

# “DARE TO BE A DANIEL”

## NO. 2291

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JANUARY 15, 1893.**  
**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
**AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank.”*  
*Daniel 1:8.*

VERY much of our future life will depend upon our earliest days. I like a remark of Mr. Ruskin’s that I remember to have read, though I cannot quote it verbatim. He says, “People often say, ‘We excuse the thoughtlessness of youth,’” but he says, “No, it never ought to be excused. I had far rather hear of thoughtless old age, when a man has done his work—but what excuse can be found for a thoughtless youth? The time for thought is at the beginning of life and there is no period which so much demands, or so much necessitates, thoughtfulness as our early days.” I would that all young men would think so. They say that they must sow their “wild oats.” No, no, my dear young Friend, think before you sow such seed as that, and remember what the reaping will be. See whether there is not better corn to be found than wild oats and try to sow that. Then think *how* you will sow it and *when* you will sow it, for, if you do not think about the sowing—

**“What will the harvest be?”**

If there is any time when the farmer should think, it is surely in the early stages of the plowing and the sowing. If he does not think, then, it will be of small use for him to think afterwards.

Daniel was a young man, and he did think. It was his glory that he so thought that he came to a purpose, and he purposed, not with a kind of superficial, “I will,” but he, “purposed in his *heart*,” and gave his whole self to a certain definite purpose which he deliberately formed. He was a young man—he was also a captive—and that rendered it the more remarkable that he should come to such a decision. He had been stolen away from his father’s house and carried into a foreign land. And you know what men say, “When you are in Rome, you must do as Rome does.” But here was a young man in Babylon who would not do what Babylon did—a youth in a *king’s court* who would not eat what the king ate, or drink what the king drank—a captive whose very name had been changed in order to make him forget his country and his God, for the change in name, as I told you in the reading, was meant to be significant of a change in religion.

But though they might change Daniel’s name, they could not change his nature, nor would he give up anything that he believed to be right. Captive as he was, he had a right royal soul, and he was as free in Babylon as he had been at Jerusalem. And he determined to keep himself so,

for he, “purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank.” Oh, that we had a multitude of young men who knew how to put their feet down! We have a great number, now, who are watching to see *where* to put their foot down, and they will *try* to put it down, not where it is most solid ground, but where it is most turfy, and easy, and soft to the feet! May God give us back the old grit that used to be in old-fashioned Christians, to whom custom was nothing, but God’s Word was everything—to whom it mattered not whether it brought loss or gain—but they did the right and followed the right, cost what it might!

Now, it was because Daniel, while yet a youth, a captive, a student, was so decided in what he did, that his later life became so bright. He would never have been called, “a man greatly beloved,” if he had not been made, by Grace, a youth greatly decided. Neither would he have advanced to the reign of Cyrus, as we read just now, if he had not stood firm in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. You shall read the evening of life in the morning of life, and you shall decide what your evening is to be by what your morning is! God help you, who are beginning life, for, if God begins with you and you begin with God, your life will be one of happy usefulness which will have a truly blessed end!

I am going to talk just now, not so much about Daniel, as about the whole subject of a spirit of decision in such a time as this. Our first head will be that *there are temptations to be resisted* by us, as there were by Daniel. Secondly, *there are right methods of resisting temptation*. And, thirdly, *there are certain points which will have to be proved by experience* while we are in this process of fighting against temptation.

**I. THERE ARE TEMPTATIONS TO BE RESISTED.** There never was a man yet who had faith and who had not trials. Wherever there is faith in God, it will be tested at some time or other—it must be so. It cannot be that the house shall be built, even on the Rock, without the rains descending, the floods coming and the winds beating upon that house. Though it shall not fall, yet it shall be tried by a force that would make it fall were it not Divinely sustained.

Now, first, look at Daniel’s temptations. In his case, *the temptation was very specious*. He was told to eat the portion of food that, every day, came from the king’s table. Could he need any better? And he was commanded to drink the measure of wine, generally the best in the world, that was sent from the king’s table. He might have fared like a prince! Could he have any objection to that? He had no objection except this—*that it would defile him*. Do you understand what he meant by that? There were certain foods used by the Babylonians, such as the flesh of swine, the flesh of the hare and of certain fish, that were unclean, and when these came from the king’s table, if Daniel ate them, he would be breaking the Law of Moses as given in the Book of Leviticus, and thus he would be defiled. Remember that the food which was allowed to Israel was to be killed in a certain way. The blood must be effectually drained from the flesh, for he that ate the blood defiled himself thereby.

Now, the Babylonians did not kill their beasts in that way and the eating of flesh which had not been killed according to the Law would have de-

filed Daniel. You know how careful the Jews are to this day with regard to the butchering of the food they eat. More than that, usually such a king as Nebuchadnezzar, before he ate food, dedicated it to his god. Bel-Merodach was greatly venerated by Nebuchadnezzar as god, so that a libation of wine was poured out to Merodach, and a certain portion of food was put aside, so that, in fact, it was offered to idols—and Daniel felt that he would be defiled if he ate of meat which might be unclean, and which was certain to be offered to idols—it would be breaking the Law of God—so Daniel would not eat it.

But the temptation to do so must have been very strong, for somebody would say, “Why, what difference can it make what you eat, or what you drink?” Under the Christian dispensation, it might be another matter, but under the Jewish dispensation, it made a great deal of difference whether a man ate or drank certain things. Others would say, “Why is Daniel so particular? There have been other Jews here who have unhesitatingly eaten the king’s meat. We read of king Jehoiakim, that he had a portion from the king’s table every day, and he does not seem to have made any objection! Why does this young fellow put his back up so and make himself so odd, and so different from everybody else? There is no use in being so strict and sticking out about little things.” So the temptation came to Daniel with great speciousness.

Then, *the temptation seemed the road to honor*. To consent to eat of the king’s meat and to drink of the king’s wine, seemed to be the way to get on in Babylon. They would say to Daniel, “Surely, if you begin by objecting to what the monarch sends you from his table, you will never get on at court. People with a conscience should not go to court.” I do not say that, today, but I do think that they ought not to be members of Parliament! It must be amazingly difficult for a man with a conscience to go in and out *there!* But for Daniel to begin with a conscience like this, so particularly tender that it was offended by a glass of the king’s wine, or a morsel of the king’s meat, why, any good old fatherly man would have said, “My boy, you will never get on—your religion will always stand in your way. I am sure you will never come to be much.” That would have been a great mistake, however, for Daniel became a great ruler and he prospered in the world through that very conscientiousness which it was thought would spoil all his prospects!

Somebody would whisper in Daniel’s ear, “It is *the law of the land*. The king, who is supreme, has *ordered* that you should eat this portion and drink this measure of wine each day.” Yes, but whatever the law may be, and whatever custom may be, the servants of God serve a higher King and they have but one rule and one custom! “We ought to obey God rather than man.” They are ready to be the most obedient subjects up to a certain point, but when the Law of God comes in, then are they dogged to a degree of obstinacy. They can burn, but they cannot turn—they can die, but they cannot deny the Law of the Lord, their God!

In Daniel’s case, if he had done what it was proposed to him to do, *it would have been giving up the separated life*. He felt that if he constantly fed upon the luxurious food of the king, he would be reckoned to be a Chaldean like the king, and so, to keep up his separation as belonging to

the chosen seed, of whom Balaam prophesied, "The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations," Daniel would not eat of the royal fare which was provided for him. Had he done so, he would have melted into a Chaldean and given up being an Israelite, to whom belonged the promises. This is the temptation of the present day. Profess to be a Christian, but float along the common current of the world! Take the name of a Christian and go to your place of worship, and go through your ceremonies—but do not bring your religion into your business! Act as other people do! This is the temptation of the time—as the majority of men think, so think you—and as the majority of men say, so say you! And as the majority of Christian professors talk, so talk you! This is the Satanic temptation which is wrecking our churches and doing, I know not how much mischief to men of God! But Daniel, though tempted strongly to do like that, would not yield. He "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank."

Now, in our own case, what are the particular temptations to which we, as believing men and believing women, are exposed?

I cannot go into the question of individuals, but I can imagine someone here, tonight, who is in a position where he is asked to do what it is not right for him to do. But he says, "I shall be fired if I refuse to do it! I know others do it and I must do it." My dear young fellow, allow me to put before you, Daniel, who purposed in his heart that he would not eat the king's meat. I talked, the other day, with a gentleman who was the trustee for one of the wealthiest men in England, and who now is trustee of the money that the same gentleman has left to all his children. Those children have grown up and have come to years of maturity, but they still make him the trustee, paying him for looking after all their money, which is an immense amount. I was asking him how it was that he gained the confidence of the family so that they put him in such a position where all that they have is under his care and discretion.

He said that he remembered, when he was but a boy, the head of the establishment said to him one day, "Say that I am out," and he replied, "Please, Sir, I could not say that, for it would not be true." Of course the master was very angry and told him that he must not bring his scruples there, or he would never get on in life—but he never asked him to tell a lie again—and when somebody was needed to act as confidential clerk, that young fellow was selected and, knowing him to be one who would be faithful and true, his master took the opportunity to promote him! And he put implicit confidence in him from that hour. Sometimes you will find that to be out and out for the right will be the making of you. I would not urge integrity upon you from such a motive, but, since the devil will tell you that it will be the ruin of you, I will urge you to stand fast to the right, to speak the truth at all times, to be straightforward, for you will find that honesty is the best policy. Any man who speaks the truth will find it the best thing in the long run! To lie, to stray from the truth, to stall, to try to hold with the hare and run with the hounds involves you in a world of difficulty and trouble! Be straight as Daniel was. The Lord help you to be so!

But now it comes to Christian people in another way. *Some would tempt us to assist the cause of God by amusements.* Christian people are asked to go to places, well, *very doubtful places*, to say the least, and sometimes this evil is introduced into religion, till, as one of our friends said most truly in prayer, tonight, they have brought the theater into the house of God! They have really done so and brought back chaos and old night, primeval darkness. Oh, that God would speak, again, and say, "Let there be light," and chase these things of darkness away once and for all! I charge every Christian here to make his resolve that, if others do these things, as for Daniel, he has purposed in his heart that he will not defile himself with the king's meat, or with the wine which the king drank!

So today, again, there is the temptation of love for intellectual novelty. Instead of the old, old Gospel, and the old, old Book, for which God be thanked forever, we are to place science, which is generally conjecture, in the place of Revelation—and the thoughts of men are to cover and bury the sublime thoughts of God. I see ministers and churches deluded and led astray by these temptations. As for me, if no one else will say it, I purpose in my heart not to defile myself with this portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank. We need still to have old-fashioned Believers who will sing the verse we sang just now—

**"Should all the forms that men devise  
Assault my faith with treacherous art,  
I'd call them vanity and lies,  
And bind the Gospel to my heart,"**

God send us many Daniels of that sort!

And, besides this, we have, nowadays, the temptation to general laxity. People do, even *Christian* people do, what Christian people should not do. And they excuse themselves by quoting the example of other Christians, or by saying, "We are not so precise as our fathers were." Has God changed? Is there not a text that says, "The Lord your God is a jealous God"? Does He permit His people to sin and take pleasure in it? And are we to forget that precept, "Be you holy, for I am holy"? Is there to be no separation from the world? And is it no longer true that, "If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him"? Is there no such text as this, "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, says the Lord Almighty"? I pray you, Brothers and Sisters, now, if never before, tie everything up as tightly as you can! The storm is now so heavy that you need to go with close-reefed sails. Oh, for a Daniel's declaration that you will not defile yourself with the portion of the king's meat, or with the wine which he drank!

I could continue long at this point, but I have given you the general principle which you can work out for yourselves. Christians have meat to eat of which the world knows not. We have our re-creation—that is the way to pronounce recreation—re-creation. We go to our Creator and He makes us anew. We have our nights of holy mirth. We have our days of delight. There is a King, a portion of whose meat we rejoice to eat, and of whose wine we delight to drink. But as to questionable things, things of

the world, and all that tends towards departure from the living God, we say that, by His Grace, we determine not to defile ourselves with them!

**II.** Now I come to the second point. THERE ARE RIGHT METHODS OF RESISTING TEMPTATION.

And the first is that *the heart must be set*. “Daniel purposed in his heart.” He looked the matter up and down and he settled it in his heart. Before he asked Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego anything about it, he had made up his own mind. Oh, for a made-up mind! Oh, for the man who knows how to look at his compass and to steer his vessel where he ought to go! God grant you Divine Grace, young man, to nail your colors to the mast and to be determined that you will keep to the right course, come fair wind or come foul! Daniel had settled it in his heart. The Grace of God is a great heart-settler. Where it comes, men become firm and positive, for the Lord teaches them to profit.

The next thing is that *the life must be willing*. Daniel was helped in carrying out his resolution by his own personal character. God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. Whenever a man is brought into favor and tender love, and is a good man, there is something about him that has commended itself. There is a something about him that is lovable, or he would not have been loved. It is of no use for a man to say, “I have made up my mind upon certain things,” and to keep doggedly fighting over those matters, while, at the same time, the whole of his life is unkind, ungenerous and unlovable. Yes, by all manner of means be a martyr if you like, but do not martyr everybody else, for it is very possible to get so much grit in you that you become all grit. There are some who have carried firmness into obstinacy and determination into bigotry, which is a thing to be shunned. Yield everything that may be yielded! Give up mere personal whims and oddities, but as for the things of God, stand as firm as a rock about them. God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince who was set over him, but there was in Daniel, by God’s Grace, a generosity and frankness and nobleness of character which even the mighty Chaldean admired. Oh, for a grand character to support one’s religious determination!

Then observe that *the protest must be courteously borne*. While Daniel was very decided, he was very courteous in his protests. He went to the prince and he told him his scruples. He requested that he might not be obliged to defile himself. There are many ways of doing the same thing and some people always select the very ugliest way of doing everything. Let us ask for wisdom and discretion in doing that which is right. Firmness of purpose should be adorned with gentleness of manner in carrying it out. It was so with young Daniel.

Next to that, *self-denial must be sought*. I do not think that Daniel had any objection to eat flesh, or to drink wine, for he evidently did both, according to other portions of this Book, but his objection was, for religious reasons, against the *king’s* meat and the *king’s* wine, so he said, “To make it clear that nothing that enters my lips has ever been dedicated to idols, let me have nothing to eat but vegetables—lentils, beans, peas and such like things—and for drink, let me have that of which kings do not often

take much, let me have nothing but water, in order to make quite sure that I have no libation that has been offered to idols.”

So Daniel and his three companions denied themselves luxuries, which, perhaps, they enjoyed as much as anybody else, so as by no means to defile themselves with anything which had been associated with the Babylonian idols. If you will be out and out for God, you must expect self-denial and you will have to habituate yourself to it. Be ready for a bad name; be willing to be called a bigot; be prepared for loss of friendships; be prepared for anything so long as you can stand fast by Him who bought you with His precious blood. He that should run the gauntlet of earth and Hell for a thousand years, and yet hold fast his integrity, would be a gainer by all that he lost—he would gain an increase of eternal joy by all he suffered. Therefore, I charge you, seek for the Daniel spirit.

And then *the test must be boldly put*. Daniel showed his faith when he said to Melzar, “Feed me and my three companions on this common fare; give us nothing else. We do not ask you to leave us to our plan for twelve months; try us for a short time. I do not say a day or two; but take as many days as you like. Put us to the test and if, at the end of the appointed time, we are not all the better for our plain fare, then we will consider further, but, for the present, will you try us?” I think that a Christian man should be willing to be tried. He should be pleased to let his religion be put to the test. “There,” he says, “hammer away if you like.” Do you need to be carried to Heaven on a feather bed? Do you need to always be protected from everybody’s sneer and frown—and to go to Heaven as if you were riding in the procession on Lord Mayor’s day? Well, if so, you are very much mistaken if you think you are going to have it so! God give you courage, more and more of it, through faith in Himself! May you be willing to put your religion to every proper test, the test of life, and the test of death, too!

**III.** Now, in closing, I want to show you that THERE ARE CERTAIN POINTS WHICH WILL HAVE TO BE PROVED BY EXPERIENCE. I speak, now, to you Christian people who hold fast by the old doctrines of the Gospel, who mean to hold fast by the old ways and will not be led astray by modern temptations. Now what have you to prove?

Well, I think that you have to prove that *the old faith gives you a bright and cheerful spirit*. Really, I cannot help laughing, sometimes, when I see myself as some other people see me. One gentleman describes me as having “settled down into an ever-deepening gloom.” It is a curious thing that I was not aware of this at all! You who know me and with whom I mix—have you noticed this “ever-deepening gloom” falling upon me? Do I preach like a man who has lost all the joy of life and all his comfort? I think not! If there is a happier man beneath the skies than I am, I will not change places with him, for I am perfectly satisfied to take things as they come to me—and I am glad that he has more to rejoice in than I have! Yet I am sure I do not know what he has that I have not. I have God in Heaven, I have God on earth! My heart is filled with an intense satisfaction in the firm conviction that what I believe is true and that what I preach to you is true! I am ready to stand before the Judgment Seat to give an account of what I have preached! That which I have asked you to

believe, I myself believe, and if I am lost with faith in Christ, and you are lost, well, we will both be lost and go down in the same ship, for I have not a little private boat on the davits, ready to be let down, that I may get away by myself! I shall stick to the old ship and be the last man to leave it—and I shall not leave it—neither will the ship go down, but it will carry us all safely to the desired haven!

Well, dear Friends, if you hold by this truth, do not let that ever make you gloomy! Men talk of “Gloomy Calvinism!” Have you never read about that “awful gloomy Calvinism”? Think of Calvin, a man who suffered from somewhere about 83 separate diseases—the most pained and tortured of all men as to his body—yet look at his life and read his Commentaries and his other books, and see the deep and wondrous calm that filled his mighty soul! There was nothing gloomy about his Calvinism—it was all bright and light and cheering to him. They do not know us, or they would not attack us as they do! Perhaps they would, though, for the enemies of the Truth of God are always ready to lie in their throats.

Another point that we shall have to prove, dear Friends, *is that the old faith promotes holiness of life*. There are some who say, “Those people cry down good works.” Do we? If you bring them as a price to *purchase* salvation, we *do* cry them down. “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” and, as somebody says, “The rags have the best of it, for they are worth more than our righteousnesses.” We do say that, but, though we cry down good works as a *ground of confidence*, we wish to abound in them more and more to the glory of God! Go to some people and hear them *talk* about good works and go to other people and see them *done*! We wish for you and for ourselves, that we may be so holy in our lives and so gracious in our conversation that even our adversaries shall be compelled to say, “Whatever their doctrines may be, their lives are right.” We have to prove that we are fatter and fairer than those who eat the king’s meat! God help us to prove that we are more truthful and more godly than those who have not like precious faith!

The next thing, dear Friends, is that we must prove that *the old faith produces much love of our fellow men*. You know that, nowadays, the watchword is, “the enthusiasm of humanity.” It is a curious thing that those churches that have such a wonderful “enthusiasm of humanity” speak of us as if we were always talking of God and forgetting men. Well, well, which of these new-fangled churches has an orphanage? It is very fine to talk about Christian socialism and what you are going to do for the poor—but what have you done? Much of it is just chatter, chatter and nothing else! But the godly, who feel that God is All, are, after all, those who care most for men. And those who believe most firmly that the unbelieving sinner will be lost are the men who are most anxious to have him saved! Those who believe that there is no salvation but by the precious blood are determined that Christ shall see of the travail of His soul. Those who believe that salvation is all of Grace, from first to last, are moved to preach it with heart and soul wherever they have the opportunity. And, when God makes up His last account, it shall be found, I trust, that the best lovers of men have been those who were first of all the best lovers of God! By your help, by your kindness, by your benevolence, prove it, so

that when they come to look at you who have eaten nothing but vegetables and who have drunk water, they may find that, after all, you appear fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children who ate the portion of the king’s meat and drank his wine. Let our labor for the conversion of souls be incessant! Let us abound and superabound in it!

And then, dear Friends, let us prove that *the old faith enables us to have great patience in trial*. He who believes the Doctrines of Grace is the man who can suffer! He who falls back on Predestination and the Sovereignty of God is the man to bear burdens that would crush another! And when we come to die, who will die best? Will it be the man who is trusting in his own righteousness, or trusting in constantly changing philosophy that alters like a chameleon, according to the light that falls on it? Who will die best? You, with all this flimsy stuff, or he who, believing in his God, and in his Bible, falls back upon the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ?

Finally, Brothers and Sisters, what is needed is that *we who hold the old faith should be in a better state of spiritual health*. May every Grace be developed! May every faculty be consecrated! May your whole lives be spent in walking with God and may you be such men and women that, if we need evidences of the truth of our holy religion, we may bring you forward and say, “See what Grace has made them! A belief in the Doctrines of Grace has fashioned them as they are, and they, themselves, are the proof of what they believe.”

May God bless to many here the words which I have spoken so feebly—and may many a young man—

**“Dare to be a Daniel!  
Dare to stand alone!  
Dare to have a purpose firm!  
Dare to make it known!”**

## EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON. DANIEL 1.

**Verse 1.** *In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.* Sin always brings its punishment. King Jehoiakim did evil in the sight of the Lord, so God used Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, to be the rod in His hand to scourge His sinful people and their wicked king.

**2.** *And the Lord gave Jehoiakim, king of Judah, into his hand.* It was not merely that Nebuchadnezzar was strong enough to overcome the Jews, but God handed over His people into Nebuchadnezzar’s hand. The enemy cannot touch the Church of God without Divine permission.

**2.** *With part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.* See how holy things, once used for the noblest purposes, become of no further service when the Spirit of God is gone from the Church. You know that when the Philistines captured the Ark of God, and put it in the temple of Dagon, the fish-god fell down broken before the Ark. Nothing of this kind happened in Babylon. The holy vessels were put into the heathen temple and no miraculous result followed, for

God cares nothing for golden vessels in and of themselves. When sin has polluted His people, their precious things are nothing to Him. They may go where men please to carry them. All their value lies in God accepting the service rendered *through* them. So, Brothers, you may keep up your attendance at the Lord’s Supper, and your preaching, and your gathering for worship—but they will all be nothing without the Spirit of God!

Look how the Lord’s Supper is turned into the sacrifice of the “mass,” and how Baptism is represented as the channel or medium of regeneration, when once the Spirit of God has gone from the Divinely-appointed ordinances! Besides these holy vessels, Nebuchadnezzar took the best of the people of the land and carried them away captive. He singled out the rich and the noble—those who had education and other attainments—while he left the poorest of the land behind. Sometimes those who are the most exalted will have the most suffering.

**3, 4.** *And the king spoke unto Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king’s seed, and of the princes; children—youths—*

**4.** *In whom was no blemish, but well favored, and skillful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king’s palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.* Nebuchadnezzar was, in many respects, an enlightened ruler. He looked upon this as one of the best things that he could do for his court and vast empire, that he should pick out the best of the young men of every nation, who should bring their national knowledge with them, and then, being sprightly in body and nimble in mind, should be trained to become counselors, or advisers of the court, or be prepared to fill important offices as they became vacant.

**5.** *And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king’s meat, and of the wine which he drank.* Treating them exceedingly well, thinking, perhaps, that the very food they ate might help to tone their minds for the work to which he had called them. He wished to make them into true Chaldeans, so he ordained that they must eat of the meat he ate and drink of the wine he drank.

