake, there might have been no Gospel preaching in England! Had it not been for those near and dear to you who loved you, prayed for you and wrestled for your salvation, you might have been in the midst of Gospel Light and yet never have seen a ray of it! Are you not a debtor, from now on, to all around you? Ought you not to repay your debt by laboring for others as others labored for you?

Remember, dear Hearers, though it is no privilege to listen to *my voice*, yet it is a great privilege to hear the *Gospel*! Prophets and kings desired it, but they heard it not. The clear manifestation of the Glory of God in the Person of Christ was known to none in olden time as it is to you. The very least in the kingdom of Heaven enjoys privileges greater than any of those who lived under the legal dispensation. Are you not grateful for this? Will you deny to the next generation the Light of God which your fathers preserved for you? Above all, remember that your ears have been opened by an act of Sovereign Grace. You might have been left as thousands are, to hear and not to hear—to listen to a voice, but not to perceive its meaning.

But the Eternal Spirit, in the sovereignty of His Grace, has visited you and given you a new life! And with it, all the privileges of the children of God. Can you be indifferent to this? Will you not feel that now the precious Seed of God must be scattered by your hands in the broad furrows of the world, out of gratitude to another hand that first gave the Seed to you and made it take root in the garden of your heart? Here, then, is your obligation. Now, listen to your commission—"Let him that hears say, Come." A Believer preaching in the street was accosted by a gentleman who had been ordained to the ministry. Hands which belonged to arms decorated with lawn sleeves had been laid upon this gentleman's consecrated head and he was, thereby, made into an authorized minister. A wonderful thing this!

How is it that those of us who were never the subjects of this solemn imposition manage to win souls for Christ? However, this man preaching the Gospel in the street was stopped and asked by this successor of the Apostles what right he had to preach. And he was not slow to give an answer. The preacher quoted this text—"Let him that hears say, Come." "I have heard the Gospel in my own soul," he said, "and that is my permission to go and preach it. And I shall not be stopped by you." You who preach the Gospel in the streets are often called lay preachers, but, indeed, you are as much God's clergy as any others! The Apostle Peter distinctly calls the whole Church, or, if you please, the mere laity, God's heritage or, in the Greek, God's *clerks* in that memorable verse addressed to ministers which warns them against being "lords over God's clergy."

All of you who believe in Jesus are God's clergy and are authorized to speak the Word of God in some form or other. Yes, the women have their places. Even though they are forbidden to preach in the public assembly, there are times when they may address their own sex and others, much to the Glory of God. Let them speak without fear, as often as God gives them opportunity, in their own modest, affectionate way. Let them tell of Jesus

and His love. Somehow or other you are all to say, "Come," whether you are men or women, ignorant or learned! And here is your permit for doing it—"Let him that hears say, Come."

But this verse is more than a permission, it is a *commission!* It means that the hearing man *ought* to speak and this he should do personally. The text does not say, "Let them that hear say, Come," for what is everybody's business is nobody's business. No, it says, "Let *him* that hears say, Come"—that is to say—each man who knows the Gospel in his heart is bound to say, "Come." When is he bound to say it? Why, now, at once! Let him that hears say, "Come," upon the first opportunity that presents itself! And when is he to stop saying it? Never at all! Let him that hears still say, "Come." Let him begin to say it as soon as he has heard it! Let him keep on saying it as long as He lives!—

***"His only righteousness I show,
His saving truth proclaim.
'Tis all my business here below
To cry, 'Behold the Lamb!
Happy, if with my latest breath
I may but gasp His name.
Preach Him to all, and cry in death,
'Behold, behold the Lamb!'"***

This is your commission. Mind that you attend to it. O you commissioned officers of Christ, see that you sound aloud your Master's Word!

Next, dear Brethren, attend to this ministry, not only because you are under obligation to do it and commissioned to do it, but because you are *qualified* to do it. "How?" you ask. Why, your qualification is this—that you have heard! A man can tell what he has heard. It has been thought by some that the qualification for preaching the Gospel is great power of thought. Press your fingers upon your brow and fetch the doctrine out! Think on as hard as you can till you have brewed a new Gospel! Produce a new Gospel every six weeks! Yes, but that is not so, otherwise preachers would be few, indeed! If you need a servant to answer the door for you who is never to come in and tell you who calls, but who is to answer the door according to her own sense and wit, you will have to pick a long while before you find such a person!

But if all you need is one who will tell you what is said and then go and say to the person at the door what you tell her, you can find such a maid pretty soon. This last is the true idea of a preacher—he is to say what God says to him and he must not go any further. If it is so said in the Word of God let him repeat it. This makes preaching a humbler work than some think it is and a more Divine power by far! We do not believe in the cry, "Every man his own savior." No, we speak of the good old way which is the *only* way! Yes, Brothers and Sisters, you are qualified to say, "Come," to others because you have heard a voice saying, "Come," in your own soul!

The text says not, "Let him that has *heard*," but, "him that *hears*"—that is to say, let the man who is still hearing the voice of God speak. Hear and then tell what you hear! I have seen pictures of a pope which represent him with a dove sitting upon his shoulder—insinuating that he receives Divine intimations. I am afraid that the bird is a raven in the case of these so-called heads of the church—but in the case of humble Believers, the

Spirit is present revealing Christ to the heart and that which is revealed is to be spoken by us. There is your qualification! You have proven the Truth of God in your own soul and so can speak *experimentally*! You have found Christ! You have drunk the Living Water and you can say, "Come."

I needed a drink of water, one day, in a thirsty place in Italy. And by the coachman's help I asked at a house for water. The owner of the house was busy and did not come to show me where the water could be found, but he sent a girl with me. She was very little, but she was quite big enough, for she led the way to a well and I was soon refreshed. She had not to *make* a well, but only to *point it out* and, therefore, her youth was no disadvantage. We have not to *invent* salvation, but to *tell* of it and, therefore, you who are but babes in Grace can perform the work! You have heard the voice of Jesus say, "Stoop down and drink, and live"—go forth and echo that voice till thousands quench their thirst! Your message is a very simple one—"Let him that hears say" _____ —a long and difficult sentence in Latin?

No! Is he to repeat a very complicated piece of Miltonic blank verse? No! "Let him that hears say, *Come*." "I can say that," says somebody. Mind you do, Brother. Just go and tell people that Jesus died. Tell them that, "whoever believes in Him is not condemned." Do not be too long over it, it is only one word, you know—"Let him that hears say, *Come*." Be very earnest about it. There are many ways of saying it—mind you say it in the best possible manner. And then, as the message is very short, repeat it often—

***"Tell me the story often,
For I forget it soon."***

Tell it over and over again, since it is all in one word, "Come." Mind you do not add anything else to it. Do not tell them to bring a price! Do not tell them to prepare themselves and to *do* this or that—just say, "Come, come, come away from yourselves! Come away from your sins! Come away from your righteousness! Come to Jesus! Come to Jesus, Sinner, come!"

It is a very short message. And so I conclude by saying, take care to remember that yours is a two-fold ministry and so when you have said, "Come," to the sinner, mind you back it all up with prayer! Go home and say, "Lord, come to these poor sinners by Your Grace. Lord, come, I pray You, come, that this poor work of mine may be ended, because a greater work shall be accomplished by Your coming." Let your heart cry to your Lord, "Come!" for then you will not be engrossed with the world. No man will be anxious for Christ to come while he has everything he wants here below and is quite satisfied with it. The miser and the sensualist do not want the Lord to come—they are so glued to this world that they dread *anything* that might change their relation to it. You must let loose of the world or you cannot sincerely say to Jesus, "Come," and that is the very spirit of an earnest worker. You must say, "Come," because you are ready to welcome Christ!

That is the way in which to preach the Gospel. I have no right to preach a sermon which I should be ashamed for Christ to hear. You and I ought to live so that if our Lord were to come we should not be afraid, but should just go on doing what we have in hand. We ought to live so that if

it were a part of the program that Christ would come at 12 o'clock, we should finish life beautifully at that very hour and look at the great Judge and rejoice to appear before Him! This is the spirit in which to go on saying, "Come," to sinners! Hear the wheels of your Master's chariot behind you? Then you will not be dull in preaching the Gospel! Feel that men will soon have to stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ—then you will not be cold in your delivery!

Expect that very soon you, too, must give your account before the Great White Throne and even think you see it—and see yourself and your hearers standing before it—*then* will you preach as though you never might preach again! You will preach as a dying man to dying men and so the, "Come," of prayer will help you when you deliver the, "Come," of invitation and you will be enabled to make full proof of your ministry! I must add how pleased I was when I was seeing applicants who wished to join the Church, to see that God is blessing many of you in the conversion of souls. One or two of the number were converted under my ministry out of some 15 or 16, but the most of them were under your ministries—one and another of my beloved members had brought others to Jesus!

I noticed four little rooms in and about Bermondsey to each of which God had been pleased to give conversions through Prayer Meetings, or the preaching of certain younger Brothers. I am right glad of that and I wish we had hundreds of such room and cottage meetings. This big city of London will never be evangelized by our great assemblies. If all the chapels were filled, which they are not, and if all the Churches were filled, which they certainly are not, then a large proportion of the people could not get in. But, alas, they do not come to worship—they will not come! I do not think they understand some of my fellow ministers, for they talk too grandly—some ministers have not learned to talk English—they speak a kind of French-Latin English.

It is not the Saxon English which the people know and as they do not understand what is preached, they do not care to come. The way to get at the masses is to reach them by twos and threes—I am sure of it! Get them into your houses, talk about Jesus Christ in your parlors, in your kitchens, in your bed-chambers, in the corners of the streets, anywhere! I am so glad that very many of you do so—go on and prosper! It will not matter whether I live or die if you all become ministers. Would God that all the Lord's servants were Prophets. May every one of you live to win souls. "Let him that hears say, Come." God help you to do it, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

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THE OFT-REPEATED INVITATION NO. 2685

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JULY 29, 1900.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JULY 10, 1881.

*“And let him who thirsts come. And whoever will, let
him take the water of life freely.”
Revelation 22:17.*

Our morning's discourse [Sermon #1608, Volume 27—THE DOUBLE “COME”—read/download the entire sermon free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>] was upon the first part of this verse—“The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears, say, Come.” I tried to show that everyone who has truly heard the Gospel call is bound to go forth and, in his turn, cry to others, “Come to Jesus.” But if every hearer of the Gospel is to say, “Come,” certainly every *preacher* of it is especially called to repeat the invitation again and again. I seemed, this morning, to have it laid upon my own heart that the very next time I entered the pulpit, I must take care to make this call the burden of my discourse, as I ask you, dear Friends, also to make it the burden of yours. “Let him that hears say, Come.” But let him that preaches say it with a more distinct emphasis than anyone else! So, tonight, I daresay that my message will appear to some of you to be monotonous, for I shall strike the same note again and again, and again, and bring out from it only this one sound, “Come, Come, Come!” Yet let me tell you that if God shall bless that invitation, and sinners do come to Christ, there will be more music evoked from this note than if my sermon had been as brilliant as the highest human eloquence could make it, for angels in Heaven and God, Himself, will rejoice if sinners are brought to the Savior!

People used to say of George Whitefield—who commonly finished up his discourse by crying, “Come to Jesus,” with his hands uplifted and his eyes streaming with tears—that when he was hard up for an idea, he always cried, “O Sinners, come to Jesus!” God be praised if all preachers imitate him in that respect when they are hard up for an idea, for I know of no idea that could possibly equal in value an earnest, simple, loving Gospel invitation! How that man of God would stand on Kennington Common or Moorfields and cry, in trumpet tones, “Come, O come! Why will you not come? Come now to Jesus!” The best of it is that his cries were not in vain, for the people did come—they came by hundreds and thousands unto Him who said, “All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me; and him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.”

I. In handling my text, I am going to make a few remarks, and this shall be the first of them. I call upon every unconverted person here present who hears the message of my text, to notice THE GREAT SOLEMNITY OF THE INVITATION. "Let him who thirsts come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

To my mind, the solemnity of this invitation lies partly in the fact that *it is placed at the very end of the Bible* and placed there because it is the sum and substance—the aim and objective of the whole Bible. It is like the point of the arrow and all the rest of the Bible is like the shaft and the feathers on either side of it. We may say of the Scriptures what John said of his Gospel, "These are written"—all these books that are gathered together into one grand library called the Bible—"these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. And that believing you might have life through His name." So far as you are concerned, this blessed Book has missed its purpose unless you have been led by it to come to Christ!

It is all in vain that you have a Bible, or read your Bible, unless you really "take the water of life" of which it speaks. It is worse than vain, for if it is not a savor of life unto life to you, it shall be a savor of death unto death! Therefore it seems to me that this is a very solemn invitation because all the books of the Bible do, in effect, cry to sinners, "Come to Jesus." All the Prophets of the Bible, all the Apostles of the Bible, all the threats of the Bible, all the promises of the Bible gather themselves up and focus themselves into this one burning ray, "Come to Jesus! Come, and take the water of life freely." Oh, that it might burn its way right into your heart! It is the very end of the Bible, then—the end of the Bible in two senses—its end and its objective that you should believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The solemnity of my text lies also in another thing, for *it might have been something very different*. It says, "You thirsty ones, come and drink the water of life." But shall I tell you what it *might* have said? Let me read to you the 11th verse of this chapter. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still." I am devoutly thankful that I have not to come to this railing and to say to you, "My unconverted Hearers, you may listen to me if you like, but it will be of no use. You are unconverted and so you always must be! You are unjust and you always must be unjust. You are filthy and you always must be filthy!" God might have sent me with that heavy message of woe, but it is a sweetly solemn thought to my heart that, instead of doing so, He has bid me say, "You unjust, come to the Just One and be made just by Him. You filthy, come to the Water of Life and wash and be clean."

God is not yet dealing with you according to His infinite Justice—it is *mercy* that rules this hour! Mercy is flowing through this place like a life-giving river—will you not drink and live? No axe is yet uplifted to smite the sinner—it is still bound up in the rods that Mercy has tied around it and there is no order to unfasten the cords. Love, Grace, Welcome—these are the sort of words we can still use—and I pray God that you may be glad that it is so and give most earnest heed to these words lest you should have to listen to a message of quite another character. Look, for

instance, at the 15th verse—“Outside are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.” Did I hear you say, “We are not dogs, nor sorcerers,” and so on? Perhaps you are not, yet you may be loving and practicing a lie—and you are doing so if you are trusting in your own righteousness and cherishing the notion that you do not need a Savior!

If you who are unconverted do not need a Savior, then the Gospel is a monstrous folly and the death of Christ upon the Cross was a superfluity, not to be praised, but to be condemned! O Sirs, do not love or practice that lie, but NOW, while Christ is freely preached to you, come, I pray you, and listen to His wooing words! Take Him now and have Him forever!

Suppose that, instead of my having to say to you, “Come to Jesus,” you heard a voice, loud as the thunder when the very heavens seem to crack and rend, shouting to you, “*Come to judgment.*” Suppose you heard the trumpet of the archangel announcing that Christ had come from Heaven with His mighty angels, “in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”? You *will* hear it one day—you may hear it within the hour! You must hear it before long—and this will be the chief note of it—

“Come to judgment!”

“Come to judgment, come away!”

Would to God that you would listen, now, to the voice that cries, “Come to mercy! Come and find mercy now, that you need not fear the great Day of Judgment, come when it may.”

That, then, is my first remark—that the invitation of the text has a very solemn setting.

II. Now, secondly, I want you to notice, in the invitation before us, THE SUITABILITY OF ITS PROVISIONS. “Let him who thirsts come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

That is just what you need—*your greatest need is life*. Merely to breathe, eat and drink is not, according to God’s notion, living. That is a mere animal kind of life and there is a far better and higher life than anything that men know about until God’s Grace quickens them and makes them truly live. Life is needed by every unconverted man and woman. Life—not merely an outward change of life, or a reformation—but the reception of a *new life* by regeneration, as our Lord said to Nicodemus, “You must be born again.” There are some things that you may be or may not be, but this is a *must be*—“You must be born again.”

Our text speaks of “the water of life” which men are bid to take and which God most freely gives. It is called “the water of life” because it *quenches thirst*. A man may scarcely know what thirst of soul really is even when he has begun to experience it. He has a sense of unrest and a desire for something that he does not possess. He does not know what that something is, but he knows that something is lacking—that is one indication of thirst of soul. And when the Spirit of God comes and deals with a man or woman, he or she gets a still more intense sense of uneasiness and unhappiness—and the pangs of desire are still more acute within.

Thirst is a very strong form of desire. Hunger may be somewhat appeased by various expedients, but I have been told that the pangs of thirst are terrible in the extreme. When it really burns a man, it is like a fierce fire raging within him. So, when a soul needs, desires, longs and pines for this unknown gift, it does not know what it really does need, but its one need is a Savior. It needs renewal, it needs forgiveness, it needs life and God, here, in our text, presents the blessing to mankind under the figure of, “the water of life,” which removes the thirst of the soul, refreshes the drooping spirit and cleanses the whole life. Oh, that men would but take it—and take it at once!

My dear Hearer, let me assure you that, *in the Gospel, there is exactly what you require*. Have you been trying to make yourself better and yet you are conscious that you are no better? The Gospel, received by faith, will make you better. Are you unhappy? Do you long to find something that will give you peace? The Gospel would give you peace if you would only believe it! You say that you want to get away from your old sinful self and to be made anew. Well, in the Gospel, that great work is provided for and many here can testify that, by its means, they have been made new creatures in Christ Jesus. There is a black past in your history that you would gladly forget—and in the Gospel there is revealed the Fountain that can wash out all its stains. Perhaps some of you are dreading the dangerous future—in the Gospel there is ample protection for all that lies before you. Possibly, to some of you, the present is a time of great darkness—in the Gospel there is light for the present—yes, joy even for this moment in which you seem to be driven almost to despair! When I preach about the water of life, so freely given by God, I mean just this—that all you need between here and Heaven, Christ is ready to give you! All that your soul can possibly require to enable you to stand in the Presence of God without fear and to dwell in the bosom of God forever, made perfectly like to God by His Grace—all that is in the Gospel for you! And we are commanded to invite you to partake of it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord!

I think the thought of the suitability of the provision of the Gospel for me is one that is worth dwelling upon. I have always felt, since I believed the Gospel, that it was made on purpose for me. If it does not suit any other man, it exactly fits me. And if you try it, my Hearer, you will find that it exactly fits you, also! The Lord knows your measure and He has made it just the right size and shape for you—there is not a particle of your being which the Gospel cannot cover. There is not a wish in your heart, which ought to be there, that the Gospel will not gratify! If you accept it, it will fill you to the brim with happiness and you shall overflow with exceeding joy of heart in the treasure which Christ has brought to you!

III. But I must hasten on to notice, in the third place, THE FREENESS OF THIS GIFT, because our text says, “Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

The Gospel is priceless in value, but it is to be had “without money and without price.” The salvation of God can never be purchased. I am amazed that anyone should ever cherish the idea of a man buying a

place for himself in Heaven. Why, the very streets are paved with exceedingly rich and rare gold, and a rich man's whole fortune would not buy a single paving stone in those golden streets! There is nothing that you can ever bring to God as the purchase-money for salvation! He is infinitely rich—what does He want of yours? If you are righteous, what do you want from Him? The impossibility of salvation by human merit or good works ought to be clear to every thinking man. If we do all that God bids us do, we are doing no more than we ought to do—and even then we are unprofitable servants!

You may offer whatever terms you please, but God will never sell Christ. Judas did that, but the Father never will. He gives Him freely to all who are willing to have Him, but He will never sell Him. He will never barter and haggle with you concerning Him—so much alms and so much repentance, and then you shall have Christ? No, Sirs, I tell you again that my Lord will never degrade His well-beloved Son by bargaining with you about Him! Will you have Him for nothing? I hear people say, sometimes, that certain things cannot be had “for love or money.” Well, God will not give Christ for money, but He will give Him out of pure love to you! If you will have Him freely and for nothing, the great transaction is done—He is yours and you have Him! But if you bring anything to pay for Him, you cannot have Him. If all the stars in the sky were worlds of gold and you could carry them all in your belt and then take them out and throw all those starry treasures down upon the floor of Heaven as the price of a single gleam of Divine Love, you could not buy it!

Solomon said, “If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly despised.” And if a man could give the whole universe, he could not purchase the love of God! No—yet you can have Christ for nothing—now, at once, just where you are if you will take him on God's terms! Will you have Him? Oh, that we would as freely *take* as God freely gives! And why, since God is willing to give, should I be unwilling to receive? O my Heart, my Heart, my Heart, why are you unwilling to receive—unwilling to be saved—unwilling to be pardoned—unwilling to have Christ for nothing? Fool that you are, I might truly say this of myself if I were unwilling to accept God's free gift! If I had some gold to give away tonight, I would not need to say much to induce you to have it. The other day I saw a diamond which was said to be worth a hundred thousand pounds—and if I had it here and said, “Dear Hearer, you may have it, and have it for nothing,” the only conceivable reason why any of you would hesitate to take it would be because you might not believe me. Otherwise, you would all cry out at once, “Thank you, Sir! Pass it over here! Have you anymore diamonds to dispose of on the same terms?”

Everybody would be willing to accept it for nothing. But when we preach Christ and His Gospel, then men want to *buy* the priceless treasure—they want to *feel* something, or to *be* something, or to *do* something, or else they will not have Him! I have no warrant to offer Christ to any man in exchange for the payment of even a penny, but I do declare that He is to be given freely, according to my text, “Let him who thirsts come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

IV. Now I pass on to make a further remark concerning THE WONDERFUL SIMPLICITY OF THE WAY OF SALVATION. Two words describe it here. “Let him who thirsts come. And whoever will, let him take.”

Surely everybody understands those two words. Take the first—“Come.” If a physician should advertise that every person who was sick might come to him, you would know what that meant. If you were sick, you would soon be at his door if you could get there. And you would put yourself into his hands if you believed him to be able to cure you. Treat the Lord Jesus Christ as you would treat an eminent physician, that is, go to Him. “Where is He?” you ask. “I know how to go to an earthly physician, I either walk or ride to his house or consulting room.” Well, you can stand still and yet come to Christ because we reach Him by *mental* traveling, not *bodily* traveling. *Think* of Christ—that is the way to come to Him. Think much of Christ—that is still further on the way to Him. Believe Him, believe *in* Him, believe *on* Him—that is, *trust* Him, and all is done. As soon as you have trusted Christ, you are a saved man, or woman, or child. That very trust of yours is an evidence that your heart is changed—you would never have trusted the Son of God with your soul if salvation had not already come to your house! Now, that is coming to Christ—just putting yourself into His hands.

The other word is quite as simple—“Take.” Everybody knows what it is to take something. To take water, for instance, the text says, “Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Well, what does a man do when he takes water? Perhaps he has a hand that trembles so much that he can hardly hold the glass or cup that contains the water, yet he takes it. Anybody can take water. There is no need to send a child to school to teach him how to take it. He puts it to his mouth and it flows down. That is all—and that is exactly how, in a *spiritual* sense, we take the water of life, and take Christ, Himself. There is another passage, you know, which says, “The word is near you, even in your mouth,” and, as I have often told you, when anything is in your mouth and you want to keep it, the proper thing to do with it is to swallow it, that is all. I do not know how to make the process of receiving Christ more simple than that. You smile, dear Friends, but the very essence of the Gospel lies in receiving Christ like that—it is taking into yourself what God freely gives to you—that is all.

“Come...take.” “Come...take.” “Come...take”—not run, fly, leap, bring—no, but, “come...take.” Oh, that you could all see how simple is this wondrous plan of salvation! The other day there passed away one who had, as I judge, been a Believer for years, but it had always been a question with her friends whether she was a Believer or not. And she said to my brother, when upon her death-bed, “The simplicity of the Gospel has been a stumbling-block to me all my life, but now that I am about to die, instead of being a stumbling-block, it is my delight, for what would I do, *now*, without the simple Gospel, ‘Believe and live?’” She was a very good Churchwoman, one of the best I ever knew. She always observed all fast days and feast days and did all manner of good things. She never seemed to do anything wrong, but always to do what was right. Yet those are just

the people who find it difficult to yield to Christ, because of their self-righteousness.

But whoever you may be, you will have to come down to God's terms if you wish to be saved! There is only one door to Heaven and but one way for the worst and for the best. You must bow down and accept Jesus as the sinners' Savior, or else you cannot have Him at all! God's terms are, "Come...take." So, do not try any other plan. Do not say, "Well, I will bring something." Do not bring anything! It is not what you *bring* to Christ, but what you *take of* Christ that will save you! Therefore hear and heed the message of the text. God make you to hear it in your very soul! It is the true Gospel message—"Come...take."

V. My fifth remark is this, NOTICE THE BREADTH OF THE GOSPEL INVITATION. "Let him who thirsts come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

I will suppose that I am addressing a person who is very anxious about his soul—one who has been for weeks or perhaps for months seeking salvation, but who has not found it. I take him by the hand and I say, "My dear Friend, you are the very individual to whom my text refers. You know that the first part applies to you—'Let him who thirsts come.' You have an earnest desire to be saved, you have that thirst of which the text speaks, so come and take the water of life freely."

Yet even while I am speaking, I can see another Brother and I know that he is groaning and saying, "Oh, I wish I had that thirst! I wish I had that desire, but I have not any. I do not feel anything! All that I feel is that I wish I did feel, but I do not feel at all." Come along, my Friend, you are another of the very men that I am sent to seek, for the second part of the text says, "Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The first net has somewhat wide meshes, so some little fish slip through it, but the second one has very small meshes. I wish it would catch the very smallest fishes—the sprats or the whitebait—I mean those persons who have the least possible desire to be saved. "Whoever will." "Whoever will." "Oh, I am willing enough," says one, "but perhaps, after all, I am not one of those persons who are invited!" Oh, but it says, "Whoever will." I am very fond of that word, "whoever." I think that the translators have left, "whoever," out in some places—may the Lord forgive them and teach them better! But we shall always keep it in even if they leave it out—and I am sure it ought to be here—"whoever will." It is a word that the Holy Spirit has blessed to thousands of souls and He has not blessed a lie or a blunder, so I am quite sure that it is "whoever will!" We will stick to that, we must have that glorious Word of God—"whoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

"Oh, but he is a very poor man!" What does that matter? "Whoever will." "But he is a very ignorant man, he does not even know his letters!" What has that to do with the text? "Whoever will." "Ah, but he has been a very bad man!" Well, what about that? It is, "whoever will." Does he will to trust Christ? Is he willing to take the water of life? Then, "let him take the water of life freely." "Oh, but," says one, "he is altogether an out-of-the-way sinner! You do not know how shamefully he has behaved." No,

and I do not want to know! But I do know that if he will but take the water of life, he may do so, for the text says, “*whoever will.*”

There is no limit to the mercy of God to all who trust His dear Son! And there is no limit to you but that which your own will imposes. If you *nil* it, that is, make nothing of it, then it shall be *nil*, that is, nothing, to you. But if you *will* it, it is God’s will that you should have it! When your will is brought to accept the Savior, then, depend upon it, it is God’s will that you should have Him! “Whoever will.” “Whoever.” I cannot conceive, in any language, a wider sweep of word than that, so come along, poor troubled Sinner, come to Jesus Christ! Accept Him and you shall be saved here and now!