**5.** *So nourishing them three years.* Putting them to college, as it were, for three years—

**5, 6.** *That at the end thereof they might stand before the king. Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.* You know these men’s names, you will recognize them when you hear them in their altered form.

**7.** *Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names.* This was to Chaldeanize them, to take away from them everything Jewish.

**7.** *For he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.* Now these young men’s Jewish names had, each one of them, the name of God worked into their texture. I need not stay to bring it out, but there is a signification about each name connecting it with God. You hear in two of them the sound of El, which is a name of God, and in the other two, the termination lah, which brings out the name Jehovah. The new names that were given to them appear to have been connected with idols—at all

events, it was so with Belteshazzar and Abednego, or Abednebo. The intent was to make Babylonians of them.

**8.** *But Daniel purposed in his heart.*—I always like to come across a, "but," when there is any scheme of this kind. When the plan is to seduce men from right, then it is a happy thing to have a but, but, but, "But Daniel purposed in his heart," determined, settled, fixed it.

**8.** *That he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank.* Daniel here mentions only himself, but the three others were one with him in the resolve and the request. He was the leader. Sometimes there would be no Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, if there was not a Daniel. The other three might never have had the strength of mind if it had not been for the Daniel who dared to stand alone. But having such a brave leader, they dared to stand with him. We often owe much to spiritually-minded men who are able to help others to take a right course.

**8, 9.** *Therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.* It was like the case of Joseph and Potiphar. Daniel's gentle disposition, his loving ways, his open and frank spirit had won upon the prince of the eunuchs, so that he not only regarded him with favor, but even had a tender love for him. God has the hearts of all men under His control and He may give His people favor where they least expect it.

**10.** *And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who has appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse looking than the children which are of your sort? Then shall you make me endanger my head to the king.* What a reign of terror there is in a despotic country where kings can do as they will! For the smallest offense, a man's head may be in danger!

**11, 12.** *Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, Prove your servants, I beseech you, ten days; and let them give us vegetables to eat, and water to drink.* I like it that the Holy Spirit uses their old names whenever it is proper that they should be used. May we never lose our old names! I mean, our *new* names, for they have grown old with some of us now! May we always be known as the servants of God and not as Chaldeans! The prince of the eunuchs gave Daniel a kind of hint, that, if the officer under him chose to take the responsibility of altering the food and drink, he might do so, and the prince would not interfere with the experiment. So Daniel turns to Melzar and says to him, "Prove your servants for a suitable time. Let us have vegetables to eat, and water to drink." He put his request in an extreme light in order to be quite sure that nothing brought to him would come from the king's table.

**13.** *Then let our countenances be looked upon before you, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as you see, deal with your servants.* "If we do fall off and grow thin, and look pale and ill through this coarse food, as you think it, well then, alter it. But if, on the other hand, we should be as well as those who have eaten the

king’s meat, and drunk the king’s wine, then let us keep to our vegetables and water.”

**14.** *So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. A round number, standing for a sufficient period to afford a fair test.*

**15.** *And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer—and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king’s meat.* I doubt not that the satisfaction of heart which they had in keeping themselves undefiled tended to give them a good digestion and thus they were more likely to be well than were the others.

**16, 17.** *Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them vegetables. As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom.* God can help us in our study. We may pray as much over what we have to learn as over what we have to do. I believe that, often, a difficult problem can be best solved by *prayer*. All true knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom are the gifts of God.

**17-19.** *And Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king.* They were made to be his attendants, his advisers—these very men who had been so absurd as not to eat the food from the royal table—so obstinate as to consider that they would defile themselves if they did! It is these absurd and obstinate people who cannot be bent, but must be straight—the upright men who shall stand before kings—for God is with them.

**20.** *And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.* They communed with God and that was better than being magicians or stargazers! Men of God are ten times better than all that lot put together!

**21.** *And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus.* Those two words summarize the whole of Daniel’s history—“Daniel continued.” May God give to each of us here Divine Grace to continue as Daniel did!

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# IS IT TRUE?

## NO. 1930

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY,  
NOVEMBER 21, 1886,  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,  
ON LORD'S DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 12, 1886.**

***“Nebuchadnezzar spoke and said to them, Is it true, O Shadrach,  
Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods,  
nor worship the golden image which I have set up?”  
Daniel 3:14.***

DEAR Friends who are not yet decided, if you would become followers of the Lord Jesus Christ it will be well for you to count the cost. It was our Lord's custom to bid men consider what His service might involve. His frequent declaration was, “He that takes not his cross, and follows after Me, is not worthy of Me.” He knew and would have us know that it is no child's play to be a soldier of the Cross. If we count upon ease in this warfare, we shall be grievously disappointed. We must fight if we would reign.

One reason for this is that the world, like Nebuchadnezzar, expects us all to follow its fashions and to obey its rules. The god of this world is the devil and he claims implicit obedience. Sin in some form or other is the image which Satan sets up and requires us to serve. The tyranny of the world is fierce and cruel—and those who will not worship its image will find that the burning fiery furnace has not yet cooled. If you mean to be a Christian and, therefore, intend to cast off the bondage of this present evil world, your resolve must be taken to bear all consequences rather than worship the idol of the hour. The world's flute, harp, sackbut and psaltery must sound in vain for you! A nobler music must charm your ears and make you bid defiance to the world's threats. The true Believer's stand must be taken and he must determine that he will obey God rather than man. That which commends itself to your conscience as right and pure and true, you *must* follow without reserve—but that which is wrong and foul and false—you must quit with fixed resolve!

You cannot be Christ's disciple unless you have come to this point and abide by it, for Jesus leads only in the ways of righteousness. He who is a loyal subject of King Jesus will not attempt to live in sin and live in Grace, too, for he will know that no one can serve two masters. The love of the world and the love of God will no more mix than oil and water. To attempt a fusion of these two is to bring confusion into your heart and life. The prophetic challenge is a wise one—“If the Lord is God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him.” One or the other you may serve, but not both!

Every man who knows the Lord Jesus Christ and has been washed in His blood—and has been made a partaker of the Divine Nature—will understand that he has done with the friendship of this present evil world. The world may demand that he should yield to its behests, but as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, he will refuse to do so. As Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said to Nebuchadnezzar, so will true Believers say to the world—“We will not serve your gods, nor worship the golden image which you have set up.”

Now, if you can refuse to sin, if you can refuse, even, to parley with iniquity, it is well with you. If you stand out for truth and righteousness, your conscience will approve your position and this is, in itself, no small comfort. It will be an ennobling thing for your manhood to have proved its strength and it will tend to make it stronger. Your course of resolute right will be acceptable with God and this, also, is an exceedingly great reward. I had rather please the Lord than win the applause of all the angels in Heaven and all the princes on earth! In that day, when the blessed and only Potentate shall distribute crowns and palms to the faithful, it will be the height of bliss to hear Him say, “Well done, you good and faithful servant.”

Perhaps some of you may say, “We will not bow before the gods of the world, but we will worship God only: we will follow Christ, and none beside.” This is a brave resolve—you will never regret it if you stand to it even to the end.

We are glad to hear you speak thus, but *is it true?* “Is it true?” These words I shall take by themselves and set them on fire. No question can be more necessary or more searching than, “Is it true?” It is very well to profess, but, “Is it true?” It is very fine to promise and vow, but, “Is it true?” It is a bold thing to talk of defying Nebuchadnezzar and his fiery furnace, but, “Is it true?” Skeptics question your declaration with a sarcastic sneer. Sinners question it with an open unbelief and saints question it with deep anxiety to have you sincere. From many sides comes the query, “Is it true?” It must be asked, it will be asked, it ought to be asked and, therefore, I ask it, “Is it true?”

**I. Follower of Christ, BE READY FOR THE QUESTION, “IS IT TRUE?”**

*Do not reckon to live unnoticed*, for a fierce light beats about every Christian. You will be sure to meet with someone whom you respect or fear who will demand of you, “Is it true?” Nebuchadnezzar was a great personage to these three holy men—he was their despotic lord, their employer, their influential friend. In his hands rested their liberties and their lives. He was, moreover, their benefactor, for he had set them in high office in his empire. All hope of further promotion lay with him and if they would prosper and rise in the world, they must earn his smile. Many young Christians are tried with this temptation. Many worldly advantages may be gained by currying favor with certain ungodly men who are like little Nebuchadnezzars—and this is a great peril. They are bid to do wrong by one who is their superior, their employer, their patron. Now comes the test! Will they endure the trial hour? They say that they can endure it, but

is it true? Let my hearers stand prepared for such an ordeal, for in all probability it will come. Some Nebuchadnezzar will put it to you pretty plainly—"Will you do as I wish, or will you obey God?" At such a time I pray that you may answer in the right manner without a second thought—and so prove that your love to God is true.

Nebuchadnezzar spoke in peremptory tones, as if he could not believe that any mortal upon earth could have the presumption to dispute his will! He cannot conceive that one employed under his patronage will dare to resist his bidding! He demands indignantly, "Is it true?" He will not believe it! He must have been misinformed! Can there exist a being in all his wide dominions who can have the impudence to think for himself, or the audacity to insinuate that it can be wrong to do what Nebuchadnezzar commands? He will not believe it! It is condescension on his part even to ask, "Is it true?" You will meet with persons so accustomed to be obeyed that they think it hard that you do not hasten to carry out their wishes. The infidel father says to his boy, "John, is it true that you go to a place of worship against my wishes? How dare you set up to be better than your father and mother?"

Often ungodly men profess that they do not believe in the conversion of their fellow workmen. Is it true, John, that you have become religious? A pretty fellow! Why, you used to sing a jolly song as well as other people and now you whine out a Psalm like other canting hypocrites! Is it true? Why, you could empty a glass and follow pretty games like the rest of us—and now you profess to be afraid of doing wrong! Is it true? Are you really such a fool? You seem almost afraid to put one foot before another for fear you should be hauled over the coals. Are you really the same fellow who could once drink and swear? "Is it true?"

They insinuate that you are out of your head, that your wits have gone wool-gathering and that you are the dupe of fanatics. I do not see the sense of such suggestions, but I suppose *they* do. In one form or other they put to you the question, "Is it true? Can you really be of this opinion and do you really intend to carry it out?" Beloved Brothers and Sisters, I want you to be ready for this assault and ready to answer without hesitation—"It is most certainly true."

You will not be able to go through life without being discovered—a lighted candle cannot be hid! There is a feeling among some good people that it will be wise to be very reticent and hide their light under a bushel. They intend to lie low all during the war and come out when the palms are being distributed! They hope to travel to Heaven by the back lanes and skulk into Heaven in disguise. Ah me, what a degenerate set! How was it Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came up to the front when the king's command was given? They could not consistently keep back. They were public men, set over provinces and it was necessary that they should set an example. They had been summoned with the rest of the rulers to attend the great ceremony and their course of action upon this public occasion would be a guide to all other Jews in the Babylonian dominions!

It would not have been enough for them to stay at home and send in the excuse that they were not well, or were called elsewhere upon urgent business. Others might do this and not be blamed, but these leaders could not shun the conflict. They must try the question between the living God and the golden idol. They must not only abstain from idolatry, but they must bear their public protest against it or else they would be unfaithful to their Lord. Rest assured, my fellow Christians, that at some period or other—in the most quiet lives—there will come a moment for open decision! Days will come when we must speak out or prove traitors to our Lord and to His Truths.

Perhaps you have fallen among godly people and so you have gone on quietly for a time—but look for storms! If you live with worldlings, perhaps they have not yet suspected you because of your exceeding closeness of disposition—but your secret will be discovered! You cannot long hold fire in the hollow of your hand, or keep a candle under the bed. Godliness, like murder, will soon be discovered! You will not always be able to travel to Heaven in secret! In every house there comes a time when each person of the family has to take sides and acknowledge to whom he belongs. The most timid wife, or the most unassuming child will be compelled to say, “I, also, am Christ’s disciple.” Be ready at once to answer the question, “Is it true?”

To be fully prepared to answer the enquiry of opposers, *act upon sound reasons*. Be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. Be able to show why you are a believer in God, why you worship the Lord Jesus Christ, why you trust in His atoning Sacrifice and why you make Him the regulator of your life. Show why you cannot do what others do—why, being a child of God—your nature is changed and you have no wish to do that which you once delighted to do in the days of your unregeneracy. Ask the Lord to help you to go to work with Bible reasons at your fingertips—for these are the best of reasons and bear a high authority about them—so that when the question is put to you, “Is it true?” you may be able to say, “Yes, it is true and this is why it is true! At such-and-such a time God revealed Himself to me, in His Grace, and opened my blind eyes to see things in a true light. He renewed my nature when He delivered me from the burden of sin. He made me to be a child of God when I found peace through His name and, because of all this, I cannot grieve my loving Lord by living in sin. I am not my own, I am bought with a price and, therefore, I must do the will of Him that redeemed me with His own blood.”

I am sure that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would never have stood out against the imperious monarch as they did if they had not known their bearings and well understood why it was that Jehovah, alone, is to be worshipped as God. When the mind is established, the heart is more likely to be firm. Know your duty and the arguments for it and you are the more likely to be steadfast in the hour of temptation. These three men were instructed men, well trained in the Law of the Lord and, there-

fore, they stood fast where the more ignorant and uninstructed yielded at once.

Next, take care that you always *proceed with deep sincerity*. Superficial profession soon ends in thorough apostasy. Only heart-work will stand the fire. Never let your speech outrun your heart. Do not profess to be more than you really are. Remember, all your professions will have to be tested and the question will be made a burning one for you, "Is it true?" Mind that it is true, all true, thoroughly true! Alas, my Friends, how much there is of praying, singing, teaching and preaching which is not real work! How much there is of Christian thought—yes, and what we call, "experience"—which is not true to the person who talks of having thought and experienced it! How much of external religion is fiction, fluff, form, foam! What is needed is solid reality. We need a religion which will bear us up under the heaviest burdens and make us patient under the sharpest pains. We need a religion which we can die with. It is a most blessed thing to be able to face death every day like the Apostle who said, "I die daily"—by this daily education we shall learn how to die gloriously at the last. Put yourself through your paces and do not believe that your religion is worth a penny unless it will bear death, judgment and the eternal world.

God grant us to be true in our first repentance and very thorough in it and, as we begin, so may we go on, not borrowing our religion and using it at second-hand, but with personal sincerity making every truth our own. We need that the Revelation of God should be a revelation to us—that repentance, faith, hope, love, holiness should be our own private possessions, our own inheritance! Then when the question comes, "Is it true?" we shall promptly answer before the living God, "It is true. O You heart-searching Lord, You know that I love You!"

This being done, *accustom yourself to act with solemn determination before God on every matter which concerns morals and religion*. Many very decent people are not self-contained, but are dependent upon the assistance of others. They are like the houses which our London builders run up so quickly in long rows—if they did not help to keep each other up they would all tumble down at once—for no one of them could stand alone! How much there is of joint-stock company religion, wherein hypocrites and formalists keep each other in countenance! Where things are not quite so bad as this, yet there is too little personal establishment in the faith. So many people have a "lean-to" religion. If their minister, or some other leading person were taken away, their back wall would be gone and they would fall to the ground.

In some cases the wife and mother, or the husband and father, or the friend and teacher constitute the main support of the individual's religion—he leans upon others and if these fail him that is the end of his hope. Friends, this sort of religion will not do! You cannot, all your life, have these good people to be your supporters and if you could have them in life they must be separated from you by death. It is a safe thing for every Christian to be in the habit of judging for himself as to what is right and then to adhere to it whether others do so or not. We have need, nowadays,

to set our face as a flint against sin and error. We must purpose in our own heart what we will do and then stand to our purpose. Happy is he who dares to be in the right with two or three. Happier still is he who will stand in the right even if the choice two or three should quit it! He who can stand alone is a man, indeed! Every man of God should be such. Athanasius *contra mundum* is a grand figure. Against the whole world Athanasius proclaimed the Godhead of Christ and he won the day. If you will not go to the world, the world will have, one day, to come to you.

Once more, dear Friends, when your determination is formed, *act in the light of eternity*. Do not judge the situation by the king's threat and by the heat of the burning fiery furnace, but by the everlasting God and the eternal life which awaits you! Let not flute, harp, and sackbut fascinate you, but listen to the music of the glorified! Men frown at you, but you can see God smiling on you and so you are not moved. It may be that you will be unable to grow rich in your trade if you are honest, but in the light of eternity, you will gladly forego the luxuries of wealth to keep a clear conscience. It may be that you will be discharged from your employment unless you can wink at wrong and be the instrument of injustice. Be content to lose place rather than to lose peace. These three holy men took the burning fiery furnace into their account and yet they cast the balance in favor of fidelity to God! Brothers and Sisters, have an eye for the endless future. Never forget Heaven and Hell and that sublime gathering around the Great White Throne when you and I shall be of the company.

Now I am sure that these good men believed in immortality or they would never have dared the violence of the flames. The martyrs, when they went to the stake, were great fools unless they believed that they should live forever and that in the great hereafter they would find a Divine recompense for the torments they were about to suffer! If in this life, only, they had hope, they were certainly poor economists. Believing in the Glory of that word, "Well done, good and faithful servants," and weighing eternity as against time—and life at the right hand of God as against a cruel death—the martyrs felt that the eternal was by far the weightier matter and so they went to prison and to death without a question! These three brave men dared the rage of an infuriated tyrant because they saw Him who is invisible and had respect unto the recompense of the reward. You also must come to live a great deal in the future or else you will miss the chief fountain of holy strength. If you are living for this life, you will soon sell your souls for so many pieces of silver. But if you project yourselves into eternity and live the life eternal, no bribe will lure you from the ways of righteousness. If your ears can hear, by anticipation, the thunder of that sentence, "Depart, you cursed," you will not dare to incur it! If that sweeter sound, "Come, you blessed," charms your ears, you will be strong in your resolve to follow the Lamb wherever He goes. Yes, with eternity before you and around you—your determination will be fixed—and you will, with dauntless spirit, meet the challenge, "Is it true?"

God make us champions of His holy cause! Heroism can only be worked in us by the Holy Spirit. Humbly yielding your whole nature to the

power of the Divine Sanctifier, you will be true to your Lord even to the end! At the foot of the Cross, with your eyes upon those blessed wounds and your whole soul trusting in Him that lives and was dead, you will not be ashamed of your Lord, nor afraid of the consequences of obeying Him!

This much upon this first head of our discourse—be ready to answer the question, “Is it true?”

**II.** But now, secondly, IF YOU CANNOT SAY THAT IT IS TRUE, WHAT THEN? If, standing before the heart-searching God at this time, you cannot say, “It is true,” how should you act? If you cannot say that you take Christ’s Cross and are willing to follow Him at all hazards, then listen to me and learn the truth!

*Do not make a profession at all.* Do not talk about Baptism or the Lord’s Supper, nor of joining a Church, nor of being a Christian! For if you do, you will lie against your own soul. If it is not true that you renounce the world’s idols, do not profess that it is so. It is unnecessary that a man should profess to be what he is not—it is a sin of excess, a superfluity of evil! If you cannot be true to Christ; if your coward heart is recreant to your Lord—do not profess to be His disciple, I beseech you. He that is married to the world, or flint-hearted, had better return to his house, for he is of no service in this war.

If you have made a profession and yet it is not true, *be honest enough to quit*—for it can never be right to keep up a fraud! A false profession is a crime and to persevere in it is a presumptuous sin. Whatever you are, or are not, be transparent, sincere, truthful. If there is any man here who, says in his heart, “No, I cannot suffer for the Truth of God’s sake. I will follow Christ as far as it is good walking and costs nothing, but I will not go through the mire for Him,” well, then, turn back at once for you are no true pilgrim! If you are determined not to press onward even though the way should lie through the Slough of Despond, you had better make the best of your way home to the City of Destruction, for you are not a man that God has called into this Kingdom. “Strange advice,” you say. Yes, but prudent advice, too! Listen to me! If any of you are ashamed of Christ, afraid of man, unwilling to be abused for Christ’s sake, then, like the faint-hearted men with Gideon, it will be well for you to go home and no longer encumber the little band of the true-hearted.

Will you, then, go back to your old ways? I am sure you will if you cannot answer the question of my text. But remember, that in so doing you will have to *believe your consciences*. Many of you who are not firm in your resolves yet know the right. You will never be able to get that light out of your eyes which was shone into them from God’s Word. You can never again sin so cheaply as others—it will be willfulness and obstinacy in your case. I am sure that many of you will have desperate work to get to Hell. You will have to ride steeple-chase over hedge and ditch to reach Perdition, for the Lord has put that within you which will never let you rest in sin, or be easy in ungodliness. The Lord has taught you too much to let you be comfortable slaves of ignorance and vice! You who have tasted of the powers of the world to come are spoilt for this world—and if you are

such cowards that you will not press forward for the next—you are, of all men, most miserable! Your consciences will dog you, haunt you and torment you. Dare you run the risk of being pursued by such a foe, compared with which the furies of classic fable were gentle beings?

Remember, also, that by yielding to the fear of man *you are demeaning yourself*. There shall come a day when the man that was ashamed of Christ will, himself, be ashamed. He will wonder where he can hide his guilty head. Look at him! There he is! The traitor who denied his Lord! The Christ was spat upon and nailed to the Cross and this man was afraid to acknowledge Him! To win the smile of a silly maid; to escape the jest of a coarse fellow; to win a few pieces of silver; to stand respectable among his companions, he turned his back upon his Redeemer and sold his Lord! And now what can be said for him? Who can excuse him? The angels shun him as a man who was ashamed of the Lord of Glory! He is clothed with shame and everlasting contempt. Even the lost in Hell get away from him, for many of them were more honest than he! Is there such a man or woman as this before me? I summon him in the name of the living God to answer for his cowardice! Let Him come forth and admit his crime and humbly seek forgiveness at the hands of the gracious Savior.

If your avowal of faith in Jesus and opposition to sin is not true, you had better withdraw it and be silent, for by a groundless presence *you will dishonor the cause of God and cause the enemy to take up a reproach against His people*. If Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had stood before Nebuchadnezzar and had made a compromise, it would have dishonored the name of the Lord. Suppose they had said, “O king, we believe in Jehovah, but we hardly know what to do in our peculiar circumstances. We desire to please you and we also dread the thought of the burning fiery furnace and, therefore, we must yield, though it greatly grieves us.” Why, they would have cast shame upon the name of Israel! O Brothers and Sisters, do not talk about principle and then pocket your principles because they are unfashionable, or will cost you loss and disrepute! If you do this, you will be the enemies of the King of kings! God commanded His people not to bow before engraved images, but the king of Babylon commanded them to do so at once or die. Which would they obey? To whom would they render the most honor?

That was the point. It would have been idle to say that they would only do it once, that it would be only a mere form and so on, for had they bowed the knee to the engraved image, they would have set Nebuchadnezzar before Jehovah. They might have pleaded that to refuse the great king was virtually to commit suicide, but they kept from such crooked reasonings. They might have argued that it was wise to save their lives because they could be so very useful to the Israelites and to the cause of true religion. How often have I heard this plea for remaining in an erring church and professing to believe what is not believed! Men do evil that good may come and after bowing in the house of Rimmon, wash their hands and pray, “The Lord pardon Your servants in this thing.”

I am glad that the three holy children were not “careful to answer,” or they might have fallen upon some crooked policy or lame excuse for compromise. What have we to do with consequences? It is ours to do right and leave results with the Lord! To do wrong cannot, under any circumstances, be right! For the Lord’s servants to be false to their conviction is always an evil thing, a root that bears wormwood. Yes, these men would have cast a slur upon the living God, upon their nation and upon themselves had they flinched in the moment of trial. Thousands of men and women are doing this continually. Shame upon them! They plead their own necessities, their large families, their position, their hopes of usefulness and the examples of others—but none of these things can excuse cowardice towards God. If by doing a little wrong, we could effect a great deal of good, we would not, thereby, be excused! This is a common way of drugging conscience and I beseech you be upon your guard against it, for it comes to this—that you are a better judge of what you ought to do than God is and your judgment is superior to the Law of God! Is not this high presumption? Does it not, also, suggest itself to you that some would serve God if it did not pay better to serve the devil? And is not this Judas Iscariot all over again, the son of perdition reproduced?

I want you to remember, also, that if you renounce Christ, if you quit Him in obedience to the world’s commands, *you are renouncing eternal life and everlasting bliss*. You may think little of that, tonight, because of your present madness, but you will think differently before long. Soon you may lie on a sick bed gazing into eternity and then your estimate of most things will undergo a great change. I know what that solemn outlook means, for I have been called several times to lie in spirit upon the brink of eternity—and I can assure you it is no child’s play. The solemn article, the judgment, the declaration of destiny—these are not little. It requires all the faith a man can summon to enable him to look forward, calmly and intelligently, to that great day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed.

Come, my Hearers, look to the eternity which awaits you! I charge you to remember that if you take the mess of pottage and barter away your birthright, you will bemoan yourselves at the last. In your dying hours, you may find no place for repentance though you seek it carefully with tears. In another world there will be no hope of reformation or of escape from the result of sin. In eternity you will look up from under the fierce wrath of God and see no way of escape, for you will then be too wedded to evil to be able to escape from it! In that day which shall burn as an oven, what will you say to yourself for having sold your Lord? Oh, do not, for the sake of a man’s frown or a woman’s smile, forego eternal life! If God goes, all is gone! To lose your Savior is to be lost yourself! Oh, my Beloved, take the roughest road rather than part company with your Best Friend!

The question is a very solemn one—“Is it true?” And if it is not true, I still stick to my advice—do not say that it is so, do not add to all your other sins, a lying profession—but act in all honesty as you stand before God.

**III.** But now, thirdly, let us consider what follows IF IT IS TRUE. I hope that many here can lay their hands upon their hearts and quietly say, "Yes, it is true; we are determined not to bow before sin, come what may." Well, then, if it is true, I have this much to say to you, dear Brothers and Sisters—*state this when it is demanded of you*. Declare your resolve. This will strengthen it in yourself and be the means of supporting it in others. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego spoke out in the presence of the furious king. Perhaps they might have taken means to hide themselves from the ordeal, but they judged it to be their duty to come forward and take the consequences—and there they were.

This word is meant for certain Christian people who come in and out of this house and join with us in public worship, but have never openly acknowledged themselves to be disciples of the Lord Jesus. Whenever we gather to the remembrance of our dying Lord, they either take their seats among the onlookers, or else they go home. This raises many anxious thoughts in our minds. We are especially exercised with this question—these people have a faith which they refuse to acknowledge—will such a faith save them? Scripture evidently lays great stress upon obedience to the Lord and taking up His Cross and following Him. Will Jesus save those who will not come out and bear His reproach? He claims of all His followers that they follow Him in the daylight. It is written, "If you shall confess with your mouth, the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

He bade us preach this as His Gospel—"He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved." These are not words of mine, but of the Lord Jesus, Himself! Take heed unto yourselves that you do not slight them! I dare not leave out part of His Gospel command when I am preaching it. If you believe in the Lord Jesus, stand on His side! Why are you slow to do so? I compared one, the other day, to a rat behind the wainscot which only comes out at night when the candles are put out and there are crumbs to be picked up. Too many Christians attempt to live in that style. Dare I call them Christians? Do not be such miserable creatures, but quit yourselves like men! Tremble lest you perish among "the fearful and unbelieving." Join with me, I pray you, in singing—

***"I'm not ashamed to acknowledge my Lord,  
Or to defend His cause!  
Maintain the honor of His Word,  
The Glory of His Cross."***

There are many dear children in this place, both boys and girls, who have not been ashamed in their early days to come forward and confess the Lord Jesus Christ! God bless the dear children! I rejoice in them. I am sure that the Church will never have to be ashamed of having admitted them. They, at least, show no cowardice—they take a solemn delight in being numbered with the people of God—and count it an honor to be associated with Christ and His Church. Shame on you older ones who still

hold back! What ails you, that babes and sucklings are braver than you? By the love you bear to Christ, I charge you—come forth and confess His name among this evil and perverse generation!

Is it true? Then *joyfully accept the trial which comes of it*. Shrink not from the flames. Settle it in your minds that, by Divine Grace, no loss, nor cross, nor shame, nor suffering shall make you play the coward. Say, like the holy children, “We are not careful to answer you in this matter.” They did not cringe before the king and cry, “We beseech you, do not throw us into the fiery furnace! Let us have a consultation with you, O king, that we may arrange terms. There may be some method by which we can please you and yet keep our religion.” No! They said, “We are not careful to answer you in this matter. If it is so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace and He will deliver us out of your hands, O king. But if not, be it known unto you, O king, that we will not serve your gods, nor worship the golden image which you have set up.”

Dear Friends, let us be ready to suffer for Christ’s sake. Some will say, “Do not be imprudent.” It is always prudent to do your duty! We have not enough, nowadays, of the virtue nicknamed imprudence. I would like to see a display of old-fashioned imprudence in these cold, calculating, selfish days! Oh for the days of zeal, the days when men counted not their lives dear to them that they might win Christ! Men sit down and reckon up what it will cost them to do right and weigh their conduct as a matter of *profit and loss*—and then they call such wicked calculations prudence! It is sheer selfishness! Do right if it costs you your life! Where would England have been if the men who won our liberties in former ages had bartered with the world for gain? If they had saved their skins, they would have lost their souls and ruined the cause of God in England! He loves not Christ who does not love Him more than all things! Oh for men of principle who know no loss but loss of faith and desire no gain save the Glory of God! Be this your cry—

***“Through floods or flames, if Jesus leads,  
I’ll follow where He goes.”***

You may lose a great deal *for* Christ, but you will never lose anything *by* Christ. You may lose for time, but you will gain for eternity! The loss is transient, but the gain is everlasting! You will be a gainer by Christ, even if you have to go to Heaven by the way of persecution, poverty and slander. Never mind the way—the end will make full amends. The treasures of Egypt are mere dross compared with the riches of endless bliss!

If it is true that you are willing, thus, to follow Christ, *reckon upon deliverance*. Nebuchadnezzar may put you into the fire, but he cannot keep you there, nor can he make the fire burn you. The enemy casts you in bound, but the fire will loosen your bonds and you will walk at liberty amid the glowing coals! You shall gain by your losses! You shall rise by your casting down! Many prosperous men owe their present position to the fact that they were faithful when they were in humble employments. They were honest and, for the moment, they displeased their employers, but in the end earned their esteem. When Adam Clarke was put out as an

apprentice and his master showed him how to stretch the cloth when it was a little short, Adam could not find in his heart to do it. Such a fool of a boy must be sent home to his mother and his godly mother was glad that her boy was such a fool that he could not stoop to a dishonest trick! You know what he became. [1760-1832 – Influential British Methodist famous for his preaching and Bible commentary.] He might have missed his way in life if he had not been true to his principles in his youth. Your first loss may be a lifelong gain!

Dear young fellow, you may be turned out of your employment, but the Lord will turn the curse into a blessing. If all should go softly with you, you might decline in character and by doing a little wrong, learn to do yet more and more—and so lose your integrity and with it—and all hope of ever lifting your nose from the grindstone! Do right for Christ's sake, without considering any consequences, and the consequences will be right enough. If you take care of God's cause, God will take care of you! Rest assured that uprightness will be your preservation and not your destruction. It will be your highest wisdom to let all things go that you may hold fast your integrity and honor the name of the Lord!

Lastly—and this is a consideration not to be forgotten. If you will stand up for Jesus and the right, and the true, and the pure, and the temperate, and the good—not only will you be delivered, but you will do great good! This Nebuchadnezzar was a poor piece of goods, yet he was compelled to acknowledge the power of these three decided and holy men. They were thrown into the furnace and they came out of it—and what did Nebuchadnezzar say? Before this, it was, “The image that I have set up,” and now he declares that no man shall speak a word against the God of Israel on pain of being cut in pieces! There is no having influence over the great men, or the little men of this age except by being firm in your principles and decided in what you do! If you yield an inch you are beaten! But if you will not yield—no, not the splitting of a hair—they will respect you!

The man who can hide his principles, conceal his beliefs and do a little wrong, is a nobody! He is a chip in the porridge—he will flavor nothing. But he who does what he believes to be right and cannot be driven from it—that is the man! You cannot shake the world if you let the world shake you, but when the world finds that you have grit in you, they will let you alone. Nebuchadnezzar was obliged to feel the influence of these men—and, even so, the most wicked and the most proud feel the force of the true-hearted, the brave and the good! For this let us pray God to give us new hearts and right spirits. For this let us cling to the blessed Cross of Christ and yield ourselves up to the power of the blood and water which flowed from His wounded side! So shall our lives be powerful! And if not illustrious in the eyes of men, they shall be acceptable in the eyes of God!

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# THREE NAMES HIGH ON THE MUSTER ROLL NO. 2217

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, AUGUST 16, 1891,  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer you in this matter. If it is so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of your hands, O king. But if not, be it known unto you, O king, that we will not serve your gods, nor worship the golden image which you have set up.”*  
*Daniel 3:16-18.*

IF YOU read the second chapter of the Book of Daniel, you will think that Nebuchadnezzar was not far from the Kingdom of God. His dream had troubled him, but Daniel had explained it. Then the king made this confession to Daniel, “Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing you could reveal this secret.” He acknowledged that Jehovah, the God of the Jews, was the greatest of gods, and was a great interpreter of secrets, but in a short time we find this man setting up an idol and persecuting to the death those who would not worship it. He seems, indeed, to have turned the blessing into a curse, and made the image of his dream the pattern of the idol he set up for the nation to worship, thus making that through which God had graciously revealed His power and wisdom, the very instrument of his folly and vainglory.

Man's proud heart is the same in all generations and the same thing happens even today. Have you not seen in your time men seriously impressed? They could not hold their own. They seemed stricken down by the force of the Truth of God and you felt almost sure that they would become, like Saul of Tarsus, true converts, and even Apostles of the faith. But after a while they forgot it, forgot it all, and became, at last, the most bitter and determined opponents of the Truth of God before which they seemed once to bow. Every minister who has a congregation of any considerable size must have met with such people. I remember one who, being at a Prayer Meeting where there was much wrestling power with God, was so overcome that he prayed aloud and seemed to cry with all his heart for mercy—and before he left, he said that he had found it. But the next day he declared that he would never go to such a meeting again—that he had been almost caught, but he would not trust himself in such society any more.

And I fear that he never did, for he could always speak with great severity against the people who met for prayer and were earnest in the faith.

We know, then, what to expect—that some who seem like fish almost landed, will, nevertheless, slip back into the stream—that it will happen unto them according to the true proverb, “The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.” They will go out from us because they are not of us, and the last state of such men will be worse than the first.

This great king of Babylon was an absolute monarch. His will was law. No man ever dared to dispute with him. Who would differ from a gentleman who could back up his arguments with a fiery furnace, or with a threat to cut you in pieces and to make your house a dunghill? And now, when it comes to this, that he sets up a god of his own, a huge colossal statue, and gathers all the princes and potentates of his world-wide dominion together to bow down before this image, it seems a strange thing to him that there should be *anybody* found who would not do so!

And yet there were three Jews who mastered him! Once before they had broken the laws of his court and refused to eat unclean meat—and though they ate nothing but vegetables and water, “At the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king’s meat.” Having stood firm for the right, before, they were the bolder to face the more terrible ordeal. The king himself had exalted them in the land and he expected them, of course, to do his bidding and set an example to others. But these three of the despised race of the Jews were unconquerable even by the master of the whole world! They stood out before Nebuchadnezzar and carried their point for God and for conscience.

As we dwell upon this deed of noble heroism, may we become sharers in the courage and faith of these men whose names stand high on the roll of worthies in the Kingdom of God! Thirteen times their names recur in this chapter, like a refrain to the song which speaks of their deed of valor.

Notice, first, *the excuses they might have made*. Secondly, *the confidence they possessed*. And thirdly, *the determination at which they had arrived*.

**I.** First of all, as we think of these three brave Jews, let us consider THE EXCUSES THEY MIGHT HAVE MADE. They were accused by the Chaldeans who had so recently been saved from death by Daniel and his three friends. The surest way to be hated by some people is to place them under an obligation. “What favor have I ever done him, that he should hate me so?” said one. But in this case the wrath of man was to praise God. The incensed monarch called the offenders before him and, scarcely believing that in his realm any could have defied his authority, he put the alternative plainly before them. “Here is the golden image; you three Jews are to bow down before it. If you do not, there is the burning fiery furnace—and into that you shall be cast at once. What is your answer?”

They might have said to themselves, “*It is perfectly useless to resist*. We cannot contend against this man. If we submit, we do it unwillingly and surely, being coerced into it, we shall be but little blamed. A man cannot be expected to knock his head against a brick wall, nor throw his life away and, therefore, we will bow our heads, as the rest of the multitude have done, and worship the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up.”

It is a bad excuse, but it is one that I have often heard made. "Oh," says a man, "we must live, you know; we must live." I really do not see any necessity for it. We must *die*, but whether we must live or not, depends upon a great many things, and it is infinitely better to die than to sink your manhood and to violate your conscience at a tyrant's bidding!

Again, they might have said, "*We are in a strange land*, and is it not written by one of our wise men, 'When you are in Babylon, you must do as Babylon does'? "Of course, if we were at home, in Judea, we would not *think* of such a thing. We would remember how God has said, 'You shall have no other gods before Me. 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.' If we were at home, we would obey that Law of God, but we are many hundreds of miles away from Jerusalem, and surely we may be permitted to yield in this point." Thus have I known many who say they are Christians at home, act differently when they are abroad. They have not regarded the Sabbath, neither have they even regarded the decency or the indecency of the amusements to which they have betaken themselves, because, after all, they were not at home! "We would not do this in England, but we are in Paris, you see, and the case is altered," they say. Is the case altered? Is God the God of this island and not the God of the Continent? Has He ever given us permission to do abroad what we may not do at home? It is a vile excuse, but commonly enough made.

They might also have said, "*We are officers of the land*," and seeing they were set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, they might have found some difficulty in detaching their private religion from their public duty. They were high officials! And what an excuse this is for a great deal of roguery and trickery everywhere! A man gets elected to a parish vestry, or a council, or a board—and when he once gets to sit on that board he seems to have left his honesty at home! I say not that it is always so, but I am sorry to say that it has often been so. The official has no sooner put on his robes of office than his conscience has vanished! But these men were not so foolish as to think that because they were made rulers in Babylon, they might, therefore, sin against the Most High God! It is true that they were bound to obey the lawful orders of their sovereign, but whether it is right to obey men rather than God, their conscience could easily enough judge. So they never made that excuse.

But, then, they were prosperous men. They were getting on in the world and I believe that God sent this trial to Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego because they were prospering. They might have said, "*We must not throw away our chances*." Among the dangers to Christian men, the greatest, perhaps, is accumulating wealth—the danger of prosperity! Wesley sometimes used to fear that Christianity was self-destructive, for when a man becomes a Christian, the blessings of this life are his, too. He begins to rise in the world. He leaves his old position behind him and, alas, too often, with increasing riches, forgets the God who gave him all! There is much truth in this idea and unless the Spirit of God abides with His peo-

ple, we might, indeed, see our faith thus commit suicide! It is a danger to be guarded against, both by liberal giving and by frequent intercession!

We often pray for Christians in adversity and it is right that we should do so, but it is even more necessary to pray for Christians in prosperity, for they run the risk of gradually becoming soft, like Hannibal's soldiers destroyed by Capuan holidays, who lost their valor in their luxury. Many a man who was an out-and-out Christian when he was lower down in life has, when prosperous, become much too great a gentleman to associate with those who were his honored Brothers and Sisters before. I have seen it scores of times and it is a shocking thing. May God grant that we may never turn His mercies into an excuse for sinning against Him! You who are rich have no more liberty to sin than if you were poor. You who rise in the world have no more right to do wrong than you had when you were down in the world and his lordship is no more honorable at a prizefight than the bullet-headed boxer! We must do right! We must never do wrong, or plead our position in society, or our prosperity in worldly things as a reason why we may do what others might not do!

Again, further, they might have excused themselves thus. The putting up of this image was not altogether a religious act. It was symbolical. The image was intended to represent the *power* of Nebuchadnezzar and bowing before it was, therefore, doing *political* homage to the great king. Might they not safely do this? They might have said, "*We are politically bound.*" Oh, how often we hear this brought up! You are told to regard the difference between right and wrong everywhere, *except* when you get into politics! Then stick to your party through thick and thin! Right and wrong vanish at once. Loyalty to your leader—that is the point! Never mind where he leads you, follow him blindly! You are even told that you may do wrong because it is politically right! I hate such an argument! These men never, for a moment, entertained that evil thought! It is true that politics were mixed up with this image, but whatever might be mixed up with it, they would not worship it, for God had said, "You shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them," and these sturdy Believers would do nothing of the kind under any pretense whatever.

A very soothing salve for their conscience might have been found in the absence of any command to renounce their own religion. They might have encouraged each other to submit, by saying, "*We are not called upon to deny our God.*" They need not believe the idol to be divine, nor confess the least faith in it—in their hearts they might make a mental reservation as they bowed—and they might have whispered to one another and said that it was a devil, and not God. They might have excused themselves to their own conscience by saying that they prostrated themselves to the music and not to the idol—or that they made obeisance to the king rather than to his image. In fact, if their consciences had been as elastic as some modern ones, though that was hardly possible, as the virtues of India rubber were scarcely known, then, they might have said that, in bowing down before the image, they were praying to Jehovah, since He might be worshipped anywhere and under any circumstances! They might have said that, although they looked at the image, they did not worship it. But beyond the glitter of its gold, their thoughts rose to the God of Glory. Any-

thing, in fact, will serve for an excuse, when the heart is bent on compromise and, especially in these half-hearted days, it is very easy to find a specious reason for a false action if some temporal benefit is attached to it! Modern charity manufactures a multitude of excuses with which to cover sins.

A stronger argument, however, might have been secured from the fact of the universal submission to the decree. *“Everybody else is doing it,”* they might have said. That morning, when the rising sun was saluted by the strains from those varied instruments of music from Persia, Greece and Babylon—when all the music of the world seemed gathered together—everybody bowed. There were Jews there, thousands of them—and they all bowed. There were *fire* worshippers there—men who hated the worship of graven images—but they all bowed. There were men there who had gods of their own which they revered—but they all bowed before Nebuchadnezzar’s god. “What a singular being you must be to stand out against the fashion of the time!” the tempter might have said. “Your own countrymen have bowed and you will not—better men than you, let me tell you, have bowed, but you will not!”

No, they will not, these three singularities, these strange eccentricities! It is folly to be singular except when to be singular is to be right! And to be eccentric is not commendable unless the eccentricity consists in not being concentric with any kind of evil way! In spite of all the apostate crowds, these brave men would not yield—not they! Though millions bowed, what had that to do with them? My dear Hearers, I ask you to cultivate a brave personality. In the service of God, things cannot go by the counting of heads. You must follow the Lord’s will wherever it leads you, whether you go alone or not—

***“Dare to be a Daniel,  
Dare to stand alone.”***

They might have said, *“It is only for once, and not for long.* Ten minutes or so, once in a lifetime, to please the king—such a trivial act cannot make any difference. At any rate, it is not enough to brave the fiery furnace for. Let us treat the whole thing as a huge jest. It would be ridiculous to throw away our lives for such a trifle.” Have you never heard such arguments in these days? This indulgent 19<sup>th</sup> Century has plenty of easy maxims of a very similar sort. In the supreme hour many fail because the trial is seemingly so small. They mean to stand for God, but this is scarcely the right time! They will wait and choose a more worthy occasion, when something really heroic can be attempted. Were they to stand for such a little thing, the world would laugh with derision at such a straining out of a gnat! So Adam eats the apple, Esau the pottage and the one temptation, unresisted, issues in life-long loss! Not even for a few minutes in a lifetime would these three brave men deny their God. May their stubborn faith be ours!

Another excuse that they might have made was, *“We can do more good by living than we can by being cast into that furnace.* It is true, if we are burned alive, we bear a rapid testimony to the faith of God, but if we live, how much more we might accomplish! You see, we three are Jews, and we are put in high office—and there are many poor Jews who are captives. We can help them. We have already done so. We have always seen justice

done to God's people, our fellow countrymen, and we feel that we are raised to our high office on purpose to do good. Now, you see, if you make us bigots and will not let us yield, you cut short our opportunities of usefulness."

Ah, my dear Brothers and Sisters, there are many that are deceived by this method of reasoning! They remain where their conscience tells them they ought not to be, because, they say, they are more useful than they would be if they went "outside the camp." This is doing evil that good may come and can never be tolerated by an enlightened conscience! If an act of sin would increase my usefulness *tenfold*, I have no right to do it! And if an act of righteousness would appear likely to destroy all my apparent usefulness, I am to do it! It is yours and mine to do the right, though the heavens fall—and follow the command of Christ whatever the consequences may be. "That is strong meat," do you say? Be strong men, then, and feed on it.

But they might also have said, "*Really, this is more than can be expected of us.* If we had been asked to contribute our tithe to the support of the religion of Jehovah, we would cheerfully do so, but to yield our *lives* in this horrible way, to be cast into a burning fiery furnace is more than flesh and blood can bear!" Yes, and some of us could not answer that argument, for, perhaps, it is pressing upon ourselves. Remember what Jesus said to the multitudes who went with Him, "If any man come to Me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, *yes, and his own life, also*, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple." We must stand to a full surrender and say, "Let it cost what it may, I make no exception. I take all risks. I will follow Christ, the Lamb, wherever He goes, even should I die while I am following Him!" He that does not come to that has not taken the position which Christ demands of us—and which His Holy Spirit must work in us before we are fully converted to the faith. "Strong language again," says one. God make you strong enough to apply it to yourself!

Thus I have set before you the excuses that these three Jews, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, might have made.

**II.** In the second place, let us assure our own hearts by admiring THE CONFIDENCE WHICH THEY POSSESSED. They expressed it very emphatically and clearly. They had a very definite, solid, foursquare faith.

First, they said, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer you in this matter." The word, "careful," there, does not give you the meaning. Read it, "We are not full of care as to how to answer you." They did answer very carefully, but *they were not anxious about the answer.* It was not a thing that troubled them in the least. They knew what they were going to say. They did not deliberate. They did not hesitate. They said, "Nebuchadnezzar, we can answer you at once on that point." They were so calm, so self-collected, that they could talk to him, not as a king, but as Nebuchadnezzar. When it came to life-work, it was man to man, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego to Nebuchadnezzar—and they told him that they had no difficulty in answering him.