VI. Now I close with the last remark, which concerns THE EARNESTNESS OF THIS CALL ON GOD’S PART—“Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

Who is the Person that invites? Listen. First, it is *the Holy Spirit*—gentle, loving, tender, gracious, mysterious, adorable, Divine. He says, “Come.” The Spirit that brooded over the chaos in the first creation and brought forth order, says, “Come, and be made new in Christ Jesus.” Who is it, next, that says, “Come”? “*The bride*”—that is, the entire Church of God. All the people of God cry to you, “Come!” Those on earth and those in Heaven, too—if you could hear them speak out of the excellent Glory, you would know that the very joy they have in Christ moves them to call you to join them! They are leaning over the battlements of Heaven and beckoning you to Christ. The bride, that is, the whole Church in Heaven and on earth, says, “Come, come!”

And then, next, *everyone who hears the Gospel* is bid to say to you, “Come.” Because the Lord knew how hard you would be to convince, He has told everybody who hears the Gospel to try and bring you—“Let Him that hears say, Come.” If you were to receive an invitation to a feast, it is possible that you would go the first time you were asked. But if you had a dozen letters inviting you, tomorrow morning you would say, “Dear me, this is very remarkable! I have 12 letters, from 12 different people, all inviting me to this banquet.” Suppose, when you went out of your door in the morning, there was a servant who stood there, and said, “Sir, I have come to invite you to the banquet.” “Why, dear me!” you would say, “I have already been invited a dozen times.” During the day, there comes a telegraph inviting you to this same banquet—perhaps you do not think much of that, but when you get home, your wife says, “Dear, I want to invite you to go to that banquet.” You smile and possibly you even put her off, but there comes in a dear child of yours, and he says, “Father, I have been to that gentleman’s house to a banquet and he has asked me to give you an invitation, and I do so want you to go to it.” You could hardly refuse that! And if, every time you met 50 or a hundred people, they all invited you to go, you would, at last, say, “Well, I really must go, for it seems such a strange thing that everybody is inviting me.”

That is just the case with some of you here. We mean never to let you have any rest till you come to Christ! I have heard that there are some friends about this Tabernacle who “bother” people concerning their souls—and I hope they will keep on “bothering” them! They will not let

them come and go out of this building without having an earnest word with them—I hope it will always be so. We have some Brothers and Sisters here who are sharpshooters—they are just now lying low in the rifle-pit, taking aim at some of you—and they will shoot at you before you get away tonight! I hope they will hit you, too, because whoever hears the Gospel is bid to say to others, “Come.” You will get girdled round with a ring of invitations, for God means to bless you and, therefore, if you escape one, He will not let you escape another!

Listen further. *The Lord Jesus Christ Himself says*, “Come.” On one occasion, on the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, “If any man thirsts, let him come unto Me, and drink.” And another day our blessed Master said, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” So, here is Jesus calling, and the Holy Spirit calling, and His people calling—even the Prophet Isaiah is still calling! Dear good man, he has been in Heaven for thousands of years, yet at this moment he cries out of the holy Book, “Ho, everyone that thirsts, come you to the waters, and he that has no money; come you, buy, and eat; yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” Why, it is like the old ages, the ancient centuries come back again to call to you to come to Christ! I hear that call from Heaven. I hear Christ calling from the Throne of God. I hear the Spirit calling. I hear the bride calling. I am calling as one of those who have heard the Gospel for myself. Listen, then, oh, listen! Was there ever such a chorus of united invitations? Did ever so many hearts combine before about any one thing? Will you not come? Will you not come? Why will you die? Why will you die when the water of life flows at your feet?—

“Stoop down and drink, and live!”

May God lead you so to do, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: ISAIAH 1:1-20.

This is a chapter which, I think, teaches an important lesson to those of us who desire the salvation of men, for it shows us how God sets about that work. He begins by exhibiting the sinner’s sin to him before He proclaims mercy to him—and if we want to be the means of doing good to men, it will not be by merely crying to them, “Believe, believe, believe”—there must be a laying of the axe at the root of the tree of self-righteousness and a cutting away of all trust in self. A man must realize his danger before he will desire to escape from it and it is a mistaken kindness which refuses to set before him the peril in which he is. God, who is infinitely tender and inconceivably merciful, shows us, in this chapter, how to go to work with sinners.

Verses 1, 2. *The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD has spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me.* “If they were simply My subjects, I could bear their rebellion better than I can, now, for they are my children. I have

nourished them and brought them up and, after long and persevering kindness towards them, I might have expected some affection from them in return, but, ‘they have rebelled against Me.’”

3. *The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel does not know, My people do not consider.* See how the Lord still acknowledges the children of Israel as His people, though He contrasts their conduct with the behavior of the ox and the ass. So we see that, however far God’s people may have gone into sin, they are still His people and He does not deny their relationship to Him. “Israel does not know, My people do not consider.”

4. *Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters.* What a terrible picture! A nation burdened with iniquity, as full of sin as their fathers were, and their offspring growing up like themselves. By hereditary transmission they have received a predisposition to evil that cannot be taken out of the blood except by Divine power!

4. *They have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.* What a description this is of the state of the unregenerate—even of God’s elect among them who are still crushed under the ruins of the Fall! Perhaps, as I am reading this chapter, some poor soul here is saying, “That just describes me.” Well, let it describe you, but lament, mourn and humiliate yourself before the Most High as you realize what is your sad condition! You have acted worse towards God than an ass does to its master. You have behaved shamefully towards Him and thus you have provoked Him to anger. Do not think lightly of your sin, but let it weigh heavily upon your spirit, as you are “laden with iniquity,” God grant that it may be a heavy burden to you! The Lord next goes on to exhibit the sin of the people in the light of His chastisement. When a child sins and does wrong, a wise parent uses correction to see whether he cannot overcome the evil tendencies, but alas, there is no correction that will ever get sin out of the sinner! See what God did with these people, and what came of it.

5, 6. *Why should you be stricken anymore? You will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.* “You are already in this terrible plight and your sufferings are the direct result of your sins.”

7, 8. *Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.* Now, to translate all this into plain English, I have known men who have been chastened for their sins and by their sins. God has chastised them and they have been severely chastised—but no obedience, no repentance has followed upon the chastisement. Men have been brought, by their sin, from wealth to poverty, from competence to actual need. Have we not seen them, by drunkenness, brought to rags, and by vice brought to rotteness? Have we not seen men brought to the very gates of Hell by their

iniquities, yet still they have clung to those iniquities? They have begun to drink the cup of their own damnation and, even when they realized what they were doing, they have still clutched the burning chalice in their hands and have willingly drained it to the last dregs! Oh, it is horrible, it is terrible, to see at what a cost men will ruin their own souls! They go to Hell as if they were at a steeplechase—no hedge is too high and no brook too wide for them—and they ride to destruction at a desperate pace. If we who are God’s people were half as earnest in serving Him as the ungodly are in their efforts to be lost, what great service we should render to Him! God reminded these people of all that He had done to them by way of chastening—yet no good had come of it.

9. *Except the LORD of Hosts had left us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like Gomorrah.* I am afraid that this verse applies to London at the present time. To what an awful extent has the sin of the people gone—and among those who commit it are many of the great ones of the earth. It is a crying iniquity which may well make God angry. I marvel not that there are alarms, and all sorts of frightful rumors in the city which has become like Sodom and Gomorrah of old.

10. *Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the Law of our God, you people of Gomorrah.* Isaiah next goes on still further to expose the sin of the people and, anticipating that they would say that they had been very religious, that they had attended the means of Grace, that they had been observant of the outward ritual of God’s sanctuary, he admits the truth of it all—and then shows what is the real value of it.

11, 12. *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? says the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When you come to appear before Me, who has required this at your hand, to tread My courts? Have not some of you at times felt as if the Lord had said to you, “What right have you to be among My people?”* For years you have been worshipping professedly, but not sincerely. It is a wonder that the seat you sit on bears you up when your worship has been all hypocrisy—a delusion—you have only given to God the external husk of devotion! The kernel of true heart-worship has never been there at all.

13, 14. *Bring no more vain oblation; incense is an abomination unto Me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot endure—away with them; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates: they are a trouble unto Me; I am weary to bear them.* When God is wearied by a man’s best things, what must His feelings be concerning the man’s worst things?

15. *And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide My eyes from you: yes, when you make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.* When even a man’s prayers become an abomination in the sight of God, what must the man, himself, be? As long as men live in sin and love it, God will not hear their supplications. Whether their hands are stained with blood, or whatever other sin it is of which they are guilty—until they forsake the evil, God will not answer their prayers. The

Lord, having thus set before the people their sin and the aggravation of that sin in that they had continued in it after severe chastisement, and the further aggravation of it in that, all the while, they had professed to be true and faithful servants of Jehovah, though they had been in constant rebellion against Him, He yet goes on to speak to them in this gracious fashion—

16, 17. *Wash you, make yourself clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.* That is to say, “Bring forth fruits meet for repentance, so that it may be seen that your heart is really changed and that you desire better things, and things more pleasing in My sight.” Then listen further to this marvelous message—

18. *Come now, and let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.* There is not as much music to a poor convinced sinner’s ears in a whole oratorio of Handel as there is in this one verse of Scripture! But your ears must be attuned to this music before you can appreciate its blessed sweetness. He only knows the music of mercy who knows the misery of sin! I think that I must read this precious verse again—“Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet”—we will not dispute about them, they are all you think they are, and much worse—“though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

19. *If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land.* “You shall not any longer be ‘as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.’ You shall be no more desolate, but, ‘you shall eat the good of the land.’ I will take away from you My chastisement when I take away your sin. I will take care to feed you if you will but come back to Me. There shall be feasting, music and dancing, instead of starving, sighing and sorrow, if you will only return to your Father’s house. ‘If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land.’”

20. *But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it.* So the Lord has mercy in His right hand for those who will turn from their sin—but He has a sword in His left hand for those who will continue to live in their iniquities. God grant us Grace, now, to yield to the sweet reasoning of His love, and to turn from our sins, for His dear Son’s sake! Amen.

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**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, OCTOBER 16, 1859,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is thirsty come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”
Revelation 22:17.***

THE cry of the Christian religion is the simple word, “Come.” The Jewish law said, “Go and take heed unto your steps as to the path in which you shall walk. Go and break the commandments and you shall perish. Go and keep them and you shall live.” The law was a dispensation of the whip, which drove men before it. The Gospel is just of the opposite kind. It is the Shepherd’s dispensation. He goes before His sheep and He bids them follow Him, saying unto them, “Come.” The Law repels. The Gospel attracts. The law shows the distance between God and man. The Gospel bridges that distance and brings the sinner across that great fixed gulf which Moses could never bridge.

The fact is—as you will all have to learn, if you know anything of gracious experience—that from the first moment of your spiritual life until you are ushered into Glory, the cry of Christ to you will be, “Come, come unto Me.” He will always be ahead of you, bidding you follow Him as the soldier follows his leader. He will always go before you to pave your way and to prepare your path and He will bid you come after him all through life. And in the solemn hour of death, when you shall lie panting upon your bed, His sweet words with which He shall usher you into the heavenly world shall be—“Come, come unto Me. Stretch your wings and fly straight to this world of joy where I am dwelling. Come and be with Me where I am.”

No, further than this, this is not only Christ’s cry to you. But if you are a Believer, this is your cry to Christ—“Come! Come!” You will be longing for His second advent. You will be saying, “Come quickly, even so come, Lord Jesus.” And you will be always panting for nearer and closer communion with Him. As His voice to you is “Come,” even so will be your prayer to Him, “Come, Lord and abide in my house. Come and consecrate me more fully to Your service. Come and without a rival reign, come, occupy alone the throne of my heart.”

“Come,” then, is the very motto of the Gospel. I hope to expand that word, this morning, to beat out the golden grain into gold leaf and may God the Holy Spirit speak this day with His minister and may some who have never come to Jesus before, now come to Him for the first time. Let

us go at once to our text—"Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Now, there are four things very plain from our text, namely, that first, there is a "water of life." That secondly, the invitation is very wide—"Whoever will." That thirdly, the path is clear, for it says, "Whoever will, let him come." And then again, that, fourthly, the only rule that is prescribed is—let him take it "freely." That is the only price demanded and the only condition, which indeed is not a condition, but a deathblow to all conditions. "Let him come and take the water of life freely."

I. First, then, remember I am about to preach a very simple sermon this morning, dealing with simple souls. I am longing to see sinners brought to Christ. My heart yearns after the multitude of men who see no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. God has saved many in this place. May He be pleased this morning to bring some wanderer to the Father's house, through the merit of the Son's Cross by the Spirit's influence. Well, then, THERE IS A "WATER OF LIFE." Man is utterly ruined and undone. He is lost in a wild waste wilderness. The skin bottle of his righteousness is all dried up and there is not so much as a drop of water in it. The heavens refuse him rain and the earth can yield him no moisture.

Must he perish? He looks aloft, beneath, around and he discovers no means of escape. Must he die? Must thirst devour him? Must he fall upon the desert and leave his bones to bleach under the hot sun? No. For the text declares there is a fountain of life. Ordained in old eternity by God in solemn Covenant, this fountain, this Divine well, takes its spring from the deep foundations of God's decrees. It gushes up from the depth which couches beneath. It comes from that place which the eagle's eye has not seen and which the lion's whelp has not passed over. The deep foundations of Godly government, the depth of His own essential goodness and of His Divine nature—these are the mysterious springs from which gush forth that fountain of the "water of life" which shall do good to a man.

The Son has dug this well and bored through massive rocks which prevented this living water from springing upward. Using His Cross as the grand instrument He has pierced through rocks, He has Himself descended to the lowest depth and He has broken a passage by which the love and Grace of God, the living water which can save the soul, may well up and overflow to quench the thirst of dying men. The Son has bid this fountain freely flow, has removed the stone which laid upon the mouth thereof and now, having ascended upon high, He stands there to see that the fountain shall never stop its life-giving course, that its floods shall never be dry, that its depths shall never be exhausted. This sacred fountain, established according to God's good will and pleasure in the Covenant, opened by Christ when He died upon the Cross, flows this day to give life and health and joy and peace to poor sinners dead in sin and ruined by the Fall. There is a "water of life."