In the second place, *they did not judge it theirs to answer at all*. I find that it may be read, as in the Revised Version, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter,” meaning, “We will not answer you. It is not for us to answer you. You have brought another Person into the quarrel.” Let me read the words that precede my text. Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?” In effect, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego replied, “It is not for us to answer you. There is Another that will do that. You have challenged God and God shall make His own reply.” It was bravely spoken. They threw the onus of this matter upon God, Himself! So may you. If you will do right, it is God’s affair to see you through. You have nothing to do with the consequences, except patiently to bear them—the consequences must be with God. Only you do right. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and obey Him and keep the command of the Most High, and then whatever comes of it, it is no fault of yours. That must be left with God.

Then notice what they say. “Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace.” *They avowed their faith in the Omnipotent God*, knowing that if He chose, no mighty man of Babylon could ever throw them into that furnace. The furnace itself must die down and become cool as ice if God so wills it. They tell the tyrant to his face, enveloped as he was in the flame of his wrath, that God can save them out of the fire. Their God was almighty and they put their trust in Him.

What is more, they add, “And He will deliver us out of your hands, O king.” Whether they burned in the fire or not, *they were sure they would be delivered*. “If we die, we shall be out of your reach, but we may not die. We may live beyond your reach! You have asked the question, ‘Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?’ and we answer you, ‘Our God will deliver us out of your hands, O king.’”

Now, Beloved Friends, if any of you are in great difficulty and trouble, tempted to do wrong, no, *pressed* to do it, and if you do what is right, it looks as if you will be great losers and great sufferers—believe this—God can deliver you! He can prevent your having to suffer what you suppose you may and if He does not prevent that, He can help you to bear it and, in a short time, He can turn all your losses into gains, all your sufferings into happiness! He can make the worst thing that can happen to you to be the very best thing that ever happened to you! If you are serving God, you are serving an Omnipotent Being, and that Omnipotent Being will not leave you in the time of difficulty, but He will come to your rescue! Many of us can say with Paul, “We trust not in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead: who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us.”

The Lord has helped us in the past, He is helping us in the present and we believe that He will help us all the way through. He will help you, too, if you just follow His Word and, by a simple faith, do the right thing. I believe that we have reason to expect interpositions of Providence to help us when we are called to suffer for Christ’s sake.

**III.** But here is the point that I want to make most prominent—the third one—THE DETERMINATION AT WHICH THEY ARRIVED. “If not,” if God does not deliver us at all, “be it known unto you, O king, that we will

not serve your gods, nor worship the golden image which you have set up." Grand language! Noble resolve! "If not, if we have to go into the fire, into the fire we will go, but we will never bow the knee to an idol." So these gracious Jews were enabled to say!

*They did not base their loyalty to God upon their deliverance.* They did not say, as some do, "I will serve God if it pays me to do so. I will serve God if He helps me at such and such a time." No, they would serve Him for nothing! Theirs was not cupboard love. "If not, if He does not deliver us, if it is His will that we should be burned alive, we surrender ourselves to His will, but we will not break His Divine command, or make idolaters of ourselves by bowing before an image which has no life in it, which could not even set itself up, but which Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up."

*They resolved that they would obey God at all costs.* Now, I knew a young man, once, to whom a certain ordinance of Christ was made known as being Scriptural, but as far as he could see, if he followed that ordinance, every door would be shut against him. If he was bold to do as he thought he ought to do, according to his Master's command and example, it would be the ruin of everything! Well, he did it, and it was *not* the ruin of *anything*—and if he had to do such a thing again a hundred times over, he thanks God that he would do it. There is such sweetness in having to make some sacrifice for God. There is such a heavenly recompense, that one almost envies the martyrs! Rather than pity their sufferings, one feels an intense longing that such honor had been ours and that we had had the moral courage and holy stamina to suffer for God even as they suffered. Who among the bright ones are the brightest in the land of light? They that wear the ruby crown of martyrdom most certainly lead the van, for they suffered, even to the death, for their Lord. O Friends, it is a glorious thing when we make no calculation of costs, but with our whole heart and soul follow the Lamb wherever He leads us!

Let us walk in this heroic path. But some will say, "It is too hard. You cannot expect men to love God well enough to die for Him." No, but there was One who loved us well enough to die for *us*, and to die a thousand deaths in one, that He might save us. If Christ so loved us, we ought so to love Him. "Well," says one, "I think it is impossible. I could not bear pain." It is possible, for many have endured it! I remember that one of the martyrs who was to be burned on the following morning, thought that he would test himself—and there being a large stove in the cell, he put his foot into it to see whether he could bear to have it burnt—and soon shrank back. Therein he was foolish, for when he went out the next morning to stand on the firewood and burn, he stood like a man and burnt bravely to the death for his Master! The fact was, his Lord did not call him to burn his foot in the stove, and so He did not help him to bear it. But when He called him to give his whole body to the flames, then Divine Grace was given.

There is a story of a martyred woman who had a child born to her a few days before she was burnt and, being in great pain, she cried aloud. One said to her, "If you cannot bear *this*, what will you do when you come to burn?" She said, "Now you see the pains of nature which befall a woman

and I have not patience enough to bear them. But by-and-by you shall see Christ in His members suffering and you shall see what patience He will have, and what patience He will give to me.” It is recorded of her that she seemed as if she had no pain at all when she yielded herself up to Christ. Do not judge, by what you are, today, what you would do if you were called into trouble! Divine Grace would be given to you. I have no doubt that many of the most timid of those who truly love the Lord would be the very bravest—while some who think they would be brave would be the very first to start back. You may never be called to such a trial as that, but still, if you cannot bear the small trials, how would you bear the great ones?

“I cannot bear to be laughed at,” says one. But though there is something cruel about mocking, it does not break anybody’s bones. And being laughed at—well, really, I have sometimes thought, when I have seen a good joke cracked over my poor head, that there is so much misery in the world that if I might be the cause of making a little more mirth, I should be glad. And even if it is told against me, if it made somebody feel a little merrier, it was not a matter for great sorrow. And then you go into the workshop and they point at you and say, “There comes a canting Methodist!” Remember, that is the way in which the world pays homage to Christianity! If there is anything genuine in the Christian religion, the world pays its respect by laughing at it and caricaturing it. Accept their compliments, not as they intend them, but as you choose to read them, and you will not be grieved.

You, Shadrach, not afraid of a burning fiery furnace, are surely not going to be frightened by the laughter of a silly boy or girl in the workshop! Alas, this unworthy fear enters into all relationships! I have known men afraid of their wives! I have known fewer wives, however, afraid of their husbands, for they are generally bold for Christ and can suffer for His name’s sake. I have known children afraid of their parents and some poor parents, six feet high, afraid of their children! Oh, what poor worms it makes of us when we begin to be afraid of our fellow creatures! Do right and fear nothing—and God will help you.

To enable us to get the spirit of these three holy men, we must get, first, *a clear sense of the Divine Presence*. If a man feels that God is watching him, he will not bow his knee to an idol. Neither will he do evil, for God’s eye is upon him. He will endure, “as seeing Him who is invisible.” And though the floods of ungodly men lift themselves up, he will remember the Lord who sits upon the floodwaters and is higher than they. The man who realizes God’s Presence is, by that invisible Companionship, rendered invincible! Greater is He that is for him, than all that can be against him—

**“For right is right, since God is God,  
And right the day must win.  
To doubt would be disloyalty,  
To falter would be sin.”**

We must, next, have *a deep sense of the Divine Law*. I have already reminded you of the Law of God, “You shall have no other gods before Me. 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." No Virgin Mary, no cross, no crucifix, no picture, no image, no visible object is to be regarded with reverence or worshipped instead of God. All this must be put away! That is clear enough and, therefore, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, feeling that God was near and knowing what God's Law was, dared not violate that Law of God, but would sooner die.

Above all, to keep us right, we must have *a mighty sense of the Divine love*. We shall never obey God till, by His Grace, we have new hearts and those hearts are full of love to Him through Jesus Christ. Then, if you love Him, you will say, "What? Put an image of gold in His place? Never! Join the multitude in worshipping a colossal statue instead of the invisible Jehovah? Never!" With holy indignation you will choose the furnace of fire rather than have that purer flame which glows in your heart quenched, or made to burn dimly.

To some of you this must seem very trifling because, you say, "I do not care about religious forms and ceremonies. Let me enjoy myself while I am here—that is all I ask." Well, you have made your bargain and a sorry one it is! If this life is all, how ought a man to live? I am sure I cannot tell you. Perhaps the wisest thing of all is, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." But there is another world and a life beyond! And it is sometimes incomparably wise to fling this life away that we may win the life eternal! Our Lord often reminded His hearers of this great Truth, "He that loves his life shall lose it; and he that hates his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

"But what did these three men do?" asks one. "They simply did not bow their heads and they were cast into the fiery furnace. What did they do?" *They influenced their age, their people and all time.* These three men influenced the city of Babylon and the whole Babylonian empire! They certainly influenced King Nebuchadnezzar. They influenced the next age and, to this hour, the influence of their brave stand for God in His eternal Unity and for the non-worship of any visible thing has held the Hebrew race firmly to this one point! It was principally through these three men that the whole Jewish people were taught their deep hatred of everything like idol-worship. And they were, by such men as these, and some who followed after, weaned from their tendency to wander after idols—and tethered fast to the worship of Jehovah, the one living and true God. Would God that the Jews as a nation went further and knew our Lord Jesus Christ!

Still, it is something that they are yet alive upon the earth bearing witness that there is but one God, Creator of Heaven and earth, who only is to be worshipped. More than that, the influence of these three men lives in this audience and will live in thousands of audiences in days to come. Does it not make your pulse race? Does it not make your heart leap within you? Have you not said to yourselves, "This is a noble example"? Oh, that we may rise to it! In an age like ours, when everything is *sold*, when you can *buy* anybody, when the flute, harp, sackbut, dulcimer and all kinds of music carry everything before them, when a mask and a visor will infatuate even a saint—it is time that there were some men of the

stern old mold of these three Jews who could not and would not, yield—whatever might happen. The pillars of the earth might be dissolved, but these men would still stand upright and bear the whole world upon their shoulders by the grand power of God that made them strong.

*These three men command the admiration of Heaven and earth.* A fool would have pointed at them and said, “There go three fools—gentlemen high in office, with large incomes and wives and families. They have only to take their cap off and they may live in their wealth! But if they do not, they are to be burnt alive and they will not do it! They will be burnt alive. They are fools!” Yes, but the Son of God did not think so. When He, in Heaven, heard them speak thus to King Nebuchadnezzar, He said, “Brave, brave men! I will leave the Throne of God in Heaven to go and stand by their side.” And invisibly He descended, till where the fires were glowing like one vast ruby, where the fierce flame had slain the men that threw the three confessors into the burning fiery furnace, HE came and stood! And there they walked! It was the greatest walk that they had ever had! On those burning coals the four of them were walking together in sweet fellowship! They had won the admiration and the sympathy of the Son of God who left Heaven, itself, that He might come and stand side by side with them!

It was, therefore, comparatively a little thing that they won the admiration of Nebuchadnezzar. That proud imperial tyrant cried to those about him, “Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?” They answered, “True, O King.” And he, with his visage white with ghostly fear, said, “Lo, I see *four men loose*, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.” He himself could not but stand there and, awestruck, admire these three heroes! And today you do the same. These three men still live! From the glowing coals their voices call aloud to us, “Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”

To close—if we would be servants of God, we must be Believers in His Son, Jesus Christ. Come and trust Jesus Christ and you are saved! When you are truly saved, you are to be saved from all hesitation about obedience to God—so saved, that from now on God’s Law is your rule. Then, with that holy Law imperative upon you, you will go forth into the world and say, “It is not mine to ask what others will do. It is not mine to shape my course by them, not mine to enquire what will bring me most profit, what will bring me most honor. It is mine to look up to You, my God, and ask, ‘What would You have Me to do? By Your Grace, I will do it at all costs.’”

I wonder how many young men to whom these words are addressed have pluck enough in them to come out on Christ’s side? I believe that many young men do not want an easy life. They would rather have a hard time and a stern battle. We still have brave spirits among us who like to lead the forlorn hope and are not afraid. I challenge such to come and serve my Master fully and thoroughly! They shall have a rough time of it, but they shall have glory, honor and immortality as their reward. Make a whole burnt offering of yourself, my Brothers and Sisters—body, soul and spirit—for Christ! These three young men “yielded their bodies,” as we

read in the 28<sup>th</sup> verse. “I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” Let the faith of your spirit carry your whole body with it in hearty obedience to God’s command, and let this be true of you—

***“In full and glad surrender,  
I give myself to You.  
Yours utterly and only  
And evermore to be.  
O Son of God You love me,  
I will be Yours alone!  
And all I have, and am, Lord,  
Shall henceforth be Your own.”***

But I fear that I speak in vain to many who will turn away and say, “This *world* is for me.” Well, if you make a choice of this world and of ease and pleasure for yourself, then you have chosen Egypt’s treasures and you have disdained the reproach of Christ—and you shall find, one day, how dreadful a folly you have committed! God grant that you may find it out soon and not in the world to come! God bless you and save you, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Daniel 3.  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—486, 670, 671.**

**MR. SPURGEON UPDATE:**

Very little can be added to former notes concerning MR. SPURGEON except this—He firmly believes that our gracious God has spared his life in answer to the “effectual fervent” prayers of the Church of Christ all over the world. And it is his confident conviction that the Lord will, in due time, raise him up and fully qualify him for future service. He cannot yet be considered out of danger—therefore continued supplication for his complete restoration is earnestly entreated, with hearty thanksgiving for the answers to prayer already received. MR. SPURGEON is very desirous that friends everywhere should know that he is full of gratitude for their prevailing prayers and loving sympathy, and that from his sickroom he presents heartfelt petitions that rich blessings may be bestowed upon all of you.

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

# CONSOLATION IN THE FURNACE

## NO. 662

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 26, 1865,  
BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire and they have no hurt. And the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.”  
Daniel 3:25.*

THE narrative of the glorious boldness and marvelous deliverance of the three holy children, or rather champions, is well calculated to excite, in the minds of Believers, firmness and steadfastness in upholding the Truth of God in the teeth of tyranny and in the very jaws of death. Let young men especially, since these were young men, learn from their example both in matters of faith in religion and matters of integrity in business, never to sacrifice their consciences. Lose *all* rather than lose your integrity, and when all else is gone still hold fast to a clear conscience as the rarest jewel which can adorn the bosom of a mortal.

It were no waste of time for the preacher to spend half-a-dozen mornings in insisting again and again upon the necessity of the Christian being obedient universally and constantly to the dictates of his conscience, for this is an age requiring sturdy independence and stern adherence to the truth. As to whether the most severe precision of integrity will turn out to be the best policy or not, I shall not care to dispute. I am talking just now, not to men guided by the will-o'-the-wisp of policy, but by the pole star of Divine light and I beseech them to follow the right at all hazards. When you see no present advantage, then walk by faith and not by sight.

I do pray you, Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, do my God the honor to trust Him when it comes to matters of loss for the sake of principle. See whether He will be your debtor! See if He does not, even in this life, prove His Word that “Godliness is great gain,” and that they who “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, shall have all these things added unto them.” Mark you, if in the Providence of God it should be the case that you are and continue to be a loser by conscience, you shall find that if the Lord pays you not back in the silver of earthly prosperity, He will discharge His promise in the gold of *spiritual* joy! And I would have you remember that a man’s life consists not in the abundance of that which he possesses.

To have a clear conscience, to wear a guileless spirit, to have a heart void of offense is greater riches than the mines of Ophir could yield or the traffic of Tyre could win. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and inward contention. An ounce of heart’s ease is worth a ton of gold. And a drop of innocence is better than a sea of flattery. Burn,

Christian, if it comes to that—but never turn from the right way! Die, but never deny the Truth. Lose all to buy the Truth of God! Sell it not, even though the price were the treasure and honor of the whole world, for “what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?”

But my particular design in referring to the narrative this morning was not to use the whole of it as an incentive to young Christians by way of earnest advice, although I confess I feel much inclined to do so. But I have this one verse on my mind, where the astonished despot saw his late victims quietly surviving the flames which he intended for their instant destruction. I desire to use his exclamation as a consolation to afflicted Christians everywhere. Concentrate, then, your thoughts on the words before us and may the Holy Spirit be our Instructor.

**I.** We will commence by gazing into the place WHERE GOD’S PEOPLE OFTEN ARE. In the text we find three of them in a burning fiery furnace, and singular as this may be, literally, it is no extraordinary thing *spiritually*, for, to tell the truth, it is the usual place where saints are found. The ancients fabled of the salamander, that it lived in the fire. The same can be said of the Christian without any fable whatever!

The ancient Church, in a favorite metaphor, described itself as a ship. Where should the ship be, but in the sea? Now the sea is an unstable element, frequently vexed with storms. It is a troubled sea which cannot rest. And so the Christian finds this mortal life to be far from smooth and seldom settled. It is rather a wonder when a Christian is not in trial, for to wanderers in a wilderness, discomfort and need will naturally be the rule rather than the exception. It is through “much tribulation” that we inherit the kingdom. There is no life so joyous as that of a man bound for the Celestial City. And, on the other hand, there is no life which involves so much conflict as does the life of a pilgrim to the skies.

The furnaces into which Christians are cast are of various sorts. Perhaps we may divide them into three groups. First, there is the furnace which *men* kindle. As if there were not enough misery in the world, men are the greatest tormentors of their fellow men. The elements in all their fury, wild beasts in all their ferocity, and famine and pestilence in all their horrors have scarcely proved such foes to man as men themselves have been.

Religious animosity is always the worst of all hatreds and incites to the most fiendish deeds. Persecution is as unsparing as death and as cruel as the grave. The believer in Jesus, who is one of a people everywhere spoken against, must expect to be thrown into the furnace of persecution by his fellow men. “If the world hates you,” says our Lord, “it hated Me before it hated you.” “If you were of the world, the world would love its own. But because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” Some suppose that these words are out of date—old-fashioned words—words that refer only to Apostolic times. I answer, you are out of the Apostolic faith or else you would painfully find them to be still standing in all their force!

At times the Christian feels the heat of the furnace of open *persecution*. What multitudes of saints have mounted to Heaven like Elijah in a chariot of fire? Their seraphic spirits found a safe way to Heaven through the flames, for they were guarded by ministering spirits whom God has made as flames of fire. Thousands of the precious sons of Zion have been left to rot in dungeons, or have been slain upon the mountain side, or have perished in penury and need. And to this day there are many that endure trials of cruel mocking and are, in various painful ways, made to bear the cross, for if any man will live godly in Christ Jesus, he must suffer persecution.

Another furnace is that of *oppression*. In the iron furnace of Egypt the children of Israel were made to do hard bondage in brick and in mortar. And doubtless many of God's people are in positions where they are little better than slaves. Oppression is far from dead—under the most free form of government there is always a possibility for the heads of households and the masters of establishments to practice the most galling oppression towards those whom they dislike. And doubtless many choice spirits are still trod down as straw is trod for the dunghill. There is also the furnace of *slander*. The ripest of fruit will be pecked at most by the birds. Those who have most of God's image will have most of the world's contempt. Expect not that the world shall speak well of you, for it never gave your Master a good word. "Shall the disciple be above his master, or the servant above his Lord?"

Expect to be misunderstood—that is man's infirmity. Expect to be misrepresented—that is his willful hatred. A very strenuous effort is being made just now to mark our denomination with the famous "S. S." which was the old log of the Puritan "Sower of Sedition." This slander is very ancient, for in Nehemiah's day the accusation ran, "This city of Jerusalem of old made sedition against kings." And this is the charge now against our missionaries and, indeed, the whole of us, that we are accomplices with those who stir up the people to sedition. Sirs, we shall not disclaim the fact that we are ever swift to vindicate the liberties of all men and are little given to flatter tyrants whether in Jamaica, or elsewhere! On the contrary, our witness is very loud and clear that there is one Lord who will execute righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.

We hate the treading down of the needy and we abhor wholesale butchery quite as much when perpetrated by Englishmen as when laid to the door of Turks or Russians. And however unfashionable it may be, we maintain the opinion that liberty is the birthright of every man, not only the liberty which permits his neck to go free from a chain, but the liberty which allows the exercise of the rights of manhood. Suffering humanity is to be aided even when it wears the ebony hue, and high-handed wrong is to be impeached even when the much despised Negro is its victim! It can never be too much lamented that the terrible passions excited by years of wrong should have led to a riot so fierce and cruel.

But we must remember that oppression makes even wise men mad, and in justice we must lay the onus of the outbreak not alone at the door

of those unhappy and uneducated men who were goaded to this passionate display of wrath, but we must give the greatest measure of blame to the men of standing, wealth and education who have laid grievous burdens upon these people and refused to hear their earnest cries and grant their justifiable demands. The infernal revenge taken by their enemies almost exonerates me from even this word of apology, for it alone is sufficient proof of the spirit which has dominated over the Black race and compelled the unhappy victims to rise against it.

But of course it will still be insisted that the Baptists are at the bottom of the outbreak and so God's Church will be the scapegoat for offenders. We are the friends of liberty, but we never taught rebellion. We endeavor to implant manly principles of independence and freedom, but we put side-by-side the gentle precepts of the loving Jesus! Yet scandals of every sort we expect to receive and we count them no strange thing when they happen to us.

Secondly, there is a furnace which Satan blows with three great bellows—some of you have been in it. It is hard to bear, for the Prince of the power of the air has great mastery over human spirits. He knows our weak places and can strike so as to cut us to the very quick. He fans the fire with the blast of *temptation*. The Evil One knows our besetting sins, our infirmities of temper, and how we can be most readily provoked. He understands how to suit his bait to his fish and his trap to his bird.

At times the most earnest Christian will be compelled to cry out, "My steps had well near gone! My feet had well near slipped!" The Savior went through this furnace in the wilderness and was thrice tempted of the devil. And in the wilderness of this life God's people frequently experience temptations of the most horrible kind. Then he works the second bellows of *accusation*. He hisses into the ear, "Your sins have destroyed you! The Lord has quite forsaken you! Your God will be gracious no more!" He tells us that we are hypocrites, that our experience has been fancy, that our faith is mere presumption. He tells us that our glorying has been a boast and the very sins which, as a tempter, he himself incited us to commit, he brings against us when he assumes his favorite character of "the accuser of the brethren." Unless we are graciously comforted under the attacks of the roaring lion, we shall be almost ready to give up all hope.

Then he will beset us with suggestions of *blasphemy*. While tormenting us with insinuations, he has a way of uttering foul things against God and then casting them into our hearts as if they were our own. He can sow the infernal seed of blasphemy in our souls and then tell us that these are the native plants of our own hearts! He lays his black offspring at our door as if they were our own home-born children. And this sometimes is very hard to bear, when curses against God and His Christ will come across our soul. And though we hate them with perfect hatred, yet we cannot be rid of them.

And thirdly, there is a furnace which God Himself prepares for His people. There is the furnace of physical *pain*. How soon is the strong man brought low! We who rejoiced in health are in a few moments made to

mourn and moan, not in weakness merely, but in pain and anguish. He only thinks little of pain who is a stranger to it. A furnace still worse, perhaps, is that of *bereavement*. The child sickens, the wife is gradually declining, the husband is struck down with a stroke. Friend after friend departs as star by star grows dim. We bitterly cry with Job, "Lover and friend have You put far from me and my acquaintance unto darkness."

Then added to this there will crowd in upon us temporal losses and sufferings. The business which we thought would enrich, impoverishes. We build the house, but Providence plucks it down with both its hands. We hoist the sail and seek to make headway but we are driven far from the desired haven by a back wind. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." I cannot multiply the description of these crosses which our heavenly Father, in His mysterious Providence lays upon His beloved ones. Certain is it that like the waves of the sea, the drops of rain, the sands of the wilderness, and the leaves of the forest the griefs of the Lord's people are innumerable. Into the central heat of the fire does the Lord cast His saints, and mark this, He casts them there because they are His own beloved and dearly loved people.

I do not see the goldsmith putting dross into the furnace—what would be the good of it? It would be a waste of fuel and labor. But he thrusts the crucible full of gold into the hottest part of the fire and heaps on coals till the heat is terrible. Some of you have no crosses—you are like Moab, "settled on your lees"—"you are not emptied from vessel to vessel" because you are reprobate and God cares not for you! But the pure gold is put into the furnace to make it purer, still. As silver is purified in a furnace of earth seven times, simply because it is silver, so are saints afflicted because of their preciousness in the sight of the Lord. Men will not be at such pains to purify iron as they will with silver, for when iron is brought to a tolerable degree of purity it works well. But silver must be doubly refined, till no dross is left.

Men do not cut common pebbles on the lapidary's wheel, but the diamond must be vexed again and again and again with sharp cuttings and even so must the Believer. The context reminds us that sometimes the Christian is exposed to very peculiar trials. The furnace was heated seven times hotter—it was hot enough when heated once—but I suppose that Nebuchadnezzar had pitch and tar and all kinds of combustibles thrown in to make it flame out with greater vehemence. Truly, at times the Lord appears to deal thus with His people. It is a peculiarly fierce heat which surrounds them and they cry out, "Surely I am the man that has seen affliction—I may take precedence of all others in the realm of sorrow."

This is not so, remember, for princes have sat in the king's gate with their heads covered with ashes and the best of men who eat bread at Jehovah's table this day, have had to say, "You have filled me with wormwood and broken my teeth with gravel." The path of sorrow is well frequented, beaten down and trod by hosts of the chosen ones of God who

have found that the path of sorrow, and that path, alone, leads to the place where sorrow is unknown!

I do not want to leave this point without observing, too, that these holy champions were helpless when thrown into the furnace. They were cast in bound. And many of us have been cast in bound, too, so that we could not lift hand or foot to help ourselves. They fell down, it is said, into the midst of the furnace. And often a sort of fainting fit overtakes the saints of God at the beginning of their trouble—the very trouble in which afterwards they can rejoice—for the present fills them with heaviness and they fall down bound into the midst of the furnace.

Pretty plight to be in! Who does not shudder at it? Certainly none of us would choose it. But we have not the choice and as we have said with David, “You shall choose my inheritance for me.” If the Lord determines to choose it for us among the coals of fire—it is the Lord—let Him do what seems good to Him. Where Jehovah places His saints they are safe in reality, although exposed to destruction in appearance. That is the first point then—where God’s people often are.

**II.** We proceed to the second—WHAT THEY LOSE THERE. Look at the text and it will be clear to you that they lost something. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego lost something in the fire—not their turbans, nor their coats, nor their shoes, nor one hair of their heads or beards—no, what then? Why, they lost their *bonds* there! Observe, “Did not we cast three men *bound* into the midst of the fire? Lo, I see four men *loose*, walking in the midst of the fire.”

The fire did not hurt them, but it snapped their bonds. Blessed loss, this! A true Christian’s losses are *gains* in another shape. Now, Beloved, observe this carefully—that many of God’s servants never know the fullness of spiritual liberty till they are cast into the midst of the furnace. Many of them are bound and fettered till they get into the flame and the flame consumes the bonds in which they had been willing to be held captives. Like the pure gold which loses nothing but its dross in the fire! Like the iron which loses nothing but its rust under the file, so is the Christian—he loses what he is glad to lose and his loss is blessed gain.

Shall I show you some of the bonds which God looses for His people when they are in the fire of human hatred? Sometimes He bursts the cords of fear of man and desire to please man. Martin Luther, I dare say, like other men, had some respect for his own character and some reverence for public opinion. He might have been willing to pay some deference to the learning and authority of the age—both of which lent their aid to the ancient system of Rome—but in a happy hour the Pope excommunicated the German troublemaker. All is well for Luther now! His course is clear and plain before his face! He must therefore never conciliate or dream of peace.

Now his bonds are broken! He burns the Pope’s bull and thunders out, “The Pope of Rome excommunicates Martin Luther and I, Martin Luther, excommunicate the Pope of Rome! The world hates me and there is no love lost between us, for I esteem it as much as it esteems me. War to the

knife,” says he! The man was never clear till the world thrust him out. It is a splendid thing to run the gauntlet of so much contempt that the soul is hardened to it under a strong consciousness that the right is none the more contemptible because its friend may be despised. “Why,” you say, “is this how I am treated for the statement of truth? I was inclined to conciliate and yield, but after this, never! You have loosed my bonds.”

When man has done his worst, as Nebuchadnezzar did in this case, why then Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, could say, “What more could he do? He has thrown us into a fiery furnace heated seven times hotter. He has done his worst and now what have we to fear?” When persecution rages, it is wonderful what liberty it gives to the child of God! Never a more free tongue than Luther’s! Never a braver mouth than that of John Knox! Never bolder speech than that of John Calvin! Never a braver heart than that which throbbed beneath the ribs of Wickliffe! Never a man who could more boldly confront popery than John Bradford or Hugh Latimer! But under God these men owed their liberty of speech and liberty of conscience to the fact that the world *thrust them out* from all hope of its favor and so loosed their bonds!

Again, when Satan puts us in the furnace, he is often the means of breaking bonds. How many Christians are bound by the bonds of frames and feelings—by the bonds of dependence upon something within—instead of resting upon Christ the great Sacrifice? When the devil comes with his sharp temptations, he roars out, “You are not children of God.” Why, what then? Why, then we go straight to Christ to look at and view the flowing of His precious blood and trust Him just as we did at first! And now what about frames and feelings? What about emotions within? Why, we are so satisfied with that finished work upon the Cross that we feel the bonds of doubt and fear no more! Now we are *free*, because we have come to live on *Christ* and not on *self*!

Fierce temptations may be like waves that wash the mariner on a rock—they may drive us nearer to Christ. It is an ill wind which blows no one any good. But the worst wind that Satan can send blows the Christian good because it hurries him nearer to his Lord! Temptation is a great blessing when it looses our bonds of self-confidence and reliance upon frames and feelings. As for the afflictions which God sends, do they not loose our bonds? Dear Brethren, doubts and fears are far more common to us in the midst of work and business than when laid aside by sickness. I do not know how you have found it, but so it is, “When I am weak, then am I strong.”

Many Believers sing most sweetly when Providence clips their wings, or puts them in a cage. They are very mute and their heart towards the Lord is very heavy till they are involved in trouble. And then their faith revives! Their hope returns! Their love glows and they sing God’s praises in the fire! Have not you, dear Friends, frequently experienced trouble cuts the cords which bind us to earth? When the Lord takes away a child, there is one tie less to fasten to the world and one band more to draw towards

Heaven. God has loosed you from the bonds of idolatry by removing your darling. You cannot idolize your little one any more, for it is taken away.

When money vanishes and business all goes wrong, we frequent the Prayer Meeting more and the closet more and read the Bible more—we are driven by all tribulation away from earth. If everything went well with us, we should begin to say, “Soul, take your ease.” But when things go amiss with us, then we want to be gone. When the tree shakes, the bird will not stop in the nest, but takes to its wings and mount. Happy trouble that looses our care of earth! Give you a few days of sharp pain on a bed of sickness and you will not love life so much as you now do! You will begin to say, “Let me be gone.”

Why, even selfishness makes you wish for that. Then you can understand what David meant when he said his heart and his flesh cried out after God. It is hard to make the flesh cry out after God—but if you nip it well, turn the screw a little further, just stretch it on the rack a little more—the dumb, earth-born flesh will begin to cry out that it may be gone and leave the pain and sickness behind it! Thus, I think, I have shown you, though very briefly, for time fails us, that the saints lose something in the furnace which they are *glad* to lose—they are cast in bound, but amid the glowing coals they are set at liberty!

**III.** In the third place, WHAT SAINTS DO THERE. “Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire.” Walking! See those gardens so delightfully laid out with varying landscape? They have rippling fountains, blushing flowers and odoriferous herbs. There are quiet arbors here and there and soft reclining seats—and there with the voice of glee—young men and maidens walk. See that fair prospect! Turn here—a blazing furnace, so fiercely heated that the eyes feel as if scorched from their sockets as they look upon it. And the fervent heat comes pouring forth as though old Sol had found a house on earth! Yet there are four men walking in that furnace—*walking* in their ease!

And there is greater joy as they walk among those sulfuric flames, greater mirth in their spirits than in those young men and maidens who walk among the flowers! They are *walking*—a symbol of joy, of ease, of peace, of rest—not flitting like unquiet ghosts, as if they were disembodied spirits traversing the flame. No, they are walking with real footsteps, treading on hot coals as though they were roses and smelling the sulfuric flames as though they yielded nothing but aromatic perfume! Enoch “walked with God.” It is the Christian’s pace, it is his general pace—he does sometimes run—but his general pace is walking with God, *walking* in the Spirit.

And you notice that these good men did not quicken their pace and they did not slacken it—they continued to walk as they usually did. They had the same holy calm and peace of mind which they enjoyed elsewhere. Their walking shows not only their liberty and their ease and their pleasure and their calm, but it shows their strength! Their sinews were not snapped, they were *walking*. Sometimes God’s people, as Jacob at the brook Jabbok, halt on their thigh—but I think it is only a small trouble

that lames Believers—a greater trial will set them right again. A stream of trouble may almost overturn a Believer—but a flood of trials will make him rise as the ark rose, nearer to Heaven. These men had no limping gait—they were walking—walking in the midst of the fire!

Now, for the explanation of all this, turn to the biographies of any of God's saints. There is an old Scotch volume entitled "Naphthali"—it is the lives of those people of God who hazarded their lives unto death in the high places of the field. Now, if you read "Naphthali," you will find that the greatest joy that ever could have been known in this mortal life was enjoyed by Covenanters among the mosses and banks and on the hillsides of Scotland. There is another blessed old book which used to be chained in the churches side by side with the Bible—I mean "Foxe's Book of Martyrs." Every family ought to have a copy of it, illustrated with pictures for the children to look at. And if you read "Foxe's Book of Martyrs," you will see clearly that there was more joy in old Bonner's coal-hole and in the Lollard's tower, than palaces kings have known!

The martyrs felt a Heaven of joy while they were suffering a Hell of pain! One Samuel was kept starving for weeks, having bread and water given him alternately—three or four mouthfuls of bread one day and no water. And the next day a few spoonfuls of water and no bread. After he had been a little time in such a state as that, he fell into a perfect Elysium of delight! He thought he heard an angel say to him, "Samuel, you have suffered thus painfully, and fasted for the sake of your Lord. You shall soon feast with Him above—meanwhile you shall feast with Him below in your soul." Many and many a child of God has had an experience manifesting as clearly the loving-kindness of the Lord! Yes, they were *walking* in the midst of the furnace!

See Paul and Silas with their feet in the stocks and their poor bleeding backs on the stone damp floor of the Roman dungeon at Philippi, and yet they sing and the prisoners hear them! Why, I think I would as soon have been with Paul and Silas as with Peter when he was on the mountain. At any rate, the three holy children might have said to the fourth, who was their Comforter and Companion, what Peter said to his Lord—"Lord, it is good to be here! Let us build three tabernacles and dwell under the fiery roof of these boughs of flame, for it is happy to be where You are, though it be in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace."

**IV.** In the fourth place, **WHAT THEY DID NOT LOSE THERE?** The text says, "And they have no hurt." They did not lose *anything* there. But we may say of them, first, their bodies were not hurt. The child of God loses in the furnace nothing of himself that is worth keeping. He does not lose his spiritual life—that is immortal. He does not lose his Divine Graces—he gets them refined and multiplied and the glitter of them is best seen by furnace light. The gifts to the Christian of God the Holy Spirit are not taken away by the fiery hands of flame. The Christian does not lose his garments there. You see their hats and their shoes and their coats were not singed, nor was there the smell of fire upon them.

And so with the Christian—his garment is the beautiful dress which Christ Himself worked out in His life and which He dyed in the purple of His own blood. This is wrapped about the Christian as his imperishable mantle of glory and of beauty—

***“This sacred robe the same endures  
When ruined nature sinks in years.  
No age can change its glorious hue,  
The robe of Christ is ever new.”***

As it is not hurt by age, nor moth, nor worm, nor mildew, so neither can it be touched by fire. When the saint shall come up to Heaven, wearing Christ’s righteousness and the question is asked, “Who are these?” as the spirits gather round them, there shall be no traces upon them whatever of any of the persecution or suffering through which they have been made to pass. The Christian never loses a grain of his treasure when he passes through the furnace—in fact, to sum up in a word—he loses nothing.

The empress threatened to banish Chrysostom. “That you can not do,” said he, “for my country is in every clime.” “But I will take away your goods.” “No,” said he, “that you can not do, for I am a poor minister of Christ, and I have none.” “Then,” said she, “I will take away your liberty.” “That you cannot do, for iron bars cannot confine a free spirit.” “I will take away your life,” said she. “That you may do,” said he, “in one sense, but I have a life eternal which you cannot touch.” The empress thought she had better leave the man alone—she could do him no harm! So is it better for the enemy to leave the child of God alone, for he that kicks against God’s people, only kicks with naked feet against the pricks. And as the ox smitten with the goad only hurts himself when he kicks against it, so shall it be with all who touch the saints of the living God. They are not hurt and they never shall be.

Now, it is hard for some of you to think that this will be the case, but thus it will be with all of you who truly put your trust in Jesus Christ. My Brethren, I know you dread that furnace—who would not? But courage, courage, courage! The Lord, who permits that furnace to be heated, will preserve you in it, therefore be not dismayed! You would wish so to live as to have some tale to tell when you shall mount to Heaven—you would not be silent there! Coming to Glory without any adventure to narrate before the throne? Now, you cannot be illustrious without *conflict*—you cannot be a conqueror without fighting! You cannot by any possibility have anything to witness to the Glory of God unless you test and try the promises and the faithfulness of the Most High. And where can you do this except in the furnace of woe? Be of good courage, then—

***“The flames shall not hurt you,  
I only design your dross to consume  
And your gold to refine.”***

**V.** The last, and perhaps the most pleasing part of the text is, WHO WAS WITH THEM IN THE FURNACE? There was a fourth and He was so bright and glorious that even the heathen eyes of Nebuchadnezzar could discern a supernatural luster about Him! “The fourth,” he said, “is like the Son of God.” What appearance Christ had put on which was recognizable

by that heathen monarch, I cannot tell, but I suppose that He appeared in a degree of that Glory in which He showed Himself to His servant John in the Apocalypse. Such was the excessive splendor and brightness—the God-like air that was about Him, the flash of His eyes and the splendor of His gait as He walked the fire with the other three—that even Nebuchadnezzar could not help saying He was like the Son of God!

Beloved, you must go into the furnace if you would have the nearest and dearest dealings with Christ Jesus! Whenever the Lord appears, it is to His people when they are in a militant posture. Moses saw God at Horeb, but it was in a burning bush. Joshua saw Him, but it was with a drawn sword in his hand, to show that His people are still a militant people. And here where the saints saw their Savior, it was as Himself in the furnace. The richest thought that a Christian, perhaps, can live upon is this—Christ is in the furnace with him! When you suffer, Christ suffers. No member of the body can be pained without the head enduring its portion.

And so you, a member of Christ's body, in every pain you feel, pain the head Christ Jesus. As Baxter says, "Christ takes us through no darker rooms than He went through before." And one could improve upon it and say, "He takes us through no rooms so dark but what He is, Himself, there in the darkness and makes that darkness by His Presence light, cheering and gladdening our hearts." I know that to the worldling this seems a very poor comfort, but then if you have never drunk this wine you cannot judge its flavor. If the King has never taken you into His banqueting house and His banner over you has never been love. If He has never kissed you with the kisses of His mouth. If He has never said unto you, "I am yours and you are Mine," why, you cannot be expected to know what you have not experienced!

But he who has once drunk of the well of Bethlehem would hazard his *life* that he might get a draught of it again! He would be willing to go through the furnace though it were heated seventy thousand times hotter, that he might be able once more to see that Son of God, the fourth bright One who trod the glowing coals! The Presence of Christ is the brightest joy beneath the stars! Oh, Christian, seek it! Do not be content without it and you shall have it!

A very unhappy thought starts up and claims expression before we close our discourse. I do not like to close with it and yet faithfulness requires me to utter it—what must it be to be cast into that fiery furnace without Christ in it! What must it be to dwell with everlasting burnings! One's heart beats high at the thought of the three poor men being thrown into that furnace of Nebuchadnezzar's, with its flaming pitch and flames reaching upwards as though it would set the heavens on a blaze! Yet that fire could not touch the three children—it was not a *consuming* fire. But, my Hearers, be warned, there is One who is "a consuming fire," and once let Him flame forth in anger and none can deliver you!

"Our God," we are told, "our God is a consuming fire." The day comes which shall burn as an oven and the proud and they that do wickedly

shall be as stubble and every soul on earth that believes not in Christ Jesus shall be cast into that furnace of fire—this is the second death. Beware, you that forget God, lest the eternal fires of Tophet kindle upon you—for their flame searches the joints and marrow and sets the soul upon a blaze with torment! For you, my Hearers, who have listened to the Gospel often, but heard it in vain—for *you* the furnace of Divine wrath shall be heated seven times hotter and you shall fall down bound into the midst of it, never to be loosed.

And instead of having Christ, then, to be with you and to comfort you, you shall see Him sitting on His Throne and His glance of lightning shall perpetually make that flame burn more terrible and yet more terrible! If you were thrown into Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, it would be all over in a moment, not even your bones would be found! But the *soul* never dies. The punishment of the wicked is of the same duration as the reward of the righteous. Justice will ever exist in the Divine mind and will ever have objects upon which to display itself. If the soul died, Hell would not be Hell, for there would then be hope. And so the most terrible element of hopelessness would be removed.

Sinner, dream not of being annihilated, but dread the fire which never shall be quenched, the worm which never dies! It is written in God's Word that He "is able to destroy both body and soul in Hell," a destruction which amounts not to annihilation, a destruction of everything that is true life, but which leaves existence still untouched—

***"What? To be banished for my life,  
To linger in eternal pain  
And yet forbid to die—  
And yet forever die!"***

Dreadful, indeed, is such a doom! There is a second death which will pass on all the ungodly, but it is not annihilation! As death does not annihilate the body so does not the spiritual death annihilate the soul—you shall lose life but never existence! You shall linger in perpetual death!

But there stands the Savior and as He was with His people in the furnace, so He is near *you* this day in mercy, to deliver you from your sins! He calls to you to leave your sins and look to Him and then you shall never die and neither upon you shall the flame of wrath kindle because its power was spent on Him! He felt the furnace of Divine wrath and trod the glowing coals for every soul that believes in Him. God give His blessing for Jesus' sake. Amen.

### ***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Daniel 3.***

Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

# THE UNCONQUERABLE KING

## NO. 949

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 4, 1870,  
BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes unto Heaven, and my understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored Him that lives forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He does according to His will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What do You?”*  
*Daniel 4:34, 35.*

NO one has ever numbered Nebuchadnezzar with the Prophets, or believed his language to be inspired. We have before us simply a statement made by an uninspired man, after passing through the most extraordinary experience. He had been among the greatest and proudest of men—he suddenly fell into the condition of a grass-eating ox, by losing his reason. And upon being restored, he acknowledged publicly the hand of the Most High. I should not have taken his language as my text if it had not happened to be, as it is, a most correct and vigorous statement of sublime doctrines which are clearly stated by the Holy Spirit in different parts of Scripture.

It is a singular instance of how, when God comes to deal with men in afflicting Providences, He can make them clearly see many great Truths concerning Himself, and can constrain them to express their convictions in identically the same way as they would have done if His own Spirit had dictated the terms. There are certain parts of the Divine Character which even the unspiritual man cannot avoid seeing. And after passing through certain processes of suffering and humiliation, the man is compelled to add his witness to the testimony of God's Spirit with regard to the Divine Character.

Every single word that Nebuchadnezzar here utters can be backed up and supported by undoubtedly inspired words of men sent of God to proclaim infallible Truth. We shall not, therefore, need to answer the objection that our text is simply the statement of Nebuchadnezzar—we grant that it is so—but we shall show as we proceed that Babylon's humbled monarch herein has spoken most correctly and accurately—and in full accordance with the testimony of other parts of Scripture.

Before I conduct your minds to a close consideration of the text, I must make one remark. Many of you will very naturally suppose that the chapter read during this service, the hymns and the sermon, were all intended to have reference to a certain great political event reported in the papers of last night [the surrender of Napoleon to the King of Prussia]. But please observe that your supposition will be unfounded, for my text was fixed upon yesterday morning, before any sort of news had reached me, and the

service would have been the same if that event had not occurred. So that anything strikingly suggestive in the choice of the passage may be looked upon, if you will, as denoting the guidance of God's Spirit, but must not be imputed to any intentional reference on my part.

We will now come first to consider the doctrinal instruction of the text. Secondly, we would learn the practical teaching of it. And thirdly, we would exhibit the spirit suitable after the contemplation of such a subject.

I. First, then, let us turn to the text, and consider THE DOCTRINAL INSTRUCTION here given to us. We have here plainly stated the doctrine of the eternal Self-Existence of God. "I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored Him that lives forever." If this word needed to be confirmed we would refer you to the language of John in the Book of the Revelation where we find him describing, in the fourth chapter, at the ninth and tenth verses, the living creatures and the four and twenty elders as giving glory and honor and thanks, "to Him that sat on the Throne, who lives forever and forever."

Better still, let us hear the witness of our own Redeemer, in the fifth of John's Gospel, at the twenty-sixth verse, where He declares that, "the Father has life in Himself." My Brethren, you need not that I marshal in array a host of confirmative passages, for the eternal Self-Existence of God is taught throughout the Scriptures, and is implied in that name which belongs only to the true God, Jehovah, "I Am that I Am," where, note that it is not "I was," which would imply that in some measure or respect He had ceased to be.

Nor is it "I will be," which would intimate that He is not now what He will be, but I AM, the only Being, the root of Existence, the Immutable, and Eternal One. "We," as a venerable Puritan observes, "have more of nothing than of being," but it is God's prerogative to BE. He alone can say, "I am God, and beside Me there is none else." He declares, "I lift up My hands to Heaven, and say I live forever." He is the One only underived, Self-Existent, Self-Sustained Being. Let us know of a surety that the Lord God whom we worship is the only Being who necessarily and from His own Nature, Exists.