Let us pause awhile and look at its floods as they come gushing upwards, overflowing on every side and assuaging men's thirst. Let us look with joyous eye. It is called the "water of life," and richly does it deserve its

name. God's favor is life and in His presence there is pleasure forever more. This water is God's favor and consequently life. By this water of life is intended God's Free Grace, God's love for men, so, that if you come and drink, you shall find this to be life, indeed, to your soul. In drinking of God's Grace you inherit God's love, you are reconciled to God, God stands in a fatherly relation to you—He loves you and His great infinite heart yearns towards you.

Again—it is living water not simply because it is love and that is life, but it saves from impending death. The sinner knows that he must die because he is filthy. He has committed sins so tremendous that God must punish him. God must cease to be just if He does not punish the sins of man. Man, when conscious that he has been very guilty, stands shivering in the presence of his Maker, feeling in his soul that his doom is signed and sealed and that he must certainly be cast away from all hope and life and joy. Come here, then, you sin-doomed ones! This water can wash away your sins and when your sins are washed away, then shall you live. For the innocent must not be punished. Here is water that can make you whiter than driven snow. Though you are black with sin as Kedar's smoky tents, here is water that can purge you and wash you to the whiteness of perfection and make you fair as the curtains of king Solomon.

These waters well deserve the name of life, since pardon is a condition of life. Unpardoned we die, we perish, we sink into the depths of Hell. Pardoned we live, we rise, we ascend to the very heights of Heaven. See here, then, this ever-gushing fountain will give to all who take thereof life from the dead, by the pardon of their sins. "But," says the poor convicted soul, "This is not all I want, for if all the sins I have ever committed were blotted out, in ten minutes I should commit many more. If I were now completely pardoned, it would not be many seconds before I should destroy my soul and sink helplessly again."

Yes! But see here this is *living water*, it can quench your thirst of sin. Entering into your soul it shall overcome and cover with its floods your propensities to evil. It shall cover them first—it shall afterwards drown them—and at last it shall utterly carry them away, sucking them into its whirlpool-depths where they shall never be found any more, forever. Oh Sinners! This fountain of Gospel Grace can so wash your hearts that you shall no longer love sin. Yes, so perfectly can this water refine the soul that it shall one day make you as spotless as the angels who stand before the Throne of God and you, too, like they, shall obey the behests of God, hearkening to His commands and rejoice to be His servants. This is life, indeed, for here is a favor, here is pardon, here is sanctity, the renewing of the soul by the washing of water, through the Word.

"But," says one, "I have a longing within me which I cannot satisfy. I feel sure that if I am pardoned yet there are some things which I want—which nothing I have ever heard of, or have ever seen or handled can satisfy. I have within me an aching void which the world can never fill." "There was a time," says one, "when I was satisfied with the theater, with the amusements. The pleasures of men of the world were very satisfactory

to me. But lo, I have pressed this olive till it yields no more the generous oil. It is but the thick excrement thereof that now I can obtain. My joys have faded. The beauty of my fat valley has become as a faded flower. No longer can I rejoice in the music of this world.”

Ah, Soul, glad am I that your cistern has become dry, for till men are dissatisfied with this world they never look out for the next. Till the god of this world has utterly deceived them they will not look to Him who is the only living and true God. But hearken! You that are wretched and miserable, here is living water that can quench your thirst. Come here and drink and you shall be satisfied. For he that is a Believer in Christ finds enough for him in Christ now, and enough forever. The Believer is not the man who has to pace his room, saying, “I find no amusements and no delight.” He is not the man whose days are weary and whose nights are long. He finds in religion such a spring of joy, such a fountain of consolation that he is content and happy.

Put him in a dungeon and he will find good company. Place him in a barren wilderness, still he could eat the bread of Heaven. Drive him away from friendship, he will find the “Friend that sticks closer than a brother.” Blast all his gourds and he will find shadow beneath the Rock of Ages. Sap the foundation of his earthly hopes, but since the foundation of his God stands sure, his heart will still be fixed, trusting in the Lord. There is such a fullness in religion, that I can honestly testify from experience—

***“I would not change my best estate,
For all that earth calls good or great.”***

I never knew what happiness was till I knew Christ. I thought I did. I warmed my hands before the fire of sin, but it was a painted fire. But oh, when once I tasted the Savior’s love and had been washed in Jesus’ blood, that was Heaven begun below—

***“’Tis Heaven on earth and Heaven above,
To see His face, to taste His love.”***

Oh, if you did but know the joys of religion, if you did but know the sweetness of love to Christ, surely you could not stand aloof. If you could but catch a glimpse of the Believer when he is dancing for joy, you would renounce your wildest mirth, your greatest joy, to become the meanest child in the family of God. Thus it is the living water, it is the water of life—because it satisfies our thirst and gives us the reality of life which we can never find in anything beneath the sky.

And here let me add very briefly, he who once drinks of this water of life, drinks that which will quench his thirst forever. You shall never thirst again, except it is that you shall long for deeper draughts of this living fountain.

In that sweet manner shall you thirst. It shall not be a thirst of pain, it shall be a thirst of loving joy—a happy thirst—you will find it a sweet thing to be thirsting after more of Christ’s love. Become a Christian and you shall be satisfied for life, you shall then be able to say—“Return unto your rest, O my son, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.” You shall find an ever-living tree upon which you shall build your nest and no

axe shall ever fell it. No winds shall ever shake your quiet resting place, but you shall rest forever on the dear bosom of the Savior where you shall find eternal rest, eternal joy and peace. Oh, come and take of Him and drink of the water of life freely.

And, moreover, he who drinks of this living water shall never die. His body shall see corruption for a little while, but his soul, mounting aloft, shall dwell with Jesus. Yes! And his very body when it has passed through the purifying process, shall rise again more glorious than when it was sown in weakness. It shall rise in glory, in honor, in power, in majesty—and united with the soul—it shall everlastingly inherit the joys which Christ has prepared for them that love Him. This is the living water. I see the fountain flowing now, freely flowing, sparkling with all these excellent properties. Who would not long to come and drink thereof?

II. In the second place we observe from the text that the invitation is very wide—“WHOSOEVER WILL, LET HIM TAKE THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY.” How wide is this invitation! There are some ministers who are afraid to invite sinners, then why are they ministers? They are afraid to perform the most important part of the sacred office. There was a time, I must confess, when I somewhat faltered when about to give a free invitation. My doctrinal sentiments did at that time somewhat hamper me. I boldly avow that I am unchanged as to the doctrines I have preached. I preach Calvinism as high, as stern and as sound as ever. But I do feel and always did feel an anxiety to invite sinners to Christ. And I do feel also, that not only is such a course consistent with the soundest doctrines, but that the other course is, after all the unsound one and has no title whatever to plead Scripture on its behalf.

There has grown up in many Baptist Churches an idea that none are to be called to Christ but what they call “sensible” sinners. I sometimes re-but that by remarking that I call stupid sinners to Christ as well as sensible sinners and that stupid sinners make by far the greatest proportion of the ungodly. But I glory in the avowal that I preach Christ even to insensible sinners—that I would say even to the dry bones of the valley, as Ezekiel did, “You dry bones live!” Doing it as an act of faith. Not faith in the power of those that hear to obey the command, but faith in the power of God who gives the command to give strength also to those addressed, that they may be constrained to obey it. But now listen to my text—for here, at least—there is no limitation. But sensible or insensible, all that the text says is, “Whoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely.”

The one question I have to ask this morning is, are you willing? If so, Christ bids you take the water of life. Are you willing? If so, be pardoned, be sanctified, be made whole. For if you are willing Christ is willing, too, and you are freely invited to come and welcome to the fountain of life and grace.

Now mark—the question has to do with the will. “Oh,” says one, “I am so foolish I cannot understand the plan of salvation, therefore I may not come and drink.” But my question has nothing to do with your understanding, it has to do with your *will*. You may be as big a fool as you will,

but if you are willing to come to Christ you are freely invited. If you could not read a single letter in the alphabet, or spell out a word in the book, yet may your lips—ignorant lips though they are—now drink of this water of life. It has nothing to do with your understanding. It does not say, “Whoever understands let him come,” but “whoever will,” and I do not doubt but what there are many souls who when they first come to Christ have very little understanding of the way of salvation and very little knowledge of the way in which He saves.

But they come to Christ—the Holy Spirit makes them willing to come and so they are saved. Oh you who have been for many a year wearing the pauper’s garb, you who come here from the workhouse, you that are ignorant, you that are despised among men—are you *willing* to be saved? Can you say from your heart, “Lord, You know I would have my sins forgiven”? Then come and welcome. Jesus bids you come. Let not your ignorance keep you away. He appeals not to your understanding, but to your will. “Oh,” says one, “I can understand the plan of salvation, but I cannot repent as I would. Sir, my heart is so hard, I cannot bring the tear to my eye, I cannot feel my sins as I would desire—

***“My heart how dreadful hard it is,
How heavy here it lies.
Heavy and cold within my breast,
Just like a rock of ice.”***

Yes, but this text has nothing to do with your *heart*. It is with your *will*. Are you *willing*? Then be your heart hard as the nether millstone if you are willing to be saved I am bid to invite you. “Whoever will,” not, “whoever *feels*” but, “whoever *will*, let him come and take the water of life freely.”

“Yes,” says one, “I can honestly say I am willing, but my heart will not soften. I wish that God’s Grace would change me. I can say I wish that Christ would soften my heart. I do desire that He would put the living fire within my cold breast and make me repent and make me love Him and make me believe in Him. I am willing.” Well, then, the text is for you, “Whoever will, let him come.” If you are willing you are freely invited to Christ. “No,” says one, “but I am such a great sinner. I have been a drunkard. I have been a lascivious man. I have gone far astray from the paths of rectitude. I would not have all my sins known to my fellow creatures. How can God accept such a wretch as I am, such a foul creature as I have been?”

Mark you, Man! There is no reference made here to your past life. It simply says, “whoever will,” Are you willing? Are you willing to be saved? Can you say, “Now, Lord, I am willing to be saved, give me a new heart. I am willing to give up my sins. I am willing to be a Christian. I am willing to believe and willing to obey, but, oh, for this no strength have I, Lord, I have the will—give me the power.” Then you are freely invited to come, if you are but willing. There is no barrier between you and Christ except your stubborn will. If your will is subdued and if you are saying “Yes, Lord, I am willing,” then you are freely invited. Oh, reject not the invitation, but come, and welcome, Sinner, come.”

But says one, "I cannot come, I cannot believe. I cannot do as I would." Well, but it does not say, "Whoever can, let him come," but "whoever will, let him come." Are you willing? You know there is many a man that has more will than power, but God estimates us not by our power—but by our will. You see a man on horseback, he is in haste to fetch a doctor for some dying man. The horse is a miserable jade and will not go as rapidly as the man would like—but you cannot scold him because you see him whipping and spurring and thus proving that he would go if he could and so the master takes the man's will for the deed. So is it with you, your poor heart will not go, it is a sorry, disabled jade, but it would go if it could. So Jesus invites you, not according to what you can, but according to what you will. "Whoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely." All the stipulation is—are you willing—truly willing? If so, you are freely welcome. You are earnestly invited to take of the water of life and that freely, too.

Surely as this goes round the hall, there will be many found who did answer to it and who will say, from all their hearts, "I am willing—I am willing." Come, let the question go personally round. Let me not talk to you in the mass, but let the arrow reach the individual. Grey head, give your reply and let yon fair-haired boy answer, also. Are you willing now to be saved—are you willing to forsake sin—willing to take Christ to be your Master from this day forth and forever? Are you willing to be washed in His blood? Willing to be clothed in His righteousness? Are you willing to be made happy—willing to escape from Hell and willing to enter Heaven? Strange that it should be necessary to ask such questions, but still it is. Are you willing? Then remember that whatever may be against you—whatever may have defiled you—however black, however filthy, however worthless you may be, you are invited this day to take of the fountain of the water of life freely, for you are willing and it is said, "Whoever will, let him come."

"Ah," says one, "God knows I am willing, but still I do not think I am worthy." No, I know you are not, but what is that to do with it? It is not "whoever is worthy," but "whoever will, let him come." "Well," says one, "I believe that whoever will, may come, but not me, for I am the vilest sinner out of Hell." But mark you, Sinner, it says, "whoever." What a big word that is! Whoever! There is no standard height here. It is of any height and any size. Little sinners, big sinners, black sinners, fair sinners, sinners double dyed, old sinners, aggravated sinners, sinners who have committed every crime in the whole catalogue—whoever. Does this exempt even *one*? Who can be excluded from this "whoever"? It matters not who you may be, nor what you may have been, if you are willing to be saved. Free as the air you breath is the love and Grace of God. "Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Thus have I tried to show you how broad the invitation is.

III. And now I am about to show you, in the third place, how clear the path is. "WHOSOEVER WILL, LET HIM TAKE THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY." That word "let" is a very curious word, because it signifies two opposite things. "Let" is an old-fashioned word which sometimes signifies

“hinder.” “He that lets shall be taken away”—that is, “He that hinders.” But here, in our text, it means the removing of all hindrance. “Let him come”—Methinks I hear Jehovah speaking this. Here is the fountain of love and mercy. But you are too unworthy, you are too vile. Hear Jehovah—He cries, “Let him come, he is willing. Stand back! Doubts and fears, away with you, let him come—make a straight road. Let him come if he is but willing.” Then the devil himself comes forward and striding across the way, he says to the poor trembling soul, “I will spill your blood. You shall never have mercy. I defy you. You shall never believe in Christ and never be saved.”

But Christ says, “Let him come.” And Satan, strong though he is, quails beneath Jehovah’s voice and Jesus drives him away. And the path stands clear this morning—nor can sin, nor death, nor Hell block up the way, when Jehovah Jesus says—“Let him come.”

Methinks I see several ministers standing in the way. They are of such high doctrine that they dare not invite a sinner and they therefore clog the Gospel with so many conditions. They will have it that the sinner must feel a certain quantity of experience before he is invited to come and so they put their sermons up and say, “You are not invited, you are a dead sinner, you must not come. You are not invited. You are a hardened rebel.” “Stand back,” says Christ, “everyone of you, though you are My servants—let him come, he is willing—stand not in his way.” It is a sad thing that Christ’s ministers should become the devil’s aides and abettors and yet sometimes they are, for when they are telling a sinner how much he must *feel* and how much he must *know* before he comes to Christ, they are virtually rolling big stones in the path and saying to the willing sinner, “You may not come.”

In the name of Almighty God, everything stand back this morning that keeps the willing sinner from Christ. Away with you, away with you! Christ sprinkles His blood upon the way and cries to you, “Vanish, be gone! Leave the road clear. Let him come. Stand not in his path. Make straight before him his way, level the mountains and fill up the valleys. Make straight through the wilderness a highway for him to come, to drink of this water of life freely. ‘Let him come.’” Oh, is not that a precious word of command? It has all the might of Omnipotence in it. God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light, and He says, “Let him come” and come he will and must, if God makes him willing to come. “Whoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.”

And now, Sinner, remember God says, “Come.” Is there anything in your way? Remember, He adds, “Let him come.” He bids everything stand out of your way. Standing one day in the courthouse, some witness was required, I forget his name, it may have been Brown. For instance, in one moment the name was announced, “Brown, Samuel Brown.” By-and-by twenty others take up the cry, “Samuel Brown, Samuel Brown.” There was seen a man pushing his way through, “Make room,” he said, “make room, His Honor calls me,” and though there were many in his path, they gave

way, because his being called was a sufficient command to them—not to hinder him—but to let him come.

And now, Soul, if you are a willing sinner—though your name is not mentioned—if you are a willing sinner, you are as truly called as though you were called by name! Therefore, push through your fears. Make elbow room and come. They that would stop you are craven cowards. He has said, “Let him come,” and they cannot keep you back. Jehovah has said, “Let him come,” and it is yours now to say, “I will come. There is nothing that shall hinder me, I will push through everything and—

***‘I will to the gracious King,
Whose scepter mercy gives,’***

I will go to the fountain and take of the water of life freely.”

IV. And now this brings me to the last head, the condition which is the death of all conditions—LET US TAKE IT FREELY. Methinks I see one here who is saying, “I would be saved and I will do what I can to be worthy of it.” The fountain is free and he comes with his halfpenny in his hand, and that a bad one, and he says, “Here, Sir, give me a cup of this living water to drink. I am well worthy of it for see the price is in my hand.” Why, man, if you could bring the wealth of Potosi, or all the diamonds of Golconda and all the pearls of Ormuz, you could not buy this most costly thing! Put up your money, you could not have it for gold or silver. The man brings his merit, but Heaven is not to be sold to merit-mongers. Or perhaps you say, “I will go to Church regularly, I will give to the poor, I will attend my meeting house, I will take a sitting, I will be baptized, I will do this and the other, and then, no doubt I shall have the water of life.”

Back! Miserable herd! Bring not your rags and rubbish to God! He wants them not. Stand back! You insult the Almighty when you tender anything as payment. Back with you! He invites not such as you to come. He says, *come freely*. He wants nothing to recommend you. He needs no recommendation. You need no good works. Do not bring any. You need no good *feelings*. If you are *willing*, come. He wants no good feelings of you. You have no belief and no repentance, yet nevertheless you are willing—

***“True belief and true repentance,
Every grace that brings us near.
Without money,
Come to Jesus Christ and buy.”***

Do not try to get them yourself—come to Him and He will give them to you. Come just as you are. It is “freely, without money and without price.”

The drinking fountains at the corners of our streets are valuable institutions. But I cannot imagine anyone being so foolish as when he comes to the drinking fountains, fumbling for his purse and saying, “I cannot drink because I have not five pounds in my pocket.” Why, however poor the man is, there is the fountain, and poor as he is, he may drink of it. It is put there for the public. Thirsty souls, as they go by, whether they are dressed in fustian or in broadcloth, don’t look for any warrant for drinking. They come and drink of it freely. Here it is. The liberality of some good friend has put it there and they take it and ask no questions whatever.

Perhaps the only persons that ever need to go thirsty through the street, where there is a drinking fountain, are the fine ladies and gentlemen who are in their carriages. They are very thirsty and cannot think of being so vulgar as to get out to drink. It would demean them, they think, to drink at a common drinking fountain, so they go with parched lips. Oh, how many there are that are rich—rich in their own good works—that cannot come to Christ. “I will not be saved,” they say, “in the same way as a harlot or a swearer. What? Go to Heaven the same way as a chimney sweep? Is there no pathway to glory, but the path which a Magdalene may take? I will not be saved that way.” Then you fine gentry may remain without. You are not bid to come, for you are not willing. But remember—

***“None are excluded hence,
But those who do themselves exclude.
Welcome the learned and polite,
The ignorant and rude.”***

“Whoever will, let him come.” Let him bring nothing to recommend him. Let him not imagine he can give any payment to God or any ransom for his soul. For the one condition that excludes all conditions is, “Let him come and take the water of life freely.” There is a man of God here, who has drunk of the river of the water of life many times. But he says, “I want to know more of Christ, I want to have nearer fellowship with Him. I want to enter more closely into the mystery of His sacrifice. I want to understand more and more of the fellowship of His sufferings and to be made conformable unto His death.” Well, Believer, drink freely. You have filled your bowl of faith once and you drunk the draught often, fill it again, drink again and keep on drinking. Put your mouth to the fountain if you will, drink right on. As good Rutherford says in one of his letters, “I have been sinking my bucket down into the well full often, but now my thirst after Christ has become so insatiable, that I long to put the well itself to my lips, and drain it all and drink right on.”

Well, take it freely and as much as you can. You have come now into the field of Boaz, you may pick up every ear that you can find. No, more than that—you may carry away the sheaves if you like and more than that—you may claim the whole field to be yours if you will. The eating and drinking at Christ’s table is like that of Ahasuerus, only in an opposite way. It is said of that table, none did compel. It is said of this, none does withhold—none can restrain. If there is a big vessel full of this holy water, drink it all up and if there is one that holds twelve barrels, drink it—yes, drink it all and you shall find that even then there is as much as ever. In Christ there is enough for all, enough for each, enough forever more. And none shall ever have need to say that there was not enough in Christ for him. Drink freely. So you see that there are two meanings—drink without price and drink without stint.

Then, again—we have an old proverb that there are certain guests who come to our houses who are more free than they are welcome. They make free themselves and go further than we can bid them welcome. But with regard to those who come to the fountain of living waters, you may make

as free as you will and you are welcome. Make as free as you can, take this water as you will, Christ will not grudge you. He that stands by the fountain will never mourn because you drink too much. He will never be dissatisfied because such a sin-black fellow as you has dared to wash himself in the living stream.

No, but the blacker you are the more will He rejoice that you have been washed. The more thirsty you are the more will His soul be gladdened to have you drink even to the full and be satisfied. He is not enriched by withholding—rather He is enriched in joy by *giving*. It is as much a pleasure to Christ to save you as it will be for you to be saved. He is just as glad to see the poor, the lame, the halt and the blind sit at His table as ever they can be to sit there. He is just as pleased to carry men to Heaven as they themselves can be when they drink of the river of joy at the fountainhead of eternity, “Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

And now I do not know what to say further. My text is such a precious one that I cannot enter into the fullness of its freeness and sweetness. Remember, my dear Friends, if you are willing to be saved, God requires nothing of you except that you will yield yourselves up to Christ. If you are willing to be saved none can prevent. There is no obstacle. You are not going like the daughters of Hobab to a well from which you will be driven by the coarseness and rudeness of shepherds. You are come where Jesus stands—stands with open arms, stands with open mouth, crying to you this day, “If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink, and whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

And now will you refuse the invitation? See that you refuse not Him that speaks! Will you go this day and abuse the free mercy of God? Shall this very mercy lead you into more sin? Will you be wicked enough to say that because God’s Grace is free, therefore you will continue in sin year after year? Oh do not! Grieve not the Spirit of God. Today is the accepted time. Today is the day of salvation. If you turn not, He will whet His sword. He has bent His bow and made it ready. You have been warned, your conscience has often pricked you. Now, this day, you are sweetly invited. But the time of warnings and invitations will not last forever. They will soon be over and when your funeral bell is tolling, you shall be in that lake of fire, that land of misery and pain, where not a drop of water shall ever cool your burning tongue.

As you would escape from the flames of Hell, as you would be delivered from the eternal torments which God will certainly hurl upon you like hailstones, I beseech you now consider your ways and if now you are willing you are invited and none can keep you back from His mercy. “Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Shall I preach in vain? Will you all go away and not take the water of life? Come, Soul—is there not one at least that God shall give me this day for my hire—not one? May I not take one of you by the hand, some poor sinning erring Brother? Come, Brothers and Sisters, let us go together and drink. O may the Holy Spirit incline you!

Take it, my Brothers and Sisters. See on that bloody tree Jesus hangs—behold He pays His life a ransom for your sins and mine. Believe on Him, trust Him, commit your soul to Him and be saved. Will you not say in your soul—

***“Just as I am without one plea
But that Your blood was shed for me
And that You bid me come to You,
O lamb of God I come, I come”?***

And as my Master is true and faithful, He cannot cast away one soul that comes, for, “him that comes unto Me I will in no wise cast out.” O Spirit, now draw reluctant hearts and now give timid souls courage to believe, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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GOD'S WILL AND MAN'S WILL

NO. 442

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 30, 1862,
BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“So then, it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs,
but of God that shows mercy.”
Romans 9:16.*

*“Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”
Revelation 22:17.*

THE great controversy which for many ages has divided the Christian Church has hinged upon the difficult question of “the will.” I need not say of that conflict that it has done much mischief to the Christian Church, undoubtedly it has. But I will rather say that it has been fraught with incalculable usefulness. For it has thrust forward before the minds of Christians, precious Truths of God, which but for it, might have been kept in the shade. I believe that the two great doctrines of human responsibility and Divine sovereignty have both been brought out the more prominently in the Christian Church by the fact that there is a class of strong-minded hard-headed men who magnify sovereignty at the expense of responsibility.

And another earnest and useful class who uphold and maintain human responsibility oftentimes at the expense of Divine sovereignty. I believe there is a needs-be for this in the finite character of the human mind, while the natural lethargy of the Church requires a kind of healthy irritation to arouse her powers and stimulate her exertions. The pebbles in the living stream of truth are worn smooth and round by friction. Who among us would wish to suspend a lava of nature whose effects on the whole are good? I glory in that which at the present day is so much spoken against—sectarianism, for “sectarianism” is the cant phrase which our enemies use for all firm religious belief.

I find it applied to all sorts of Christians. No matter what views he may hold, if a man is but in earnest, he is a sectarian at once. Success to sectarianism. Let it live and flourish. When that is done with, farewell to the power of godliness. When we cease, each of us, to maintain our own views of truth and to maintain those views firmly and strenuously, then the Truth of God shall fly out of the land and error alone shall reign—this, indeed, is the object of our foes—under the cover of attacking sects, they attack true religion and would drive it, if they could, from off the face of the earth.

In the controversy which has raged, a controversy which, I again say, I believe to have been really healthy and which has done us all a vast amount of good—mistakes have arisen from two sources. Some Brethren have altogether forgotten one order of Truths, and then, in the next place,

they have gone too far with others. We all have one blind eye and too often we are like Nelson in the battle, we put the telescope to that blind eye and then protest that we cannot see. I have heard of one man who said he had read the Bible through thirty-four times on his knees but could not see a word about election in it. I think it is very likely that he could not—kneeling is a very uncomfortable posture for reading and possibly the superstition which would make the poor man perform this penance would disqualify him for using his reason.

Moreover, to get through the Book thirty-four times, he probably read in such a hurry that he did not know what he was reading, and he might as well have been dreaming over “Robinson Crusoe” as the Bible. He put the telescope to the blind eye. Many of us do that. We do not want to see a Truth of God, and therefore we say we cannot see it. On the other hand, there are others who push a truth too far. “This is good! Oh, this is precious!” they say, and then they think it is good for everything—in fact, it is the only truth in the world. You know how often things are injured by over-praise—how a good medicine, which really was a great benefit for a certain disease, comes to be despised utterly by the physician, because a certain quack has praised it up as being a universal cure—so puffery in doctrine leads to its dishonor.

The Truth of God has thus suffered on all sides. On the one hand Brethren would not see all the Truth, and on the other hand they magnified out of proportion that which they did see. You have seen those mirrors, those globes that are sometimes hung up in gardens? You walk up to them and you see your head ten times as large as your body, or you walk away and put yourself in another position and then your feet are monstrous and the rest of your body is small. This is an ingenious toy, but I am sorry to say that many go to work with God's Truth upon the model of this toy. They magnify one capital Truth, till it becomes monstrous. They minify and speak little of another Truth till it becomes altogether forgotten.

In what I shall be able to say this morning you will probably detect the failing to which I allude, the common fault of humanity, and suspect that I also am magnifying one Truth at the expense of another. But I will say this, before I proceed further, that it shall not be the case if I can help it. I will endeavor honestly to bring out the Truth of God as I have learned it and if in anything you see that I teach you is contrary to the Word of God, reject it. But mark you, if it is according to God's Word, reject it at your peril. For when I have once delivered it to you, if you receive it not, the responsibility lies with you.

There are two things, then, this morning I shall have to talk about. The first is, that *the work of salvation rests upon the will of God and not upon the will of man*. And secondly, the equally sure doctrine, that *the will of man has its proper position in the work of salvation and is not to be ignored*.