No other being could have been but for His Sovereign will, nor could it continue were that will suspended. He is the only light of life, all others are reflections of His beams. There must be God, but there was no such necessity that there should be any other intelligences. In all the future God must Be, but the necessity for the continuance of other spirits lies in His will and not in the very nature of things. There was a time when the creatures were not. They came from Him as vessels from the potter's wheel. They all depend upon Him for continuance, as the streamlet on the fountain from where it flows.

And if it were His will, they all would melt away as the foam upon the water. That immortality of spirits implied in such passages as Matthew 25:46, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal," is the result of His own resolve to make spirits whose duration should be eternal. And though He will never withdraw the endowment of immortality which He has bestowed, yet the reason for eternal existence is not in the *beings*, but entirely in Himself, for essentially, "He only has immortality"—

***"He can create and He destroy."***

All that is, whether material or intellectual, if so it had pleased God to ordain, might have been as transient as a sunbeam and have vanished as speedily as the rainbow from the cloud. If anything now exists of necessity, that necessity sprang from God, and still depends upon the necessity of Divine Decree.

God is independent—the only being who is so. We must find food with which to repair the daily wastes of the body. We are dependent upon light and heat, and innumerable external agencies—and above all we are primarily dependent upon the outgoings of the Divine power towards us. But the I AM is Self-Sufficient and All-Sufficient—

***“He sits on no precarious throne,  
Nor borrows leave to be.”***

He was as glorious before He made the world as He is now. He was as great, as blessed, as Divine in all His attributes before sun and moon and stars leaped into existence as He is now. And if He should blot all out as a man erases the writing of his pen, or as a potter breaks the vessel he has made, He would be none the less the supreme and ever-blessed God.

Nothing of God’s Being is derived from another, but all that exists is derived from Him. You hills and mountains, you seas and stars, you men and angels, you heavens and you Heaven of heavens—you minister nothing to Him who made you—you all stand up together in existence flowing from your Creator. God ever lives in this respect, that He undergoes no sort of change. All His creatures must, from their constitution, undergo more or less of mutation. Of them all it is decreed, “They shall perish, but You shall endure: yes, all of them shall wax old like a garment. As a vesture shall You change them, and they shall be changed: but You are the same, and Your years shall have no end.”

Our life is made up of changes. From childhood we hasten to youth, from youth we leap to manhood, from manhood we fade into old age. Our changes are as many as our days. “The creature” is, indeed, in our case, “made subject to vanity.” Lighter than a feather, more frail than the flower of the field, brittle as glass, fleeting as a meteor, tossed to and fro like a ball, and quenched as a spark—“Lord, what is man?” There comes to us all in the time appointed the great and ultimate change when the spirit is separated from the body—to be followed by another in which the divided manhood shall be re-united. But with God there are no changes of this or any other kind. Has He not declared, “I am God, I change not”?

God is essentially and evermore pure Spirit, and consequently undergoes no variableness nor shadow of a turning. Of none of the creatures can this be said. Immutability is an attribute of God only. The things created were once new—they are waxing old—they will become older still. But the Lord has no time, He dwells in eternity. There is no moment of beginning with the Eternal, no starting point from which to calculate age. From of old He was the Ancient of Days, “from everlasting to everlasting You are God.”

Let your mind retreat as far as its capacities will allow into the remote past of old eternity, and there it finds Jehovah alone in the fullness of His glory. Then let the same thought flash forward into the far off future, as far as imagination can bear it, and there it beholds the Eternal, unchanged, unchangeable. He works changes and effects changes, but He

Himself abides the same. Brethren, let us worship Him with words like these—

***“Your throne eternal ages stood,  
Before seas or stars were made.  
You are the Ever-Living God.  
Were all the nations dead.  
Eternity with all its years,  
Stands present in Your view  
To You there’s nothing old appears  
Great God! There’s nothing new.  
Our lives through various scenes are drawn,  
And vexed with trifling cares,  
While Your eternal thought moves on  
Your undisturbed affairs.”***

That He lives forever is the result, not only of His essential and necessary Self-Existence, of His independence, and of His unchangeableness, but of the fact that there is no conceivable force that can ever wound, injure, or destroy Him. If we were profane enough to imagine the Lord to be vulnerable, yet where is the bow and where the arrow that could reach Him on His Throne? What javelin shall pierce Jehovah’s buckler? Let all the nations of the earth rise and rage against God, how shall they reach His Throne? They cannot even shake His footstool.

If all the angels of Heaven should rebel against the Great King, and their squadrons should advance in serried ranks to besiege the palace of the Most High, He has but to will it, and they would wither as autumn leaves, or consume as the fat upon the altar. Reserved in chains of darkness, the opponents of His power would forever become mementos of His wrath. None can touch Him. He is the God that ever lives. Let us who delight in the living God bow down before Him, and humbly worship Him as the God in whom we live and move, and have our being.

In our text we next find Nebuchadnezzar asserting the everlasting dominion of God. He says, “Whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation.” The God whom we serve not only exists, but reigns. No other position would become Him but that of unlimited Sovereign over all His creatures. “The most high God, possessor of Heaven and earth has prepared His Throne in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all.” As David said so, we say also, “Yours O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the Heaven and in the earth is Yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and You are exalted as head above all.” “The Lord sits upon the flood; yes, the Lord sits King forever.”

The Lord is naturally the Ruler of all, but who shall pretend to rule over Him? He is not to be judged of man’s finite reason for He does great things which we cannot comprehend. Amazing is the impertinence of man, when the creature dares to sit in judgment on the Creator! His Character is not to be impugned or called into question. Only the boundless arrogance of our pride would so dare to insult the thrice holy God. “Be still, and know that I am God,” is a sufficient reply to such madness. The Lord’s place is on the Throne, and our place is to obey. It is His to govern, ours to serve—His to do as He wills, and ours, without questioning, to make that will our constant delight. Remember, then, that in the universe God is actually reigning.

Never let us conceive of God as being infinitely great, but not exerting His greatness—infininitely able to reign—but as yet a mere spectator of events. It is not so. The Lord reigns even now. Though in one sense we pray, “Your kingdom come,” yet in another we say, “Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever.” The Throne of the universe is not vacant, nor its power in abeyance. God does not hold a bare title to kingship—He is actually King. The government is upon His shoulders, the reins of management are in His hands. Even at this hour He speaks to the sons of men, “See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive. I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand.”

Before your very eyes He has fulfilled His word. (Luke 1:51, 52.) Events appear to fly at random like the dust in the whirlwind, but it is not so. The rule of the Omnipotent extends over all things at all times. Nothing is left to its own chance happening, but in wisdom all things are governed. Glory be unto the Omnipresent and Invisible Lord of All!

This Divine kingdom appeared very plainly to the once proud monarch of Babylon, to be an everlasting one. The reign of the Ever-Living extends as other kingdoms cannot, “from generation to generation.” The mightiest king inherits power and soon yields his scepter to his successor. The Lord has no beginning of days nor end of years—predecessor or successor are words inapplicable to Him. Other monarchies stand while their power is not subdued, but in an evil hour a greater power may crush them down. There is no greater power than God—there is no other power but that which proceeds from God, for, “God has spoken once; twice have I heard this. That power belongs unto God.” Therefore His monarchy cannot be subdued, and must be everlasting.

Dynasties have passed away, dying out for lack of heirs, but God the Ever-Living asks none to succeed Him and to perpetuate His name. Internal corruptions have often blasted empires which stood aloft like forest trees, defiant of the storm—at the core the tree was rotten, and before long, weakened by decay—it tottered to its fall. But the infinitely Holy God has no injustice, error, partiality, or evil motive in the government of His affairs—everything is arranged with spotless holiness, unimpeachable justice, unvarying fidelity, untarnished truth, amazing mercy, and overflowing love. All the elements of His kingdom are most conservative, because radically right. There is no evil leaven in the council chamber of Omniscience, no corruption on the Judgment Seat of Heaven. Therefore, “His Throne is established in righteousness.” Because His Throne is holy we rejoice that it can never be moved.

Pause here, dear Hearer, and let your soul’s eye behold again this view of things. God has reigned from the first day, God shall reign when days are gone. Everywhere He is the reigning God—reigning when Pharaoh said, “Who is Jehovah, that I should obey Him?” as much as when Miriam took her timbrel, and said, “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously.” He was reigning when Scribe and Pharisee, Jew and Roman, nailed His Only Begotten Son to the Cross, as much as when the angelic cohorts shouted in triumph, “Lift up your heads, O you gates, and be you lift up, you everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in.”

He is reigning amid all the calamities which sweep the globe as much as He shall be in the halcyon days of peace. Never is the Throne vacant, never is the scepter laid aside. Jehovah is always King, and shall be King forever and forever. Oh, happy subjects, who have such a Throne to look to! Oh, blessed children, who have such a King to be your Father! You, as a royal priesthood, may feel your royalties and your priesthods both secure for this unconquerable King sits securely on His Throne. Your monarch has not yielded up His sword to a superior foe. You have not to search for another leader. In the Person of His dear Son He walks among our golden candlesticks, and holds our stars in His right hand. He keeps Israel, and never slumbers nor sleeps.

But we must hasten on. Nebuchadnezzar, humbled before God, uses, in the third place, extraordinary language with regard to the nothingness of mankind. "All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing." This is Nebuchadnezzar, but his words are confirmed by Isaiah, "Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket," the unnoticed drop which remains in the bucket after it has been emptied into the trough, or the drip which falls from it as it is uplifted from the well—a thing too inconsiderable to be worthy of notice. "And are counted as the small dust of the balance." As the dust which falls upon scales, but is not sufficient to affect the balance in any degree whatever.

"Behold, He takes up the isles as a very little thing." Whole archipelagos He uplifts as unconsidered trifles. This triple kingdom of ours He reckons not only to be little, but "a very little thing." The vast island of Australia, the gems of the Pacific, the nations of the Southern Ocean, all these He handles as children lift their toys. "All nations before Him are as nothing. And they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity." So if Nebuchadnezzar goes far, Isaiah, inspired of the Spirit, goes farther. The one calls the nations "nothing," and the other "less than nothing," and "vanity."

You will find the passage in the fortieth of Isaiah, at the fifteenth and seventeenth verses. Now mark the force of each word, "all the inhabitants of the earth," not some of them only, not the poor ones among them, but the rich, the kings, the wise, the philosophers, the priests—all put together—"are as nothing." What an assembly would there be if all the nations could be gathered together! An impressive spectacle rises before my vision! One had need possess an eagle's wing merely to pass over the mighty congregation. Where could a plain be found which could contain them all? Yet all of them, says the text, are, "as nothing."

Now, observe they are so in themselves, for concerning all of us who are gathered here it is certain that there was a time when we were not—we were then in very deed "nothing." At this very moment, also, if God wills it, we may cease to be, and so in a step return to nothing. We are nothing in ourselves, we are only what He chooses to allow us to be, and when the time comes and it will be a very short time, so far as this world is concerned, we shall be nothing. All that will remain of us among the sons of men will be some little hillock in a cemetery or a country Churchyard, for we shall have no part in anything which is done under the sun.

Of what account at this day, my Brethren, are all the antediluvian millions? What are the hosts of Nimrod, of Shishak, of Sennacherib, of

Cyrus? What reeks the world of the myriads who followed the march of Nebuchadnezzar, who obeyed the beck of Cyrus, who passed away before the eye of Xerxes? Where are the generations which owned the sovereignty of Alexander, or the legions which followed and almost adored the eagles of the Caesars? Alas, even our grandsires, where are they? Our sons forewarn us that we must die. Have they not been born to bury us? So pass the generations like the successive series of forest leaves. And what are they but at their best estate, "altogether vanity?"

The nations are nothing in comparison with God. As you may place as many ciphers as you like together, and they all make nothing, so you may add up as many men, with all their supposed force and wisdom, as you please, and they are all nothing in comparison with God. He is the Unit. He stands for All in All, and comprehends all. And all the rest are but so many valueless ciphers till His Unity makes them of account. Here let me remind you that every man who is spiritually taught of God is made to feel experimentally on his own account his own utter nothingness. When his inner eye, like that of Job, beholds the Lord, he abhors himself, he shrinks into the earth, he feels he cannot contrast or compare himself with the Most High even for a single second.

***"Great God, how infinite are You!  
What worthless worms are we!"***

is the verse which naturally leaps to the lip of any man who knows himself and knows his God.

Spiritually, our nothingness is very conspicuous. We were nothing in our election—"You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." "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 is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy." We were nothing in our redemption. We contributed nothing to that price which Jesus paid—"I have trod the winepress alone. And of the people there was none with Me." We are nothing in our regeneration—can the spiritually dead help the blessed God to quicken them? "It is the Spirit that quickens, the flesh profits nothing." "We are His workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus." We shall, when we get to Heaven, make it part of our adoration to confess that we are less than nothing and vanity, but that God is All in All. Therefore shall we cast our crowns at His feet, and give Him all the praise forever and ever.

"The inhabitants of the earth are as nothing." It is a wonderful expression, and you see I do not attempt to expound it or any part of the text. I rather repeat words of the same meaning with the text by way of illustration. Before me is a great deep, and who shall fathom it? I would not darken counsel by words without knowledge. If there were an ant's nest somewhere in a farmer's estate and suppose he had ten thousand acres of land. That ant's nest would bear some portion, though a very small one, to the ten thousand acres of land. It could not be so strictly said to be as nothing as the whole world can when compared with God.

This round earth bears a very insignificant proportion to the vast creation of God, even to that which is revealed to us by the telescope. And we have reason to believe that all which can be seen with the telescope—if indeed it is a mass of worlds, and all inhabited—is but as a pin's prick compared with the city of London, to the far-reaching universe. If it is so,

and your mind were capable of compassing the entire creation of God, yet it would be only as a drop of a bucket compared with God Himself who made it all, and could make ten thousand times ten thousand as much, and then be but at the beginning of His power.

This world, then, bears no such proportion to the Lord as an ant's nest to the estate of ten thousand acres. Now if the farmer wishes to till the soil, it is not at all probable that he will take any cognizance whatever of that ant's nest in the arrangement of his affairs. And in all probability will overturn and destroy it. This proves the insignificance of the ant and the greatness of man as compared with ants. But as it involves a degree of forgetfulness or overlooking on the farmer's part, the ants are great enough to be forgotten—but the nations are not great enough even for that. If it were possible for the farmer to arrange without difficulty all his plans so that without disturbing his proceedings, every bird, ant and worm should be cared for in his scheme, how great then would he be compared with the ants!

And this is just the case with the Lord—He so arranges all things that apparently without effort the government of Providence embraces all interests, wrongs none, but yields justice to all. Men are so little in the way of God that He never finds it necessary to perpetrate an injustice even on a single man, and He has never caused one solitary creature to suffer one unnecessary pang. Herein is His greatness, that it comprehends all littleness without a strain—the glory of His wisdom is as astonishing as the majesty of His power, and the splendors of His love and of His Grace are as amazing as the terror of His Sovereignty. He may do what He wills, for none can stop Him. But He never wills to do in any case anything that is unjust, unholy, unmerciful, or in any way inconsistent with the perfection of His matchless Character. Here let us pause, and worship. I at least must do so. For my soul's eyes ache, as though I had been gazing at the sun.

We turn now to the next sentence, which reveals the Divine power at work sovereignly. "He does according to His will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth." This is easy to understand in reference to the celestial host, for we know that God's will is done in Heaven—we devoutly pray that it may yet be done on earth after the same fashion. The angels find it their Heaven to be obedient to the God of Heaven. Under the term, "army of Heaven," is comprehended fallen angels who were once numbered with that band, but were expelled from Heaven for their rebellion.

Devils unwillingly, but yet of necessity, fulfill the will of God. "Whatever the Lord pleased, that did He in Heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places." When we read in the text that on earth God's will is done, we see that it is so in a measure among the righteous whose renewed hearts seek after God's glory. But the Truth goes further, for that will is also accomplished in the *unrighteous*, and by those who know Him not. Yes, in those whose will is determined to oppose Him—but in some way unknown to us the will of God is still achieved (Prov. 19:21; Acts 4:27, 28).

I can understand a man taking so many pieces of wood and arranging them just as he pleases, nor can I see any very remarkable skill in so do-

ing. But the miracle of Divine Glory lies in this—that He has made men free agents, has endowed them with a will with which He never interferes except according to the laws of mind. That He leaves them absolutely free to do what they will, and they will universally of themselves to do contrary to His will. And yet, such is the magnificent strategy of Heaven, such is the marvelous force of the Divine mind, that despite everything, the will of God is done!

Some have supposed that when we believe with David, in Psalm 65, that God has done whatever He has pleased, we deny free agency, and of necessity moral responsibility also. No, but we declare that those who would do so are tinctured with the old captious spirit of him who said, “Why does He yet find fault, for who has resisted His will?” And our only answer is that of Paul, “No, but O man, who are you that replies against God?” Can you understand it, for I cannot—how man is a free agent, a responsible agent, so that his sin is his own willful sin and lies with him and never with God—and yet at the same time God’s purposes are fulfilled, and His will is done even by demons and corrupt men?

I cannot comprehend it, but without hesitation I believe it, and rejoice to do so. I never hope to comprehend it. I worship a God I never expect to comprehend. If I could grasp Him in the hollow of my hand, I could not call Him my God. And if I could understand His dealings so that I could read them as a child reads his spelling book, I could not worship Him. But because He is so infinitely great I find Truth here, Truth there, Truth multiform. And if I cannot compress it into one system—I know it is all clear to Him—and I am content that He should know what I know not.

It is mine today to adore and obey—by-and-by when He sees fit I shall know more and adore better. It is my firm belief that everything in Heaven, and earth, and Hell will be seen to be, in the long run, parts of the Divine Plan. Yet never is God the Author or the accomplice of *sin*—never is He otherwise than the Hater of sin and the Avenger of unrighteousness. Sin rests with *man*, wholly with man, and yet by some strange overruling force, Godlike and mysterious, like the existence of God, His supreme will is accomplished. Observe how the two truths combine in practice, and are stated in the same verse in reference to our Lord’s crucifixion, in Acts 2:23—“Him, being delivered by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.”

Now, to deny this Truth because we cannot understand it, were to shut ourselves out of a great deal of important knowledge. Brethren, if God does not rule everywhere, then something rules where He does not, and so He is not Omnipresent supreme. If God does not have His will, someone else does, and so far that someone is a rival to God. I never deny the free agency of man, or diminish his responsibility, but I dare never invest the free will of man with Omnipotence, for this were to make man into a sort of God, an idolatry to be loathed.

Moreover, admit *chance* anywhere, and you have admitted chance everywhere, for all events are related and act on one another. One cog of the wheel of Providence disarranged or left to Satan, or man’s absolute freedom apart from God, would spoil the whole machinery. I dare not believe even sin itself to be exempt from the control of Providence, or from the

overruling dominion of the Judge of all the earth. Without Providence we were unhappy beings. Without the universality of the Divine power, Providence would be imperfect, and in some points we might be left unprotected and exposed to those evils which are, by this theory, supposed to be beyond Divine control. Happy are we that it is true, “the Lord does as He wills in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth.”

Let us now consider the fifth part of the text—“None can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What do you?” I gather from this that God’s fiat is irresistible and unimpeachable. We are told by some annotators that the original has in it an allusion to a blow given to a child’s hand to make him cease from some forbidden action. None can treat the Lord in that manner. None can hinder Him, or cause Him to pause. He has might to do what He wills. So also says Isaiah—“Woe unto him that strives with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashions it, What make you? Or your work, He has no hands?”

Man is powerless, then, to resist the fiat of God. Usually he does not know God’s design, although he blunderingly thinks he does—often in opposing that apparent design he fulfils the secret design of God against his will. If man did know God’s design, and should set himself with all his might against it, yet as the chaff cannot resist the wind, as it is not possible for the wax to resist the fire, so neither can man effectually resist the absolute will and Sovereign good pleasure of the Most High. Only here is our comfort—it is right that God should have this might, because He always uses His might with strictest rectitude. God cannot will to do anything unjust, ungenerous, unkind, ungod-like.

No laws bind Him as they bind us, but He is a Law to Himself. There is, “You shall,” and, “You shall not,” for me, for you—but who shall put, “You shall,” to God, or who shall say, “You shall not”? Who shall attempt to be legislator for the King of kings? God is Love. God is Holiness. God is the Law. God is Love, and doing as He wills, He wills to love. God is Holy, and doing as He wills, He wills holiness, He wills Justice, He wills Truth. And though there were raised a thousand questions as to how is this just? How is that loving? How is that wise? The one sufficient answer is—

***“God is His own interpreter  
And He will make it plain.”***

O sons of men, it is not for me to solve the enigmas of the Infinite, he shall explain Himself. I am not so impertinent as to be His apologist, He shall clear Himself. I am not called to vindicate His Character. “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” What folly to hold up a candle to show the brightness of the sun! How much more foolish to attempt to defend the thrice holy Jehovah! Let Him speak for Himself if He will deign to contend with you. If you do but hear His thunders, how you tremble! When His lightning sets the heavens on fire, how amazed you are! Stand forth, then, and question Him if you dare.

If you are at sea in a storm, when every timber of your vessel creaks, when the mast is broken, when the mariners stagger like drunken men, when overhead is the horrible tempest, and the thundering voice of God in the tempest, and all around you the howling winds, then cease your caviling, and cry unto Him in your trouble. Act, then, this day as you would do

in such a case, for you are equally in His hands. (Psalm 99:1, 5; 100:3, 4). Thus have I tried to set forth the doctrine of the text.

**II.** Now, very briefly, consider its PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION. I think the first lesson is how wise to be at one with Him! As I bowed before the majesty of this text in my study, I felt within my soul, "Oh, how I long to be perfectly at one with this infinitely mighty, glorious and holy God. How can I dare to be His enemy?" I felt then if I had not yielded before, I must yield now, subdued before Him. I would that any of you who are not doing His will would give up your hopeless rebellion. He invites you to come. He might have commanded you to depart. In His infinite Sovereignty He has appointed Christ Jesus to be the Savior of men. Come and accept that Savior by faith.

How encouraging this is to those who are at one with God! If He is on our side, who shall be against us? "The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." We ought to be of the same mind as that believing woman who, during an earthquake, was observed to be very happy. Everybody else was afraid—houses were falling, towers were rocking, but she smiled. And when they asked her why, she replied, "I am so glad to find that my God can shake the world. I believed He could, and now I see that He can."

Be glad that you have One to trust in to whom nothing is impossible, who can and will achieve His purposes. My heart feels that she would give Him the power if He had it not, and if it were all mine. I would leave all power in His hands even if I could remove it. "Great God, reign You supremely, for there is none like unto You." "The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice. Let the multitude of isles be glad thereof." How joyful this thought ought to be to all holy workers! You and I have enlisted on the side of God and of His Christ, and, though the powers against us seem very strong, yet the invincible King will surely put them to rout before long.

Romanism, idolatry, infidelity—these all appear mighty things. And so seem those pots fresh from the potter—a child thinks them to be stone. But when the Lord Jesus smites them with the rod of iron, see how the potsherds fly! This shall He do before long. He will lift the might of His terrible arm and bring down His iron rod! Then shall it be seen that the Truth of God as it is in Jesus must and shall prevail.

How this should help you that suffer! If God does it all, and nothing happens apart from God, even the wickedness and cruelty of man being still overruled by Him, you readily may submit. How graciously and with what good face can you kiss the hand which smites you! The husband is gone to Heaven, God took him. The property has melted, God has permitted it. You were robbed, you say—well, think not so much of the second cause, look to the great *first* cause. You strike a dog, he bites the stick. If he were wise, he would look at you who use it.