I. First, then, SALVATION HINGES UPON THE WILL OF GOD, AND NOT UPON THE WILL OF MAN. So says our text—“It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy”—by which is

clearly meant that the reason why any man is saved is not because *he* wills it but because *God* willed, according to that other passage, "You have not chosen Me but I have chosen you." The whole scheme of salvation, we declare, looms first to last, hinges and turns, and is dependant upon the absolute will of God—and not upon the will of the creature.

This, we think, we can show in two or three ways. And first, we think that an *analogy furnishes us with a rather strong argument*. There is a certain likeness between all God's works. If a painter shall paint three pictures, there is a certain identity of style about all the three which leads you to know that they are from the same hand. Or, if an author shall write three works upon three different subjects, yet there are qualities running through the whole which will lead you to assert, "That is the same man's writing, I am certain, in the whole of the three books."

Now what we find in the works of nature, we generally find to be correct with regard to the work of Providence. And what is true of nature and of Providence, is usually true with regard to the greater work of Divine Grace. Turn your thoughts, then, to the works of *creation*. There was a time when these works had no existence—the sun was not born. The young moon had not begun to fill her horns. The stars were not. Not even the illimitable void of space was then in existence. God dwelt alone without a creature.

I ask you, with whom did He then take counsel? Who instructed Him? Who had a voice in that council by which the wisdom of God was directed? Did it not rest with His own will whether He would create or not? Was not creation itself, when it lay in embryo in His thoughts, entirely in His keeping so that He would or would not just as He pleased? And when He willed to create, did He not still exercise His own discretion and will as to what and how He would create? If He has made the stars spheres, what reason was there for this but His own will? If He has chosen that they should move in the circle rather than in any other orbit, is it not God's own fiat that has made them do so?

And when this round world, this green earth on which we dwell, leaped from His molding hand into its sunlit track, was not this also according to the Divine will? Who ordained, save the Lord, that there the Himalayas should lift their heads and pierce the clouds, and that there the deep cavernous recesses of the sea should pierce earth's heart of rock? Who, save Himself, ordained that yonder Sahara should be brown and sterile, and that yonder isle should laugh in the midst of the sea with joy over her own verdure? Who, I say, ordained this, except God? You see running through creation, from the tiniest animalcule up to the tall archangel who stands before the Throne, this working of God's own will. Milton was nobly right when he represents the Eternal One as saying—

***"My goodness is most free
To act or not: necessity and Chance
Approach not Me and what I will is fate."***

He created as it pleased Him. He made them as He chose. The Potter exercised power over His clay to make His vessels as He willed and to make them for what purposes He pleased. Think you that He has abdi-

cated the Throne of Grace? Does He reign in creation and not in Grace? Is He absolute King over nature and not over the greater works of the new nature? Is He Lord over the things which His hands made at first and not King over the great regeneration, the new-making wherein He makes all things new?

But take the works of *Providence*. I suppose there will be no dispute among us that in providential matters God orders all things according to the counsel of His own will. If we should, however, be troubled with any doubts about that matter, we might hear the striking words of Nebuchadnezzar when, taught by God, he had repented of his pride—"All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing. He does according to His will in the armies of Heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What are you doing?"

From the first moment of human history even to the last, God's will shall be done. Though it IS a catastrophe or a crime—there may be the second causes and the action of human evil—but the great First Cause is in all. If we could imagine that one human action had eluded the prescience or the predestination of God, we could suppose that the whole might have done so, and all things might drift to sea, anchorless, rudderless—a sport to every wave—the victim of tempest and hurricane. One leak in the ship of Providence would sink her, one hour in which Omnipotence relaxed its grasp, and she would fall to atoms.

But it is the comfortable conviction of all God's people that "all things work together for good to them that love God"—that God rules and overrules and reigns in all acts of men and in all events that transpire. From seeming evil He is still producing good, and better still, and better still in infinite progression, still ordering all things according to the counsel of His will. And do you think that He reigns in Providence and is King there and not in Grace? Has He given up the blood-bought land to be ruled by man, while common Providence is left as a lonely province to be His only heritage? He has not let slip the reins of the great chariot of Providence, and do you think that when Christ goes forth in the chariot of His Grace it is with steeds unguided, or driven only by chance, or by the fickle will of man?

Oh, no, Brethren. As surely as God's will is the axle of the universe, as certainly as God's will is the great heart of Providence sending its pulsings through even the most distant limbs of human act, so in Divine Grace let us rest assured that He is King, willing to do as He pleases, having mercy on whom He will have mercy, calling whom He chooses to call, quickening whom He wills and fulfilling—despite man's hardness of heart, despite man's willful rejection of Christ—His own purposes, His own decrees, without one of them falling to the ground. We think, then, that analogy helps to strengthen us in the declaration of the text, that salvation is not left with man's will.

2. But, secondly, *we believe that the difficulties which surround the opposite theory are tremendous. In fact, we cannot bear to look them in the face.* If there are difficulties about ours, there are ten times more about the opposite. We think that the difficulties which surround our belief that

salvation depends upon the will of God, arise from our ignorance in not understanding enough of God to be able to judge them. But that the difficulties in the other side do not arise from that cause but from certain great Truths of God, clearly revealed, which stand in manifest opposition to the figment which our opponents have espoused.

According to their theory—that salvation depends upon our own will—you have first of all this difficulty to meet, *that you have made the purpose of God in the great plan of salvation entirely contingent*. You have an “if” put upon everything. Christ may die, but it is not certain, according to their theory, that He will redeem a great multitude. No, not certain that He will redeem *any*, since the efficacy of the redemption, according to their plan, rests not in its own intrinsic power, but in the will of man accepting that redemption. Hence if man is, as we declare he always is, if he is a bond slave as to his will and will not yield to the invitation of God's Grace, then in such a case the atonement of Christ would be valueless, useless and altogether in vain, for not a soul would be saved by it.

And even when souls are saved by it, according to their theory, the efficacy, I say, lies not in the blood itself, but in the *will* of man which gives it efficacy. Redemption is therefore made contingent. The Cross shakes, the blood falls powerless on the ground, and atonement is a matter of perhaps. There is a Heaven provided but there may be no souls who will ever come there if their coming is to be of themselves. There is a fountain filled with Christ's blood, but there may be none who will ever wash in it unless Divine purpose and power shall constrain them to come. You may look at any promise of Divine Grace but you cannot say over it, “This is the sure mercy of David.” For there is an “if,” or a “but,” or a “perhaps.”

In fact, the reins are gone out of God's hands. The locking pin of the shaft of the wheel of creation is taken away. You have left the whole economy of Grace and mercy to be the gathering together of fortuitous atoms impelled by man's own will! And what may become of it at the end nobody can know. We cannot tell on that theory whether God will be glorified or sin will triumph. Oh, how happy are we when we come back to the old-fashioned doctrines and cast our anchor where it can get its grip in the eternal purpose and counsel of God, who works all things to the good pleasure of His will!

Then another difficulty comes in. Not only is everything made contingent, but it does seem to us *as if man were thus made to be the supreme being in the universe*. According to the free will scheme, the Lord intends good, but He must wait like a lackey on His own creature to know what his intention is. God wills good and would do it, but He cannot, because He has an unwilling man who will not have God's good thing carried into effect. What do you do, Sirs, but drag the Eternal from His Throne and lift up into it that fallen creature, man? For man, according to that theory, nods, and his nod is destiny. You must have a destiny somewhere. It must either be as God wills, or as man wills. If it is as God wills, then Jehovah sits as sovereign upon His Throne of Glory and all hosts obey Him and the world is safe.

If not God, then you put man there, to say, "I will," or "I will not. If I will it, I will enter Heaven. If I will it, I will despise the Grace of God. If I will it, I will conquer the Holy Spirit, for I am stronger than God and stronger than Omnipotence. If I will it, I will make the blood of Christ of no effect, for I am mightier than that blood, mightier than the blood of the Son of God, Himself. Though God makes His purpose, yet will I laugh at His purpose—it shall be *my* purpose that shall make His purpose stand, or make it fall."

Why, Sirs, if this is not Atheism, it is idolatry. It is putting man where God should be, and I shrink with solemn awe and horror from that doctrine which makes the grandest of God's works—the salvation of man—to be dependent upon the will of His creature whether it shall be accomplished or not. Glory I can, and must, in my text in its fullest sense. "It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy."

3. We think that the known condition of man is a very strong argument against the supposition that salvation depends upon his own will. And hence is a great confirmation of the Truth of God that it depends upon the will of God. That it is God that chooses and not man—God who takes the first step and not the creature. Sirs, on the theory that man comes to Christ of his own will, what do you with texts of Scripture which say that he is dead? "And you has He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins."

You will say that is a figure of speech. I grant it, but what is the meaning of it? You say the meaning is, he is *spiritually* dead. Well, then I ask you, how can he perform the *spiritual* act of willing that which is right?

He is alive enough to will that which is evil, only evil, and that continually—but he is not alive to will that which is spiritually good. Do you not know, to turn to another Scripture, that he cannot even *discern* that which is spiritual? "For the natural man knows not the things which are of God, seeing they are spiritual, and must be spiritually discerned." Why, he has not a "spirit" with which to discern them. He has only a soul and body—and the third principle, implanted in regeneration, which is called in the Word of God, "the spirit," he knows nothing of and he is, therefore, incapable, seeing he is dead and is without the vitalizing spirit, of doing what you say he does.

Then, again, what make you of the words of our Savior where He said to those who had heard even Him, "You *will not* come to Me that you might have life?" Where is free will after such a text as that? When Christ affirms that they will not, who dares say they will? "Ah, but," you say, "they could if they would." Dear Sir, I am not talking about that, I am not talking about if they would. The question is "*will they?*" And we say "no," they never will by nature. Man is so depraved, so set on mischief, the way of salvation is so obnoxious to his pride, so hateful to his lusts, that he cannot like it and will not like it, unless He who ordained the plan shall change his nature and subdue his will.

Mark, this stubborn will of man is his *sin*. He is not to be excused for it. He is guilty because he will not come. He is condemned because he will not come. Because he will not believe in Christ, therefore is condemnation

resting upon him. But still the fact is not altered for all that—he will not come by nature if left to himself. Well, then, if man will not, how shall he be saved unless God shall make him willing?—unless, in some mysterious way, He who made the heart shall touch its mainspring so that it shall move in a direction opposite to that which it naturally follows?

4. But there is another argument which will come closer home to us. *It is consistent with the universal experience of all God's people that salvation is of God's will.* You will say, "Mr. Spurgeon, you have not had a very long life." I have not, but I have had a very extensive acquaintance with all sections of the Christian Church. And I solemnly swear before you that I have never yet met with a man professing to be a Christian, let alone his really being so, who ever said that his coming to God was the result of his unassisted nature. Universally, I believe, without exception, the people of God will say it was the Holy Spirit that made them what they are—they would have refused to come, as others do—unless God's Grace had sweetly influenced their wills.

There are some hymns in Mr. Wesley's hymn book which are stronger upon this point than I could ever venture to be, for he puts prayers into the lips of the sinner in which God is even asked to force him to be saved by Divine Grace. Of course I can take no objection to a term so strong, but it goes to prove this—that among all sections of Christians, whether Arminian or Calvinistic, whatever their doctrinal sentiments may be—their *experimental* sentiments are the same. I do not think they would any of them refuse to join in the verse—

***"Oh, yes, I do love Jesus
Because He first loved me."***

Nor would they find fault with our own hymn—

***"It was the same love that spread the feast,
That sweetly forced us in;
Else we had still refused to taste,
And perished in our sin."***

We bring out the crown and say, "On whose head shall we put it? Who ruled at the turning-point? Who decided this case?" And the universal Church of God, throwing away their creeds, would say, "Crown *Him!* Crown *Him*, put it on *His* head, for *He* is worthy. He has made us to differ. *He* has done it and unto *Him* be the praise forever and ever." What staggers me is that men can believe dogmas contrary to their own experience—that they can hug that to their hearts as precious to which their own inward convictions must give the lie.

5. But, lastly, in the way of argument and to bring out our great battering ram at the last. It is not, after all, arguments from analogy, nor reasons from the difficulties of the opposite position, nor inferences from the known feebleness of human nature—nor even deductions from experience—that will settle this question once and for all. To the Law and to the Testimony! If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Do me the pleasure, then, to use your Bibles for a moment or two, and let us see what Scripture says on this main point.

First, with regard to the matter of God's preparation and His plan with regard to salvation. We turn to the Apostle's words in the Epistle to the

Ephesians and we find, beginning in the first chapter and the third verse, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will." A double word you notice—it is according to the will of His will. No expression could be stronger in the original to show the entire absoluteness of this thing as depending on the will of God.

It seems, then, that the choice of His people and their adoption is according to His will. So far we are satisfied, indeed, with the testimony of the Apostle. Then in the ninth verse, "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He has purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven and which are on earth. Even in Him." So, then, it seems that the grand *result* of the gathering together of all the saved in Christ, as well as the primitive purpose, is according to the counsel of His will. What stronger proof can there be that salvation depends upon the will of God?

Moreover, it says in the eleventh verse—"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will." A stronger expression than "of His will"—"of His *own* will," His free, unbiased will, His will alone. As for redemption as well as for the eternal purpose—redemption is according to the will of God. You remember that verse in Hebrews, tenth chapter, ninth verse—"Lo, I come to do Your will, O God. He takes away the first, that He might establish the second. By that will we are sanctified." So that the redemption offered up on Calvary, like the election made before the foundation of the world, is the result of the Divine will.

There will be little controversy here—the main point is about our new birth—and here we cannot allow of any diversity of opinion. Turn to the Gospel according to John, the first chapter and thirteenth verse. It is utterly impossible that human language could have put a stronger negative on the vainglorious claims of the human will than this passage does—"Born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." A passage equally clear is to be found in the Epistle of James, at the first chapter and the eighteenth verse—"Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures." In these passages—and they are not the only ones—the new birth is peremptorily and in the strongest language put down as being the fruit and effect of the will and purpose of God.