Do not look at the second cause of the afflictions, look to the great first cause. It is your God who is in it all, your Father God, the Infinitely good. Which would you desire to have done on earth, your will or God's will? If you are wise, you say, "Not my will, but Yours be done." Then accept the ways of Providence. Since God appoints them, accept them with grateful praise. Herein is true sacrifice to God when we can say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." We have received good at His hands, and we

have blessed Him—heathen men and publicans might have done that. But if we receive evil and still bless Him, this is Divine Grace, this is the work of His Holy Spirit!

If we can bow before His crushing strokes, and feel that if the crushing of us by the weight of His hand will bring Him honor, we are content. This is true faith. Give us Grace enough, O Lord, never to fail in our loyalty, but to be Your faithful servants even to sufferings' bitterest end. Oh, to have the mind thus subjected to God! Some kick at the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty, but I fear it is because they have a rebellious, unhumiliated spirit. Those who feel obedient to God cannot have God cried up too much, cannot yield Him too absolute an authority. Only a rebellious child in a house wishes the father to be tied by rules and regulations. No, my Father must do right, let Him do what He wills!

**III.** What is THE RIGHT SPIRIT in which to contemplate all this? The first is humble adoration. We do not worship enough, my Brethren. Even in our public gatherings we do not have enough worship. O worship the King! Bow your heads now—bow your spirits, rather, and adore Him that lives forever and ever. Your thoughts, your emotions—these are better than bullocks and he-goats to be offered on the altar—God will accept them. Worship Him with lowliest reverence, for you are nothing, and He is All in All. Next let the spirit of your hearts be that of unquestioning acquiescence. He wills it! I will do it or I will bear it. God help you to live in perfect resignation.

Next to that, exercise the spirit of reverent love. Do I tremble before this God? Then I must seek more Grace that I may love Him as He is. Not love Him when my thoughts have diminished Him of His splendor, and robbed Him of His Glory, but love Him even as an absolute Sovereign, for I see that sovereignty exercised through Jesus Christ, my Shield and His Anointed. Let me love my God and King, and be a courtier, happy to be admitted near His Throne, to behold the light of the Infinite Majesty.

Lastly, let our spirit be that of profound delight. I believe there is no doctrine to the advanced Christian which contains such a deep sea of delight as this. The Lord reigns! The Lord is King forever and ever! Why, then all is well! When you get away from God, you get away from peace. When the soul dives into Him, and feels that all is in Him, then she feels a calm delight, a peace like a river, a joy unspeakable. Strive after that delight this morning, my Beloved, and then go and express it in your songs of praise.

If you are alone this afternoon, any of you, and not engaged in service, be sure to bless and magnify your God. Lift up your hearts in His praise, for “whoso offers praise glorifies God.” May the Lord bring us all, through faith in Jesus Christ, into harmony with this ever-blessed and ever-living God, and unto Him be praise and glory forever and forever. Amen.

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# THE SCALES OF JUDGMENT

## NO. 257

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JUNE 12, 1859,  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“TEKEL; You are weighed in the balances  
and are found wanting.”  
Daniel 5:27.***

There is a weighing time for kings and emperors and all the monarchs of earth, albeit some of them have exalted themselves to a position in which they appear to be irresponsible to man. Though they escape the scales on earth, they must surely be tried at the bar of God. For nations there is a weighing time. National sins demand national punishments. The whole history of God's dealings with mankind proves that though a nation may go on in wickedness, it may multiply its oppressions, it may abound in bloodshed, tyranny and war—but an hour of retribution draws near—when it shall have filled up its measure of iniquity. Then shall the angel of vengeance execute its doom. There cannot be an eternal damnation for nations as nations. The destruction of men at last will be that of *individuals* and at the bar of God each man must be tried for himself. The punishment, therefore, of nations, is national. The guilt they incur must receive its awful recompense in this *present* time state.

It was so with the great nation of the Chaldeans. They had been guilty of blood. The monuments which still remain and which we have lately explored, prove them to have been a cruel and ferocious race. A people of a strange language they were and stranger than their language were their deeds. God allowed that nation for a certain period to grow and thrive, till it became God's hammer, breaking in pieces many nations. It was the axe of the Almighty—His battle axe and His weapon of war. By it He smote the loins of kings, yes, and slew mighty kings. But its time came at last. She sat alone as a queen and said, “I shall see no sorrow,” nevertheless, the Lord brought her low and made her grind in the dust of captivity and gave her riches to the spoiler and her pomp to the destroyer.

Even so must it be with every nation of the earth that is guilty of oppression. Humbling itself before God, when His wrath is kindled but a little, it may for awhile arrest its fate. But if it still continues in its bold unrighteousness, it shall certainly reap the harvest of its own sowing. So likewise shall it be with the nations that now abide on the face of the earth. There is no God in Heaven if the iniquity of slavery goes unpunished. There is no God existing in Heaven above if the cry of the Negro does not bring down a red hail of blood upon the nation that still holds the black man in slavery. Nor is there a God anywhere if the nations of Europe that still oppress each other and are oppressed by tyrants do not

find out to their dismay that He executes vengeance. The Lord God is the avenger of everyone that is oppressed and the executor of everyone that oppresses.

I see, this very moment, glancing at the page of the world's present history, a marvelous proof that God will take vengeance. Piedmont, the land which is at this time soaked with blood, is only at this hour suffering the vengeance that has long been hanging over it. The snows of its mountains were once red with the blood of martyrs. It is not yet forgotten how there the children of God were hunted like partridges on the mountains. And so has God directed it—that the nations that performed that frightful act upon His children—shall there meet, rend and devour each other in the slaughter. And both sides shall be almost equal, so nothing shall be seen but that God will punish those who lift their hands against His anointed.

There has never been a deed of persecution—there has never been a drop of martyr's blood shed yet, but shall be avenged and every land guilty of it shall yet drink the cup of the wine of the wrath of God. And especially certain is there gathering an awful storm over the head of the empire of Rome—that spiritual despotism of the firstborn of Hell. All the clouds of God's vengeance are gathering into one—the firmament is big with thunder, God's right arm is lifted up even now and before long the nations of the earth shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire. They that have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication shall soon also have to drink with her of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. And they shall reel to and fro, their loins shall be loose, their knees shall smite together when God fulfils the old handwriting on the rock of Patmos.

Our duty at this time is to take heed to ourselves as a nation that we purge ourselves of our great sins. Although God has given so much light and kindly favored us with the dew of His Spirit, yet England is a hoary sinner. Favorably with mercy does God regard her then let each Christian try to shake off the sins of his nation from his own skirt and let each one to the utmost of his ability labor and strive to purify this land of blood and oppression and of everything evil that still clings to her. So may God preserve this land. And may its monarchy endure till He shall come, before whom both kings and princes shall lose their power right cheerfully even as the stars fade when the King of light—the Son—lifts up His golden head.

With this brief preface, I will leave nations and kings all to themselves and consider the text principally as it has relation to each one of us. And may God grant that when we go out of this hall most of us may be able to say, "I thank God I have a good hope that when weighed in the scales at last I shall not be found wanting." Or, if that is too much to expect, may I yet trust some will go away convicted of sin, crying in their own spirits, "I am wanting now, but if God in His mercy meets with me, I shall not be wanting long."

I shall notice, first, that there is certain preliminary weighing which God would have us put ourselves to in this world and which indeed He has set up as kind of tests whereby we may be able to discover what shall

be the result of the last decisive weighing. After I have mentioned these, I shall then come to speak of the last tremendous weighing of the Judgment Day.

**I. LET US JUDGE OURSELVES THAT WE MAY NOT BE JUDGED.** It is for us now to put ourselves through the various tests by which we may be able to discover whether we are, at this present time, short weight or not.

The first test I would suggest is that of human opinion. Now understand me. I believe that the opinion of man is utterly valueless when that opinion is based upon false premises and, therefore, draws wrong conclusions. I would not trust the world to judge God's servants and it is a mercy to know that the *world* shall *not* have the judging of the Church, but rather, the *saints* shall judge the *world*. There is a sense in which I would say with the Apostle, "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment—yes, I judge not myself." Human opinion is not to be put in competition with Divine Revelation. But I speak now of judging ourselves and I do not think it safe, when weighing our own character, to prefer our own and exclude our neighbor's judgment.

The esteem or contempt of honest men, which is instinctively shown without reference to party or prejudice, is not by any means to be despised. When a man knows that he is right he may snap his fingers in the face of all men but when a man's conscience tells him that he is wrong—if at the judgment bar of men he is found guilty, he must not despise it, he must rather look on the judgment of men as being the first intimation of what shall be the judgment of God. Are you, my Hearer, at this time in the estimation of all your fellow creatures condemned as one who should be avoided? Do you clearly perceive that the righteous shun you because your example would contaminate them? Have you discovered that your character is not held to be estimable among honest and respectable men?

Let me assure you that you have good reason to be afraid, for if you cannot stand the trial of an honest fellow creature—if the laws of your country condemn you—if the very laws of society exclude you—if the imperfect judgments of earth pronounce you too vile for its association, how fearful must be your condemnation when you are put into the far more rigid scale of God's justice! And how terrible must be your fate when the perfect community of the first-born in Heaven shall rise as one man and demand that you shall never behold their society! When a man is so bad that his fellow creatures themselves, imperfect though they be, are able to see in him not the mere seeds, but the very flower, the full bloom of iniquity, he should tremble. If you cannot pass that test, if human opinion condemns—if your own conscience declares that opinion to be just, you have good need to tremble, indeed, for you are put into the balances and are found wanting.

I have thought it right to mention this balance. There may be some present to whom it may be pertinent, but at the same time, there are far better tests for men, tests which are not so easily to be misunderstood. And I would go through some of these. One of the scales into which I would have every man put himself, at least once in his life—I say at least once,

because, if not, Heaven is to him a place the gates of which are shut forever—I would have every man put himself into the scales of the Divine Law. There stands the Law of God. This Law is a balance which will turn, even were there but a grain of sand in it. It is true to a hair. It moves upon the diamond of God's eternal immutable Truth. I put but one weight into the scale. It is this—"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul and with all your strength," and I invite any man who thinks himself to be of the right stamp and flatters himself that he has no need of mercy—no need of washing in the blood of Jesus Christ—no need of any atonement—I invite him to put himself into the scales and see whether he is full weight, when there is but so much as this one commandment in the other scale.

Oh, my Friends, if we did but try ourselves by the very first commandment of the Law, we must acknowledge that we are guilty. But when we drop in weight after weight, till the whole sacred ten are there, there is not a man under the scope of Heaven who has one grain of wit left, but must confess that he is short of the mark—that he falls below the standard which the Law of God requires. Mrs. Too-Good has often declared that she herself has done all her duty and perhaps a little more. That she has been even more kind to the poor than there was any occasion for. That she has gone to Church more frequently than even her religion requires. That she has been more attentive to the sacraments than the best of her neighbors and if she does not enter Heaven she does not know who will. "If I have not a portion among the saints, who can possibly hope to see God's face in light?"

No, Madam, but I am sorry for you. You are light as a feather when you go into the scales. In these wooden balances of your own ceremonies you may, perhaps, be found right enough, but in those eternal scales, with those tremendous weights—the Ten Commandments of the Law—the declaration is suspended over your poor, foolish head. "You are weighed in the balances and are found wanting,"

There may, perhaps, in congregations like this, be some extremely respectable body who has from his youth up, as he imagines, kept God's Law. His country, family, or associates can bring no charge against him and so he wraps himself up and considers that really he is *the man* and that when he appears at the gates of Heaven, he will be received as a rightful owner and proprietor of the reward of the righteous. Ah, my Friend, if you would take the trouble just to sit down and weigh yourself in the scales of the Law. If you would take but one command, the one in which you think yourself least guilty, the one that you imagine you have kept best and really look at its intent and spirit and view it in all its length and breadth in the Truth of God I know you would step out of the scale and say, "Alas, when I hoped to have gone down with a sound of congratulation, I find myself hurled up, light as the dust of the balance, while the tremendous Law of God comes sounding down and shakes the house." Let each man do this and everyone of us must retire from this place saying, "I am weighed in the balances and I am found wanting."

And now the true Believer comes forward and he claims to be weighed in another balance, for says he, according to this balance, if I am what I profess to be, I am not found wanting, for I can bring with me the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. And that is full weight, even though the Ten Commandments of the Law are weighed against it. I bring with me the full atonement, the perfect satisfaction of Jesus' blood and the perfect righteousness of a Divine Being, the spotless righteousness of Jesus the Son of God. I can be weighed against the Law and yet sit securely, knowing that now and forever, I am equal to the Law. It has nothing against me since Christ is mine. Its terrors have no power to frighten me and as for its demands they can exact nothing of me for they are fulfilled to the utmost in Christ. Well, I propose now to take professors and put *them* into the scales and try them. Let each one of us put ourselves into the scale of *conscience*. Many make a profession of religion in this age. It is the time of shams. There were never so many liars in the world since the days of Adam, as there are now. The Father of Lies has been more prolific of children at this than at any other period. There is such an abundance of newspapers and of talkers and of readers—and consequently flying reports. Wrong news and evil tales are far more numerous than ever. So, too, there is a great deal of vain show with religion. I sometimes fear we have not a grain more religion in England now than we had in the time of the Puritans. Then, though the stream in which it ran was narrow—it did run very deep, indeed.

Now, the banks have been burst. A great extent of country is covered with religious profession. But I tremble lest we should find at last that the flood was not deep enough to float our souls to Heaven. Will each one now in this congregation put himself into the scale of *conscience*, sit down and ask, "Is my profession true? Do I feel that before God I am an heir of the promises? When I sit at my Savior's table, have I any right to be a guest? Can I truly say that when I profess to be converted, I only profess what I have actually proved? When I talk experimentally about the things of the kingdom of God, is that experience a borrowed tale, or have I felt what I say in my own breast? When I stand up to preach, do I preach that which I have really tasted and handled, or do I only repeat that which I have learned to utter with the lips, though it has never been fused in the crucible of my own heart?"

Conscience is not very readily cheated. There are some men whose consciences are not a safe balance. They have by degrees become so hardened in sin that conscience refuses to work. But still I will hope that most of us may abide by the test of our own conscience, if we let it freely work. Dear friends, I would that you would often retire to your chambers alone—shut the door and shut out all the world and then sit and review your past life. Scan carefully your present character and your present position. And do, I beseech you, try to get an honest answer from your own conscience. Bring up everything that you can think of that might lead you to doubt. You need be under no difficulty here. For are there not enough sins com-

mitted by us every day to warrant our suspicions that we are not God's children?

Well, let all these black accusers for death, let them all have their say. Do not cloak your sins. Head your diary through, let all your iniquities come up before you—(this is the pith of confession)—and then ask conscience whether you can truly say, "I have repented of all these. God is my witness, I hate these things with a perfect hatred. God also hears my witness that my trust is fixed alone in Him who is the Savior of sinners for salvation and justification. If I am not awfully deceived, I am a partaker of Divine Grace, having been regenerated and begotten again unto a lively hope." Oh that conscience may help each of us to say, "I am not a mere painted image of life, but I trust I have the life of Jesus made manifest in my body. My profession is not the pompous pageantry with which dead souls are carried respectably to perdition. It is the joy, the hope, the confidence of one who is being borne along in the chariot of mercy to his Father's home above."

Ah, how many people are really afraid to look their religion in the face! They know it to be so bad they dare not examine it. They are like bankrupts that keep no books. They would be very glad for a fire to consume their books, if they ever kept any, for they know the balance is all on the wrong side. They are losing, breaking up and they would not wish to keep an account of their losses or villainies. A man who is afraid to examine himself may rest assured that his ship is rotten and that it will not be long before it founders in the sea, to his eternal shipwreck. Call up conscience—put yourself in the scale and God help you, that the verdict may not be against you—that it may not be said of you, "You are weighed in the balances and are found wanting."

I would have every man also weigh himself in the scales of God's Word—not merely in that part of it which we call legal and which has respect to us in our fallen state. But let us weigh ourselves in the scale of the Gospel. You will find it sometimes a holy exercise, to read some Psalm of David, when his soul was most full of grace. And if you were to put questions as you read each verse, saying to yourself, "Can I say this? Have I felt as David felt? Have my bones ever been broken with sin as his were when he penned his penitential Psalms? Has my soul ever been full of true confidence in the hour of difficulty, as his was when he sang of God's mercies in the cave of Adullam, or the holds of Engedi? Can I take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord? Can I pay my vows now unto the Lord, in the courts of His house, in the presence of all His people?"

I am afraid that the book of Psalms itself would be enough to convince some of you that your religion is but superficial, that it is but a vain show and not a vital reality. God help you often to try yourselves in that scale. Then read over the life of Christ and as you read, ask yourselves whether you are conformed to Him, such as He describes a true disciple. Endeavor to see whether you have any of the meekness, any of the humility, any of the lovely spirit which He constantly inculcated and displayed. Try your-

selves by the Sermon on the Mount—you will find it a good scale in which to weigh your spirits. Take, then, the Epistles and see whether you can go with the Apostle in what he said of his experience. Have you ever cried out like he—“O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” Have you ever felt like he, “That this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners?”

Have you ever known his self-abasement? Could you say that you seemed to yourself the chief of sinners and always accounted yourself less than the least of all saints? And have you known anything of his devotion? Could you join with him and say, “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain”? Oh, Brothers and Sisters, the best of us—if we put the Bible into the scales for the proof of our state, if we read God’s Word as a test of our spiritual condition—the very best of us has cause to tremble! Before Almighty God, on our bended knees, with our Bible before us, we have good reason to stop many a time and say, “Lord, I feel I have never yet been here, oh, bring me here! Give me true penitence, such as this I read of. Give me real faith, oh, let me not have a counterfeit religion! Give me that which is the current coin of the realm of Heaven—Your own sterling Grace, which shall pass in the great day, when the gates of Heaven shall be opened and alas, the gates of Hell wide open, too.” Try yourselves by God’s Word and I fear there are some who will have to rise from it and say, “I am weighed in the balances and found wanting.”

Yet again, God has been pleased to set another means of trial before us. When God puts us into the scales I am about to mention, namely, the scales of Providence it behooves us very carefully to watch ourselves and see whether or not we are found wanting. Some men are tried in the scales of adversity. Some of you, my dear Friends, may have come here very sorrowful. Your business fails, your earthly prospects are growing dark. It is midnight with you in this world. You have sickness in the house. The wife of your bosom languishes before your weeping eyes. Your children perhaps, by their ingratitude, have wounded your spirits. But you are a professor of religion, you know that God is dealing with you now. He is testing and trying you. He knows you and He would have you know that a summer-time religion is not sufficient. He would have you see whether your faith can stand the test of trial and trouble.

Remember Job. What a scale was that in which he was put! What weights of affliction were those cast in one after another, very mountains of sore trouble. And yet he could bear them all, by His grace, and he came out of the scales proof against all the weight that even Satanic strength could hurl into the scale. And is it so with you? Can you now say—“The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord”? Can you submit to His will without murmuring? Or if you cannot master such a phase of religion as this, are you able still to feel that you cannot complain against God? Do you still say, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him”? Oh, my Friends, remember that if your religion will not stand the day of adversity, if it affords you no comfort in the time of

storms, you would be better in that case without it than with it. For with it you are deceived, but without it you might discover your true condition and seek the Lord as a penitent sinner. If you are now broken in pieces by a little adversity, what will become of you in the day when all the tempests of God shall be let loose on your soul?

If you have run with the footmen and they have wearied you, what will you do in the swellings of Jordan? If you cannot endure the open grave, how can you endure the trump of the archangel and the terrific thunders of the Last Great Day? If your burning house is too much for you, what will you do in a burning world? If thunder and lightning alarm you, what will you do when the world is in a blaze and when all the thunders of God leave their hiding places and rush screaming through the world? If mere trials distress you and grieve you, oh, what will you do when all the hurricanes of Divine vengeance shall sweep across the earth and shake its very pillars till they reel and reel again? Yes, friends, I would have you, as often as you are tried and troubled, see how you bear it—whether your faith then stands and whether you could see God's right hand, even when it is wrapped in clouds. Whether you can discover the silver lining to the black clouds of tribulation. God help you to come out of the scales, for many are weighed in them and have been found wanting.

Another set of scales there is, too, of an opposite color. Those I have described are painted black. These are of golden hue. They are the scales of *prosperity*. Many a man has endured the chills of poverty who could not endure sunny weather. Some men's religion is very much like the palace of the queen of Russia which had been built out of solid slabs of ice. It could stand the frost—the roughest breeze could not destroy it. The sharp touch of winter could not devour it. They but strengthened and made it more lasting. But summer melted it all away and where once were the halls of revelry, nothing remained but the black rolling river. How many have been destroyed by prosperity? The fumes of popularity have turned the brains of many a man. The adulation of multitudes has laid thousands low. Popular applause has its foot in the sand, even when it has its head among the stars.

Many have I known who in a cottage seemed to fear God, but in a mansion have forgotten Him. When their daily bread was earned with the sweat of their brow, then it was they served the Lord and went up to His house with gladness. But their seeming religion all departed when their flocks and herds increased and their gold and silver was multiplied. It is no easy thing to stand the trial of prosperity. You know the old fable—I will just put it in a Christian light. When the winds of affliction blow on a Christian's head, he just pulls around him the cloak of heavenly consolation and girds his religion about him all the tighter for the fury of the storm. But when the sun of prosperity shines on him, the traveler grows warm and full of delight and pleasure—he ungirds his cloak and lays it aside—so that what the storms of affliction never could accomplish, the soft hand and the witchery of prosperity has been able to perform.

It has loosed the loins of many a mighty man. It has been the Delilah that has shorn the locks and taken away the strength of many a Samson. This rock has witnessed the most fatal wrecks—

***“More the treacherous calm I dread,  
Than tempests rolling over head.”***

But shall we be able to say, after passing through prosperity, “*this* is not my rest, *this* is not my God. Let Him give me what He may, I will thank Him for it, yet will I rejoice in the Giver rather than the gift. I will say unto the Lord, *You* only are my rest.” It is well if you can come out of these scales enabled honestly to hope that you are not found wanting.

There are again the scales of *temptation*. Many and many a man seems for a time to run well. But it is temptation that tries the Christian. In your business you are now honest and upright, but suppose a speculation crosses your path which involve but a very slight departure from the high standard of Christianity and, indeed, would not involve any departure from the low standard which your fellow tradesmen follow? Do you think you would be able to say, “How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” Could you say, “Should such a man as I do this? Shall I hasten to be rich, for if I do I shall not be innocent?” How has it been with you? You have had your trials. There has been an opportunity of making a little—have you taken it? Has God enabled you to endure when tempted, whether to unlawful gain, or to lustful pleasure, or to pride and vanity? Have you been enabled to stand against all these and to say, “Get you behind me Satan for you savor not the things which be of God, but those which be of man and of sin”?