As to the sanctification which is the result and outgrowth of the new birth—that also is according to God's holy will. In the first of Thessalonians, fourth chapter and third verse, we have, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." One more passage I shall need you to refer to, John, the sixth chapter and thirty-ninth and fortieth verses. Here we find that

the preservation, the perseverance, the resurrection and the eternal glory of God's people, rests upon His will. "And this is the Father's will which has sent Me, that of all which He has given Me, I should lose nothing but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of Him that sent Me that everyone which sees the Son and believes on Him, may have everlasting life and I will raise him up at the last day."

And indeed this is why the saints go to Heaven at all, because in the seventeenth chapter of John, Christ is recorded as praying, "Father, I will that they also whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am." We close, then, by noticing that according to Scripture, there is not a single blessing in the New Covenant which is not conferred upon us according to the will of God, and that as the vessel hangs upon the nail, so every blessing we receive hangs upon the absolute will and counsel of God, who gives these mercies even as He gives the gifts of the Spirit according as He wills. We shall now leave that point and take the second great Truth of God and speak a little while upon it.

II. MAN'S WILL HAS ITS PROPER PLACE IN THE MATTER OF SALVATION. "*Whosoever will let him come and take the water of life freely.*"

According to this and many other texts of Scripture where man is addressed as a being having a will, it appears clear enough that men are not saved by compulsion. When a man receives the Divine Grace of Christ, he does not receive it against his will. No man shall be pardoned while he abhors the thought of forgiveness. No man shall have joy in the Lord if he says, "I do not wish to rejoice in the Lord." Do not think that anybody shall have the angels pushing them from behind into the gates of Heaven.

They must go there freely or else they will never go there at all. We are not saved against our will. Nor again, mark you, is the will taken away. For God does not come and convert the intelligent free agent into a machine. When He turns the slave into a child, it is not by plucking out of him the will which he possesses. We are as free under Grace as ever we were under sin. No, we were slaves when we were under sin—and when the Son makes us free we are free, indeed, and we were never free before. Erskine, in speaking of his own conversion, says he ran to Christ, "with full consent against his will" by which he meant it was against his *old* will—against his will as it was till Christ came. But when Christ came, then he came to Christ with full consent and was as willing to be saved—no, that is a cold word—as *delighted*, as *pleased*, as *transported* to receive Christ as if Divine Grace had *not* constrained him.

But we do hold and teach that though the will of man is not ignored, and men are not saved against their wills, that the work of the Spirit, which is the effect of the will of God, is to *change the human will*, and so make men *willing in the day of God's power*, working in them to will and to do of His own good pleasure. The work of the Spirit is consistent with the original laws and constitution of human nature. Ignorant men talk grossly and carnally about the work of the Spirit in the heart as if the heart were a lump of flesh, and the Holy Spirit turned it round mechanically. Now, Brethren, how is your heart and my heart changed in any matter? Why, the instrument generally is *persuasion*.

A friend sets before us a truth we did not know before. He pleads with us. Puts it in a new light and then we say, "Now I see that," and then our hearts are changed towards the thing. Now, although no man's heart is changed by moral persuasion in itself, yet the way in which the Spirit works in his heart, as far as we can detect it, is instrumentally by a blessed persuasion of the mind. I say not that men are saved by moral persuasion, or that this is the first cause, but I think it is frequently the *visible means*. As to the secret work, who knows how the Spirit works? "The wind blows where it lists and you hear the sound thereof but you can not tell from where it comes nor where it goes: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit."

But yet, as far as we can see, the Spirit makes a revelation of the Truth of God to the soul, whereby it sees things in a different light from what it ever did before. And then the will cheerfully bows that neck which once was stiff as iron and wears the yoke which once it despised—and wears it gladly, cheerfully and joyfully. Yet, mark, the will is not gone. The will is treated as it should be treated—man is not acted upon as a machine—he is not polished like a piece of marble. He is not planed and smoothed like a plank of wood. But his mind is acted upon by the Spirit of God, in a manner quite consistent with mental laws. Man is thus made a new creature in Christ Jesus, by the will of God, and his own will is blessedly and sweetly made to yield.

Then, mark you—and this is a point which I want to put into the thoughts of any who are troubled about these things—this gives the renewed soul a most blessed sign of Grace, insomuch that if any man wills to be saved by Christ, if he wills to have sin forgiven through the precious blood, if he wills to live a holy life resting upon the atonement of Christ and in the power of the Spirit—that *will* is one of the most blessed *signs* of the mysterious working of the Spirit of God in his heart. Such a sign is it that if it is real willingness, I will venture to assert that that man is not far from the Kingdom. I say not that he is so saved that he, himself, may conclude he is, but there is a work *begun*, which has the germ of salvation in it.

If you are *willing*, depend upon it that God is willing. Soul, if you are anxious after Christ, He is more anxious after you. If you have only one spark of true desire after Him, that spark is a spark from the fire of His love to you. He has drawn you, or else you would never run after Him. If you are saying, "Come to me, Jesus," it is because He *has come to you*, though you do not know it. He has sought you as a lost sheep, and therefore you have sought Him like a returning prodigal. He has swept the house to find you, as the woman swept for the lost piece of money—and now you seek Him as a lost child would seek a father's face. Let your willingness to come to Christ be a hopeful sign and symptom.

But once more and let me have the ear of the anxious yet again. It appears that when you have a willingness to come to Christ, there is a special promise for you. You know, my dear Hearers, that we are not accustomed in this House of Prayer to preach only one side of the Truths of God, but we try, if we can, to preach it all. There are some Brethren with

small heads, who, when they have heard a strong doctrinal sermon, grow into hyper-Calvinists and then when we preach an inviting sermon to poor sinners, they cannot understand it, and say it is a “yes and no” Gospel. Believe me, it is not a “yes and no,” but “yes and yes.” We give our “yes” to all Truth, and our “no,” we give to no doctrine of God. Can a sinner be saved when he wills to come to Christ? *YES*. And if he does come, does he come because *God brings him*? *YES!*

We have no nays in our theology for any revealed Truth of God. We do not shut the door on one word and open it to another. Those that do that are the “yes and no” people who have a “no” to the poor sinner, when they profess to preach the Gospel. As soon as a man has any willingness *given to him*, he has a special promise. Before he had that willingness, he had an invitation. Before he had any willingness, it was his *duty* to believe in Christ, for it is not man's condition that gives him a *right* to believe. Men are to believe in *obedience* to God's command. God commands *all men* everywhere to repent and this is His great command, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” “This is the commandment, that you believe in Jesus Christ whom He has sent.”

Hence your right and your duty to believe—but once you have got the willingness, then you have a special promise—“Whosoever will, let him come.” That is a sort of extraordinary invitation. Methinks this is the utterance of the *special* call. You know how John Bunyan describes the special call in words to this effect—“The hen goes clucking about the farm-yard all day long. That is the *general* call of the Gospel. But she sees a hawk up in the sky and she gives a sharp cry for her little ones to come and hide under her wings. That is the *special* call. They come and are safe.”

My text is a special call to some of you. Poor Soul! Are you willing to be saved? “O, Sir, willing, willing indeed! I cannot use that word. I would give all I have if I might but be saved.” Do you mean you would give it all in order to purchase it? “Oh no, Sir, I do not mean *that*. I know I cannot purchase it. I know it is God's gift, but still if I could but be saved, I would ask nothing else—

***‘Lord, deny me what You will,
Only ease me of my guilt
Suppliant at Your feet I lie,
Give me Christ, or else I die’ ”***

Why, then, the Lord speaks to you this morning! To you, if not to any other man in the Chapel, He speaks to you and says—“Whosoever will, let him come.” You cannot say this does not mean you. When we give the general invitation, you may exempt yourself perhaps in some way or other but you cannot now. You are willing, then come and take the water of life freely! “Had not I better pray?” It does not say so. It says, take the water of life. “But had not I better go home and get better?” No, take the water of life, and take the water of life *now*. You are standing by the fountain outside there and the water is flowing and you are willing to drink. You are picked out of a crowd who are standing round about and you are especially invited by the person who built the fountain.

He says, "Here is a special invitation for you. You are willing—come and drink." "Sir," you say, "I must go home and wash my pitcher." "No," he says, "come and drink." "But, Sir, I want to go home and write a petition to you." "I do not want it," he says, "drink now, drink now." What would you do? If you were dying of thirst, you would just put your lips down and drink. Soul, do that now. Believe that Jesus Christ is able to save you now. Trust your soul in His hands now. No preparation is wanted. Whosoever will, let him come. Let him come at once and take the water of life freely. To take that water is simply to trust Christ. To repose on Him. To take Him to be your All in All. Oh that you would do it now! You are willing! God has made you willing!

When the crusaders heard the voice of Peter the Hermit, as he bade them go to Jerusalem to take it from the hands of the invaders, they cried out at once, "Deus vult! God wills it! God wills it!" And every man plucked his sword from its scabbard and set out to reach the holy sepulcher, for God willed it. So come and drink, Sinner. God wills it! Trust Jesus. God wills it! If you will it, that is the sign that *God* wills it. "Father, Your will be done on earth even as it is in Heaven." As sinners, humbly stoop to drink of the flowing crystal which streams from the sacred fountain which Jesus opened for His people. Let it be said in Heaven, "God's will is done! Hallelujah, hallelujah!" "It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy." Yet—"Whosoever will, let him come, and take the water of life freely."

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TILL WE MEET AGAIN

NO. 1628

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

***“The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”
Revelation 22:21.***

THE first saints could never be long without speaking of their Lord and Savior. He filled their hearts and, therefore, they must necessarily speak of Him. How ingeniously they bring Him in! When they commence an Epistle, the salutation will be sure to bear His name. When they are in the midst of a letter, they lay down their pen and offer a prayer. And when they begin, again, it is with a benediction in which His name is prominent, or with a doxology ascribing glory unto Him, with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. John's Book of Revelation is full of Christ. Its opening verse rings out the precious name and the closing line, which is now before us, repeats the heavenly music! Is not the Lord Jesus the sum and substance, the Glory of every vision seen in Patmos? May I not say of the Apocalypse, as John said of the New Jerusalem, “the Lamb is the light thereof”?

Until He looses the seals and opens the roll, the book of John's prophecy is so folded up that no man shall understand it. John could not finish his book without mentioning that name which was dearest of all names to him. As he puts aside his pen to write no more, he concludes with an invocation of blessing upon all the saints in every place—and this is the form of it—“The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.” Paul is thought to have claimed the use of this benediction as his particular token—“in every epistle so I write.” I am not sure that it is so, for I suspect that the Apostle referred to his own large handwriting and to the signature which he put to his letters. But still, according to many interpreters, Paul used this particular blessing as his private mark—the seal of the authenticity of a letter.

See the end of the Epistles to the Corinthians and Thessalonians—“The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.” Certainly Paul used the words often, but, perhaps, when Paul had been taken up, John deemed it right to adopt Paul's motto and with it to set, as it were, his stamp and seal upon the last book of Revelation. It was a benediction which could not be engrossed by any one Apostle, nor, indeed, by all the Apostles put together! Paul made it his own, but John had equal right to use it. And it is now all the dearer to *us* because both these mighties employed it.

Brothers and Sisters, the benediction before us is not only Paul's word and John's word—and the Bible's last word—but it is now the chosen word of all the ministers of Jesus Christ! Is not this the benediction with which we dismiss the faithful—“The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all”? So shall it remain until the Lord shall come a second time! It is an expression suitable to the most gracious heart, a prayer with which the Believer may

vent his best wishes and express his most devout desires. Over you all at this time, in my own most humble but sincere manner, I would pronounce the benediction, “The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.”

If the Spirit shall help me, I would at this time say, first, let us consider this benediction. And then, secondly, let us consider its peculiar position, for something can be learned from it.

I. First, then, let us CONSIDER THIS BENEDICTION. It divides itself into three parts, under these heads—What? How? And, to whom?

1. What? What is this which John desires when he says—“The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all”? The word is “Charis.” I do not think any better translation could be given than, “Grace”—it is usually translated Grace throughout the New Testament. Those who understand the Greek language thoroughly tell us that it has for its root, “joy.” There is joy at the bottom of Charis, or Grace. It also signifies favor, kindness and especially love. And I might, without violating the meaning of the Spirit, read the words thus—“The *love* of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.” But inasmuch as love to unworthy creatures such as we are can only display itself in free favor—that is, Grace—and we know that the term used is an accurate expression, we will let it stand as it is, only putting in a drop or two of the sweet honey of the love which lies within it.

John desires that we may have the free favor of Jesus Christ, the love of Jesus Christ, the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ Himself is generally mentioned in our benedictions as having Grace and the Father as having love—and our usual benediction begins with the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God. Is that the proper order? Should we not rather say, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit? Brothers and Sisters, the order observed in the benediction is that of our *experience*—the order in which we *learn*—the order in which we *receive*. We first receive the Grace and free favor which are in Christ Jesus—and then, from these we learn the love of the Father—for no man comes unto the Father but by Jesus Christ.

The order is correct to our experience and, in an instructive benediction, the Holy Spirit intends this for our learning. The Father’s love is, as it were, the secret, mysterious germ of everything. That same love in Jesus Christ is Grace. His is love in its active form, love descending to earth, love wearing human nature, love paying the great ransom price, love ascending, love sitting and waiting, love pleading, love soon to come with power and Glory! The eternal love which, as it were, did lie in the bosom of the Father, rises up and comes into *activity* and is then called the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. This Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is, therefore, the Grace of a Divine Person.

We wish you, Brethren, as we wish for ourselves, the Grace of God, Himself—rich, boundless, unfathomable, immutable, Divine—not temporary Grace, such as some speak of, which keeps not its own but suffers even the sheep of its own pasture to go astray and perish. No, we wish you the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom it is written, “Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” That Grace most potent of which it is said, “None shall pluck them out of My

hand!" We wish this Grace to be with you—the Grace which loved you before the earth was made—"I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you." That is the Grace which will be with you when this poor world shall have melted back into the nothingness from which it sprang—infinite, everlasting, unchanging Grace—we wish you may have that!

May its Divine height, depth, length and breadth be enjoyed by you! May you know the loving Grace of Christ which passes knowledge! May you grasp the unsearchable riches of Christ. This is no small treasure—this Grace of a Divine Person. Yet our Lord Jesus is also human, as truly human as He is Divine and, believing in Him, you have the Grace of Jesus Christ, the Man, to be with you all. May you feel His tenderness, His brotherliness, His Grace. He is your kinsman and He graciously favors His own kinsfolk. The Man is next of kin to us and as Ruth enjoyed all the love of Boaz, so may you possess all the heart of Jesus! May He redeem your inheritance for you and take you to Himself to be His own, in blessed union with Himself forever. May the Grace of the Man of Nazareth, the Grace of the Son of Mary be with you, as well as the Grace of "God over all, blessed forever," to whom be praise!

The Grace of that wondrous Person who is God and Man in one Person and whom we call Lord, is now solemnly invoked upon you. Read the text again and pause a while in the middle to enjoy, "The Grace of our Lord." Whatever familiarity we have with Him, we call Him Master and Lord, and He says, "You do well, for so I am." Let us never forget that! The Grace that comes from His majesty, the Grace that comes from His headship, the Grace that comes from His divinely human supremacy over His Church, which is His body—this is the Grace which we desire for you all! Read the next word, "the Grace of our Lord Jesus"—may that be with you—that is to say, the Grace of our Savior, for that is the meaning of the word, Jesus. All His *saving* Grace, all that which redeems from guilt, from sin, from trouble—all that which saves us with an everlasting salvation—may that be yours to the fullest!

Then comes the other word, "the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." May He, as the Anointed One, visit you. May the Grace of His anointing be with you! May the holy anointing which was poured upon the Head come down upon you, as the sacred nard dropped from Aaron's beard and perfumed all his robes! May you have that anointing from the Holy One which shall make you know all things. I am tempted to linger over each one of these words, but I may not, for time would forbid. Yet must we tarry on that word, "our." "May the Grace of *our* Lord." Catch at that sweet word! It may not, perhaps, be genuine in this case, for it is not in the Sinaitic manuscript, but whether it is so in this particular instance or not, it is in the Word of God and stands forever true. Jesus is our Lord—our Lord Jesus Christ—both yours and ours. May the fullness of His Grace be with you and with us.

2. Our next division is How? "May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." What does this mean? Our first answer is the wish that the Grace of our Lord may rest upon you as a matter of *fact*—that He may

love you truly and intensely! That He may love you, not only as He loves the world, but as He loved His own which were in the world. May you have His Redemption, not as a general thing, but according to that Word of God, "He has redeemed us from among men out of every kindred." May you have the special, peculiar love which Christ has to those whom His Father gave Him, whose names are on His breastplate and for whom He has paid an effectual ransom price that they, thereby, might be delivered—may such Grace be with you! As a matter of fact, may it rest upon you as the chosen, adopted, called and sanctified!

Next, may you believe that Grace; may you trust that Grace; may it be with you because your faith has closed in with it and you are relying upon it! You believe that Jesus loves you. You believe in His Grace and trust yourself to Him, committing your spirit to the keeping of those hands which were pierced and fastened to the Cross for you. May His Grace be with you in that sense, so that you realize it! Still further, may His Grace be with you as the object of faith, so that your belief comes to be full assurance, till you *know* the love which Christ has towards you and no more doubt it than you doubt the love of the dearest friend you have on earth. May His love be a present fact and not a thing to be questioned. May it be a treasure in which you glory in the secret places of your soul, saying, "He loved me and gave Himself for me." May His Grace be with you in the sense that you are confidently assured of it.

And may His Grace be with you, next, as to the favors which flow out of it. May you enjoy all the blessings which the Grace of Christ can yield—the Grace of a peaceful conscience, the Grace of a cleansed walk, the Grace of access to God, the Grace of fervent love, the Grace of holy expectancy, the Grace of self-denial, the Grace of perfect consecration—and the Grace of final perseverance. May the fountain and wellhead be with you, so that the sparkling streams may flow at your feet. And may Grace be with us, next, so as to produce constant communion between us and Christ, His favor flowing into our heart and our hearts returning their gratitude. O, to carry on blessed commerce with Christ, exchanging weakness for strength, sin for righteousness and trust for care! O to give love for love and heart for heart, till my best Love loves me and my best love is all His own!

O, to come to this pass, that our Well-Beloved is with us, and we enjoy sweet mutual communion—this is to have the love, or Grace, of Jesus with us! May our Lord Jesus Christ, in His Grace, be with us and may He work for us all that He can work. May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, Brothers and Sisters, when you desire to pray—then may the great High Priest intercede for you! May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you so that when you are downcast He may say, "Let not your heart be troubled." May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you to check you when you are likely to stray aside; to guide you when you know not your way; to inspirit you when you are ready to be cast down; to confirm you when you have almost slipped.

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you when heart and flesh are failing you; when the last hour has come and you are about to

appear before God! God grant you to know, always, all that Christ can do in you and for you, and with you and by you. What better benediction could John, himself, utter?

3. But, now, the third part of our discourse comes under the head of “to whom.” “The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.” Surely if we were to take this in the widest possible sense and say—may it be with you all—it could not be wrong to wish that all should have the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ with them. Yet I know some sound Brethren are very jealous of anything that looks like a wide expression—an expression which would wish good to all. For my own part, I do not understand the nature of the orthodoxy which would limit benevolent desires. I should like to be more and more heterodox in the direction of desiring good to all that come in my way. Would to God that the best that could happen to all men did happen to them!

I would, without the slightest hypocrisy, breathe this desire over all mankind, “The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.” Still, there is no doubt that the context in which it stands and also certain versions of it, do confine this benediction to the *saints* and, practically, it must always be confined to them, for the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is only known and enjoyed by those who have given their hearts to Jesus and are living by Him, in Him and to Him. Let us wish the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to all the saints, at any rate. Some of the saints will hardly acknowledge us, but may the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with them!

They would not let us preach in their pulpits, but may Grace be with them. They would not partake of the communion with us, but may Grace be with them! They call us sectarians and schismatics, but may “the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with them all. Amen!” May it be with every one of them, whoever they may be! If they are in Jesus Christ, may the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with them! If, every now and then, you come across a book written by one who is a long way off from understanding all the Truth of God—yet He knows Jesus Christ—as you read the sweet words that come from his pen concerning the Master, you feel your heart knit to him. Your soul feels that it is a pity that the writer was a High Churchman, but if he loves the Lord Jesus Christ, we forget his errors and are delighted with the life of Jesus which we see in him!

If a man knows Christ, he knows the most important of matters and is possessed of a secret quite as precious as any in our own keeping—for what do we know more than Christ—and what hope have we but in Christ? If you love Christ, give me your hand, my Friend, notwithstanding your blunders! If Christ is all your trust and all your confidence, I am sorry for your eyes that you cannot see a great deal more. I am sorry for your head that you cannot think more straight—but your *heart* is in the right place resting on Jesus, reposing on Him—and who am I that I should judge you? There is a life in Christ which a thousand errors cannot kill! There is a life which is the same in all that have it, however diverse they may happen to be upon opinion or outward ceremony. There is a life eternal and that life is Christ Jesus! And to all that have that life we,

with intensity of heart, say, "The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all."

I notice Paul says this in one of his Epistles to a Church that misbehaved itself dreadfully. It was one of the churches that would not have any minister—a Church where they all spoke as they pleased—to whom Paul said, "God is not the author of confusion." They were so depraved a Church that they allowed an incestuous person to be present at the communion, but still, after the Apostle had rebuked them, he said, "The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." Even so must we say to those who err ignorantly, as the Corinthians did! If we differ from Brethren. If we have to rebuke them. If sometimes they also rebuke us and show temper over it, yet may this be the finale of it all, "The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all."

Should we not wish the highest degree of Grace to all who are in the body of Christ? Let us not utter this benediction merely because we ought to say it, but because we *delight* to say it! Let us not only wish well to the saints because we are bound to wish them well, but because our hearts cannot do otherwise.

II. So now, not to detain you much longer, I ask your earnest attention for a few minutes to THE POSITION OF THIS BENEDICTION. First, I draw what I have to say from the fact that it is the last word of Scripture. I regard it, therefore, as being the Apostle's last and highest wish. We are glad to find that while the Old Testament finishes with a curse—"Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse"—the New Testament concludes with a blessing, "The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all," as if to show that the very life and spirit of a Christian should be blessing. And this should be, to us, our last and highest wish for men—that they may receive and retain the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ!

I wish this blessing to you all, my dear Brothers and Sisters. Whatever you may miss, may the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be always with you. In whatever points you, or any of us may fail, may we never come short of the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ! What if the preacher should preach to others and himself be a castaway? Pray that it be not so! What if a deacon or elder should lead the flock of Christ and yet the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ should not be with him? He would become another Judas or Demas! That would be dreadful. What if you should teach the little ones in the school and yet not learn, yourselves? It would be a sad thing to have come to the Lord's Supper and yet never to have eaten His flesh and drunk His blood—to be immersed in water, but never to have known the Baptism of the Holy Spirit—nor to have been baptized into Christ with the spiritual Baptism!

What a thing it will be, if, after all our professions, all our labors and all our teachings, the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ should *not* be with us! I pray, Brothers and Sisters, whatever other prayer may not be granted, that this may be, concerning every member of this Church and every member of *every* Church of Jesus Christ, that at any rate the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be with us! We cannot do with less than this and we do not need more than this. If we have Grace from Jesus, we shall

have Glory with Jesus, but without it we are without hope! Standing at the end of the Book of Revelation as this does, I next regard its position as indicating what we shall need till the end comes—that is, from now till the descent of our Lord in His Second Advent. This is the one thing we require, “The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.”

May it be with us daily, hourly! May it be with us, instructing us as to our behavior in each generation! May it be with us cleansing us from all sin; enabling us to walk in the Light of God as He is in the light! May it be with us, strengthening us to carry our daily burdens and to bear our witness for His name under the varying circumstances of the ages. May it be with us counseling us when the trials of life distract us! May it be with us transfiguring us from glory to glory till we shall bear the image of Jesus Christ! May it be with us all-sufficiently! Has He not said, “My Grace is sufficient for you”? May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all in every way in which you shall require it till He comes! He can furnish you with the whole armor of God. He can equip you with all the necessities of the pilgrim life.

For our labor as Gospel fishermen He supplies all the nets that we shall require. For our work in His vineyard He gives us every tool. May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us and we shall be swift of foot as a young roe and sure of foot as the hart on the mountainside that slips not, however slippery the crags may be. Only let Christ be with us and we are complete in Him—perfect in Christ Jesus! All the equipment that men shall need between earth and Heaven to fight against Hell, to trample on the world and to enter into eternal perfection is found in Christ! May His Grace be with you all. Amen.

Placed as this blessing is, at the end of the book, there is but this one more thought—this is what we shall wish for when the end comes. We shall come to the end of life, as we come to the end of our Bibles. And oh, aged Friend, may your failing eyes be cheered with the sight of the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ on the last page of life, as you will find it on the last page of your well-thumbed Bible! Perhaps some of you may come to the last page of life before you get Divine Grace—I pray that there you may find it. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you! Or, suppose we should not die—suppose the Lord should suddenly come in His Glory? Oh, then may we have Grace to meet Him!

I am so glad that a benediction closes the Apocalypse, for, as you stand in the book of Revelation, you hear the thunders roll, peal after peal! You see the vials poured forth, darkening the air, and sun and moon turned into blackness and blood! Earth reels beneath your feet and stars fall like fig leaves from the trees! You are full of confusion and dismay until you hear this holy whisper, “The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.” Let every star of the firmament fall where it will—the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is with us! Rock and reel, you mountains! Be dissolved, O Earth, and pass away! If the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is with us, we fear not the end!

We can serenely look upon the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds. Let the last august tribunal sit and men summoned to stand before it to

receive their final doom—we shall, without trembling, advance before that Great White Throne and stand there, if the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is with us—

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

Oh, happy are they, shrouded, sheltered and hidden in Christ their Savior, to whom His Grace shall be like the white robes of Mount Tabor’s transfiguration, for they shall be accepted in the Beloved, glorified in the Glory of their Master! These are they to whom the text shall be fulfilled—“The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.”

Finally, Brothers and Sisters, farewell, and as you go out I would like just to take my place at the doorway, to offer my hand of friendship and say to each one, “Farewell for a little while. This is my best wish for you—The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.” Will you start back and say, “Sir, I know nothing of this Grace”? Then would I ask you to stay a moment while I breathe the prayer, “The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.” Maybe there is only a tear of penitence in your eye, no light of faith is there as yet. May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, poor broken-hearted Penitent! Maybe you do not know Jesus, yet, and you are only *seeking* Him. His Grace be with you now—may He manifest Himself to you!

And you, Backslider, do you feel as if you cannot receive a blessing? The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be *especially* with you, to raise you up and set you on your feet again, as He did fallen Peter! I would like, if I could, to say to the stranger within our gates, tonight, who does not often attend the House of God—it is our heart’s desire for you that you may know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in truth! To the boys and girls here, the pastor says, “God bless you.” Little Mary, or Jane, or John, or Willie, or whatever your name may be, “The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you,” for He says, “Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not.”

As for you, gray-headed Friends, you who will soon be Home, I wish you this parting blessing, “The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.” Till I see you again, “God bless you.” Till the day breaks and the shadows flee away, may the Lord Jesus never be absent from you. Amen and amen!

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