How have you stood the test of temptation? If you have never been tempted you know nothing about this. How can we tell the worthiness of the ship till she has been at sea in the storm? You cannot know what you are till you have been through the practical test of everyday life. How, then, has it been with you? Have you been weighed in the balance and have you been enabled to say, “I know through grace I have been kept in the hour of temptation and with the temptation the Lord has always sent a way of escape. And here I am glorying in His Grace. I cannot rest in myself, but still I can say, ‘I am truly His.’ The work within me is not of man, neither by man—it is the work of the Spirit. I have found succor and support when my heart and my flesh have failed me”?

It is probable, my Hearers, that most of you are professors of religion. Let me ask you again, very earnestly, to test and try yourselves—whether your religion is real or not. If there are many false prophets in the world and those prophets have followers, must there not be many false men who are fatally deceived? Do not suppose, I beseech you, because you are a deacon, or have been baptized, or are a member of the Church, or are professors, you are therefore safe. The bleaching bones of the skeletons of self-deceived ones should warn you. On the rock of presumption thousands have been split that once sailed merrily enough. Take care, O Mariner! Though your boat may be gaily trimmed and may be brightly painted, yet it is none the surer after all. Take heed, lest the rocks be seen beneath

the keel, lest they pierce you through and lest the waters of destruction overwhelm you. Oh, do not, I entreat you, say, "Why make this stir? I dare say I shall be all right at last." Do not let your eternal state be a matter of suspicion or doubt. Decide now, I beseech you, decide now in your conscience whether you are Christ's or not. Of all the most miserable men in the world and the most hopeless, I think those are most to be pitied who are indifferent and careless about religion.

There are some men whose feelings never run deeper than their skin. They either have no heart, or else it is so set round with fatness that you can never touch them. I like to see a man either desponding or rejoicing— anxious about his eternal state, or else confident about it. But you who never will question yourselves—you are just like the bullock going to the slaughter, or like the sheep that will enter the very slaughter-house and lick the knife that is about to take its blood. I wish I could speak this morning more earnestly. Oh, if some sparks from the Divine fire would now light up my soul, then, by His grace, I could speak to you like some of the Prophets of old—when they stood in the midst of a professing generation—to warn them. Oh that the very voice of God would speak to each heart this morning! While God is thundering on high may He thunder below in your souls! Be warned, my Hearers, against self deception. Be true to yourselves. If God is God, serve Him and do it truly. If the devil is God, serve him and serve him honestly and serve him faithfully. But do not pretend to be serving God while you are really indifferent and careless about it.

**II.** I must now close by endeavoring to speak of THE LAST GREAT BALANCE. And here would I speak very solemnly and may the Spirit of God be with us. Time shall soon be over. Eternity must soon begin. Death is hurrying onward. The pale horse at his utmost speed is coming to every inhabitant of this earth. The arrow of death is fitted to the string and soon it shall be sent home. Man's heart is the target. Then, after death, comes the judgment. The dread assize shall soon commence. The trump of the archangel shall awake the sleeping myriads and, standing on their feet, they shall confront the God against whom they have sinned. Methinks I see the scales hanging in Heaven—so massive that none but the hand of Deity can uphold them. Let me cast my eye upward and think of that hour when I must myself enter those scales and be weighed once and for all.

Come, let me speak for each man present. Those scales yonder are exact. I may deceive my fellows here, but deceive God I cannot. I may be weighed in the balances of earth which shall give but a partial verdict and so commit myself to a false idea that I am what I am not—that I am hopeful when I am hopeless. But those scales are true. There are no means, whatever, of flattering them into a false declaration. They will cry aloud and spare not. When I get there, the voice of flattery shall be changed into the voice of honesty. Here I may go daily crying, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." But there the naked Truth of God shall startle me and not a single word of consolation shall be given me that is not true.

Let me, therefore, ponder the fact that those scales are exactly true and cannot be deceived. Let me remember, also, that whether I will or not, into those scales I must go. God will not take me on my profession. I may bring

my witnesses with me—I may bring my minister and the deacons of the Church to give me a character, which might be thought all-sufficient among men, but God will tolerate no subterfuge. Into the scales He will put me do, what I may—whatever the opinion of others may be of me and whatever my own profession. And let me remember, too, that I must be altogether weighed in the scales. I cannot hope that God will weigh my head and pass over my heart—that because I have correct notions of doctrine, therefore He will forget that my heart is impure, or my hands guilty of iniquity. My *all* must be cast into the scales.

Come, let me stretch my imagination and picture myself about to be put into those scales. Shall I be able to walk boldly up and enter them, knowing whom I have believed and being persuaded that the blood of Christ and His perfect righteousness shall bear me harmless through it all? Or shall I be dragged with terror and dismay? When the angel comes and says, “You must enter.” Shall I bend my knee and cry, “Oh, it is all right,” or shall I seek to escape? Now, thrust into the scale, do I see myself waiting for one solemn moment? My feet have touched the bottom of the scales and there stand those everlasting weights and now which way are they turned? Which way shall it be? Do I descend in the scale with joy and delight, being found through Jesus’ righteousness to be full weight and so accepted? Or must I rise, light, frivolous, unsound in all my fancied hopes—and kick the beam? Oh, shall it be, that I must go where the rough hand of vengeance shall seize and drag me downward, into fell despair?

Can you picture the moments of suspense? I can see a poor man standing on the drop with the rope round his neck and oh, what an instant of apprehension must that be! What thoughts of horror must float through his soul! How must a world of misery be compressed into a second? But O, my Hearers, there is a far more terrible moment still for you that are Godless, Christless, careless—that have made a profession of religion and yet have it not in your hearts. I see you in the scales, but what shall we say? The wailings of Hell seem not sufficient to express your misery. In the scales *without Christ!* Not long before you shall be in the jaws of Hell, without pity and without compassion. O, my dear Hearers, if you could hope to get to Heaven without being weighed—if God would believe what you say without testing you—I would not dare admit asking you this morning to ascertain the state of your own hearts. But if God will try you, try yourselves. If He will judge you, judge your own hearts.

Don’t say that because you profess to be religious therefore you are right—that because others imagine you to be safe that therefore you are. Weigh yourselves—put your hearts into the balance. Do not be deceived. Pull the bandage from your eyes, that your blindness may be removed and that you may pass a just opinion upon yourselves as to what you are. I would have you not only see yourselves as others see you, but I would have you see yourselves as God sees you. For that, after all, is your real state. His eye is not to be mistaken. He is the God of Truth and just and right He is. How fearful a thing will it be, if any of us who are members of Christ’s Church shall be cast into Hell at last! The higher we ascend, the greater will be our

fall—like Icarus in the old parable who flew aloft with wax wings—till the sun did melt them and he fell.

And some of you are flying like that—you are flying up with wax wings. What if the terrible heat of the Judgment Day should melt them! I sometimes try to picture how terrible the reverse to be if found to be rejected at last. Let what I shall say for myself suit us all. No, and must it be, if I live in this world and think I am a Christian and am not—must it be that I must go from the songs of the sanctuary to the curses of the synagogue of Satan? Must I go from the cup of the Eucharist to the cup of devils? Must I go from the table of the Lord to the feast of fiends? Shall these lips that now proclaim the word of Jesus one day utter the wailings of perdition? Shall this tongue that has sung the praises of the Redeemer be moved with blasphemy? Shall it be that this body which has been the receptacle of so many a mercy—shall it become the very house and home of every misery that vengeance can invent? Shall these eyes that now look on God's people, one day behold the frightful sights of spirits destroyed in that all-consuming fire?

And must it be that the ears that have heard the hallelujahs of this morning shall one day hear the shrieks and groans and howls, of the lost and damned spirits? It must be so if we are not Christ's. Oh, how frightful will it be! Methinks I see some grave professor at last condemned to Hell. There are multitudes of sinners, lying in their irons and tossing on their beds of flame—lifting themselves upon their elbows for a moment, they seem to forget their tortures as they see the professor come in and they cry—"Are you become like one of us? Is the preacher himself damned? What? Is the deacon of the Church come to sit with drunkards and with swearers? "Ah," they cry, "aha, aha, are you bound up in the same bundle with us, after all?" Surely the mockery of Hell must be itself a most fearful torture—professing sinners mocked by those who never professed religion.

But mortal fire can never describe the miseries of a disappointed hope, when that hope is lost—it involves the loss of mercy, the loss of Christ, the loss of life—and it involves moreover, the terrible destruction and the awful vengeance of Almighty God. Let us one and all go home this day, when yet God's sky is heavy, and let us bend ourselves at His altar and cry for mercy. Every man apart—husband apart from wife. Apart, let us seek our chambers—praying again and again, "Lord renew me—Lord forgive me—Lord accept me." And while, perhaps, the tempest which is now lowering over the sky and before another tempest direr still shall fall on us with its fearful terrors, may you find peace. May we not, then, find ourselves lost, lost forever, where hope can never come! It shall be my duty to search myself. I hope I shall be enabled to put myself into the scale—promise me, my Hearers, that each of you will do the same.

I was told one day this week by someone, that having preached for several Sabbaths lately upon the comforting doctrines of God's Word, he was afraid that some of you would begin to console yourselves with the idea that you were God's elect when perhaps you were not. Well, at least, such a thing shall not happen, if I have done what I hoped to do this morning. God bless you, for Jesus' sake.

# DANIEL FACING THE LIONS' DEN

## NO. 1154

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

***“Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did before”  
Daniel 6:10.***

Daniel was of royal race, and, what is far better, he was of royal character. He is depicted on the pages of Scriptural history as one of the greatest and most faultless of men. How grand and impressive his first appearance as a young man, when he was introduced to Nebuchadnezzar! The Chaldeans and magicians and astrologers had all failed to discover the secret which perplexed the king and troubled his spirit—till at length there stood up before him this young prince of the house of Judah to tell his *dream* and the *interpretation*. No wonder that the excellent spirit which shone in him led to his being made a great man, procured for him rich gifts and led to his promotion among the governor of Babylon.

In later days he showed his dauntless courage when he interpreted the memorable dream of Nebuchadnezzar, in which the king's pride was threatened with a terrible judgment. It needed that he should be a lion-like man to say to the king, “You, O king, shall be driven from among men, and eat grass as oxen, and your body shall be wet with the dew of Heaven, till your hairs are grown like eagles' feathers, and your nails like birds' claws.” Yet what he told him came true, for all this came upon the king, Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel discharged his duty to his conscience, so there was nothing to disquiet him. Well might he have said—

***“I feel within me  
A peace above all earthly dignities,  
A still and quiet conscience.”***

In ghastly light, in terrible grandeur, Daniel comes forth again, on the last night of Belshazzar's reign, when the power of Babylon was broken forever. Persians had dried up the river and were already at the palace doors. “You are weighed in the balances and are found wanting,” said the Prophet, as he pointed to the mysterious handwriting on the wall. After this he appears again, and this time in a personal dilemma of his own. Great as he was in the palace, and great in the midst of that night's car-

ounsel, he appears, if possible, greater, because the faith that animates him shines more radiantly when he is upon his knees.

The princes have conspired against him. They have, by fraud, perverted the king's mind so that he has passed an edict. Though Daniel knows that it is contrary to the law of the realm for him to pray or ask a petition of any god or man save of king Darius, yet he does pray and give thanks before his God. He believes in the higher sovereignty of the King of kings—and to the edicts of His everlasting kingdom he yields fearless and unqualified obedience. The sequel shows that the Most High God delivers him. Of this Daniel we are about to speak to you.

**I.** Our first point will be that DANIEL'S PRAYERFULNESS WAS THE SECRET OF HIS POWER. Daniel was always a man of prayer. If you saw him great before the people, the reason was because he was great before his God. He knew how to lay hold of Divine strength and he became strong. He knew how to study Divine wisdom and he became wise. We are told that *he went to his house to pray*. He was a great man—the highest in the land—consequently he had great public duties. He would sit as a judge probably a large part of the day. Life would be engaged in the various state offices distributing the favors of the king—but he did not pray in his office, except, of course, when his heart would go up in adoration of his God all day long.

He was in the habit of going to his house to pray. This showed that he made a business of prayer. And finding it neither convenient to his circumstances nor congenial to his mind to pray in the midst of idolaters, he had chosen to set apart a chamber in his own house for prayer. I don't know how *you* find it, but there are some of us who never pray so well as by the old arm-chair in that very room where many a time we have told the Lord our griefs, and have poured out before Him our transgressions. It is well to have, if we can have, a little room, no matter how humble, where we can shut the door and pray to our Father who is in Heaven, who will hear and answer.

*He was in the habit of praying three times a day.* He had not only his appointed seasons of morning prayer and of evening prayer, as most Believers have, but he had his noon-day retirement for prayer, as perhaps only a few have. He was an old man, over 80 years of age at this time, but he did not mind taking three journeys to his house to pray. He was a very busy man. Probably no one here has half so much important business to transact daily as Daniel had, for he was set over all the empire—and yet he found time regularly to devote three stated intervals for prayer. Perhaps he thought that this was prudent economy, for, if he had so much to do, he must pray the more. As Martin Luther said, "I have got so much to

do today that I cannot possibly get through it with less than three hours of prayer.”

So, perhaps, Daniel felt that the extraordinary pressure of his engagements demanded a proportionate measure of prayer to enable him to accomplish the weighty matters he had on hand. He saluted his God and sought counsel of Him when the curtains of the night were drawn, when his eyelids opened at the dawn of day and when the full sunlight was poured out from the windows of Heaven. Blessing the Lord of the Darkness, who was also the Lord of the Light, Daniel thrice a day worshipped his God.

A singularity in his manner is noticeable here. *He had been in the habit of praying with his windows open towards Jerusalem.* This had been his habit—by long use it had become natural to him—so he continues the practice as before. Though it was not essential to prayer, he scorns to make any alteration, even in the least point. Now that the decree had been signed that he must *not* pray, he would not only pray, but he would pray just as often as he had done—in the same place and the same attitude—and the same indifference to publicity, with the windows open. Thus openly did he ignore the decree! With such a royal courage did he lift his heart above the fear of man and raise his conscience above the suspicion of compromise. He would not shut the window because he had been accustomed to pray with it open. He prayed with his window open towards Jerusalem—the reason being that the temple was being built—and if he could not go, himself, at any rate he would look that way.

This showed that he loved his native land. Great man as he was, he did not scorn to be called a Jew, and everybody might know it. He was “*that Daniel of the children of the captivity of Judah.*” He was not ashamed to be accounted one of the despised and captive race. He loved Jerusalem and his prayers were for it. Hence he looked that way in his prayer. And I think, also, he had an eye to the altar. It was the day of symbols. That day is now past. We have no altar save Christ our Lord, but, Beloved, we turn our eyes to Him when we pray. Our window is open to Jerusalem that is above and towards that Altar where they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle with outward religiousness. We worship with our eyes to Christ.

And during that age of symbols, Daniel saw by faith the realities that were foreshadowed. His eyes were turned towards Jerusalem, which was the type and symbol of the one Lord Jesus Christ! So he prayed with his window open. I cannot help admiring the open window, because it would admit plenty of fresh air. There is much good in fresh air—the more the better. We do not want our bodies to be sleepy, or our senses sluggish, for if they are, we cannot keep our souls awake and our spirits lively.

And it would appear that *whenever Daniel prayed he mingled his supplication with thanksgiving*. He “prayed and gave thanks.” I wonder if he sang a Psalm? Perhaps he did. At any rate, prayer and praise—prayer and Psalms—sweetly blend in his worship. He could not ask for more Grace without gratefully acknowledging what he had already received. Oh, mix up thanks with your prayers, Beloved! I am afraid we do not thank God enough. It ought to be as habitual to us to thank as to ask. Prayer and praise should always go up to Heaven, arm in arm, like twin angels walking up Jacob's ladder, or like kindred aspirations soaring up to the Most High. I will not say more of this feature of Daniel's character. Oh, that we might all emulate it more than we have ever done!

How few of us fully appreciate and fondly cultivate that communion with God to which secret prayer, continuously, earnestly offered, is the key and the clue! Could we not, all of us, devote more time to seeking the Lord in the stillness of the closet greatly to our advantage? Have not all of us who have tried it found an ample recompense? Should we not be stronger and better men if we were more upon our knees? As to those of you who never seek the Eternal King, how can you expect to find Him? How can you look for a blessing which you never ask for? How can you hope that God will save you, when the blessings He does give you, you never thank Him for, but receive them with cold ingratitude, casting His Word behind your backs? Oh, for Daniel's prayerful spirit!

**II.** We pass on to DANIEL'S DIFFICULTIES, OR THE PRIVILEGES OF PRAYER. Daniel had always been a man of prayer, but now there is a law passed that he must not pray for 30 days—for a whole calendar month. I think I see Daniel as he reads the edict. Not proud and haughty in his demeanor, for, as a man used to governing, it was not likely that he would needlessly rebel. But as he read it, he must have felt a blush upon his cheek for the foolish king who had become the blind dupe of the wily courtiers who had framed a decree so monstrous! Only one course was open to him. He knew what he meant to do—he should do what he always had done.

Still, let us face the difficulty with a touch of sympathy. He must not pray? Suppose we were under a like restriction? I will put a supposition for a minute. Suppose the law of the land were proclaimed, “No man shall pray during the remainder of this month on pain of being cast into a den of lions”—how many of you would pray? I think there would be rather a scanty number at the Prayer Meeting! Not but what the attendance at Prayer Meetings is scanty enough now! But if there were the penalty of being cast into a den of lions, I am afraid the Prayer Meeting would be postponed for a month—owing to pressing business and manifold engage-

ments of one kind and another. That it would be so, not here only, but in many other places, I should be prone to anticipate.

And how about private prayer? If there were informers about and a heavy reward was offered to tell of anybody who bowed the knee night or morning, or at any time during the day, for the next 30 days, what would you do? Why, some persons would say, "I will give it up." Ah, and there are some who would boastfully say, "I will not give it up," whose bold resolve would soon falter, for a lion's den is not a comfortable place. Many thought they could burn in Queen Mary's days that did not dare to confront the fire, though I think it almost always happened that whenever any man through fear turned back, he nevertheless met with a desperate death at last. There was one who could not burn for Christ, but about a month afterwards he was burnt to death in bed in his own house.

Who has forgotten Francis Spira, that dreadful apostate, whose dying bed was a foretaste of Hell? It is left on record, as a well-authenticated narrative of the miseries of despair, though it is scarcely ever read nowadays, for it is far too dreadful for one to think upon. If we quail at suffering for Christ and evade His Cross, we may have to encounter a fiercer doom than the terror from which, in our cowardly panic, we shrunk. Men have declined to carry a light burden and been forced to bear a far heavier one. They have fled from the bear and the lion has met them! They have sought to escape from the serpent, but the dragon has devoured them.

To shrink from duty is always perilous. To demoralize yourselves in demoralized times is a desperate alternative. Better to go forward, better to go forward! Better, I say, even though you may have no armor. The safest thing is to go on. Even if there are lions in front, it is better to go ahead, for if you turn your back, the stars in their courses will fight against you. "Remember Lot's wife!" She looked back, and was turned into a pillar of salt. The apostate is of all creatures the most terrible delinquent—his crime is akin to that of Satan—and the apostate's doom is the most dreadful that can be conceived. Master Bunyan pictures—(what was the man's name? I forget for the moment)—one Turnaway (was it not?) who was bound by seven devils, and he saw him taken by the back way to Hell, for he had been a damnable apostate from the faith as it is in Jesus. It may be hard going forward, but it is worse going back!

Now it is a great privilege that we enjoy civil and religious liberty in our favored land. We are not under such cruel laws, that, as in other times or in other countries, laid restrictions upon conscience. We are allowed to pray according to the conviction of our judgment and the desire of our heart. But as I want you to value the privilege very much, I will put a supposition to you. Suppose there was only *one* place in the world where a man might pray and offer his supplications unto God? Well, I think there

is not a man among us that would not like to get there at some time or other, or at least to die there. Oh, what pains we should take to reach the locality! And what pressure we would endure to enter the edifice!

If there were only one House of Prayer in all the world, and prayer could be heard nowhere else, oh, what tugging and squeezing and toiling there would be to get into that one place! But now that people may pray *anywhere*, how they slight the exercise and neglect the privilege!—

***“Where'er we seek Him He is found,  
And every place is hallowed ground.”***

Yet it would argue sad ingratitude if seeking were, therefore, less earnest or prayer less frequent! And suppose there was only one man in the world who might pray and that one man was the only person who might be heard? Oh, if there were to be an election for that man, surely the stir to get votes for that man would be far more exciting than for your School Boards or your representatives in Parliament! Oh, to get to that man and ask him to pray for us—what overwhelming anxiety it would cause!

When the promoters and directors of railways had shares to dispose of during the old mania, how they were stopped in the streets by others who wished to get them and secure the premiums they carried in the market! But the man who was entrusted with the sole power of prayer in the world would surely have no rest day or night—we would besiege his house with petitions and ask him to pray for us. But now that we may each pray for ourselves, and the Lord Jesus waits to hear those who seek Him, how little is prayer regarded! And suppose nobody could pray unless he *paid* for the privilege? What “rumblings” there would be from the poor! What meetings of the working men, because they could not pray without so many pounds of money! And what a spending of money there would be! What laying out of gold and silver to have the privilege of speaking to God in prayer!

But now that prayer is free, without money and without price, and the poorest need not bring a farthing when he comes to have audience with God, oh, how prayer is neglected! Perhaps it would not be a bad thing, on some accounts, if there could be a law to *prevent* men from praying—because some would say, “We *will* pray.” They *would* pray! They would get over the shock and stoutly protest, “We are not to be kept down, we *must* pray.” Suppose I were bound to tell you, now, that God would not hear your prayers all next week? You would be afraid to abide in your houses and you would be equally afraid to leave them. You would be scared with terrors in your bed and you would be afraid to get up and face the perils of moving about. You would say, “Whatever happens, I cannot ask God for His blessing. Whatever I do, I cannot expect His blessing on it, for I must not pray.”

Then, perhaps you would begin to wish that you could pray! Oh, dear Soul, do not live this night through without prayer! Get to the Mercy Seat! Let sin be confessed to God. Let pardon be sought and all the blessings of Divine Grace. Do not despise or turn away from that blessed Mercy Seat which stands open to every soul that desires to draw near unto God.

**III.** Having thus dwelt upon Daniel's difficulty, I now want to draw your attention to DANIEL'S DECISION. The king says he must not pray. Daniel did not deliberate for a single minute. When we know our duty, first thoughts are the best. If the thing is obviously right, never think about it a second time, but straightway go and do it. Daniel did not deliberate. He went to his house and prayed in the morning. He went to his house and prayed at noon. And he retired to his house and prayed at eventide. "He kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did before."

I greatly admire one feature in Daniel's decision. He did not alter his accustomed habit in any single particular. Without disguise and without parade he pursued the even tenor of his way. As we have already said, the time was the same, the attitude was the same, the open window was the same. There was no precaution, whatever, to conceal the fact that he was going to pray, or to equivocate in the act when he was praying. He does not appear to have taken counsel of his friends, or to have summoned his servants and charged them not to let any intruder come in. Neither did he adopt any measure to escape his enemies. Not one jot of anxiety did he betray. His faith was steadfast, his composure unruffled, his conduct simple and artless.

Doubtless, Daniel felt that as he was the greatest man in Persia, if he, a worshipper of Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, failed in any degree, he would set a bad example to others and greatly discourage any poor Jew who might have Divine Grace enough to stand out, provided his example led the way. Persons who occupy high positions should know that God expects more of them than of other people. England expects every man to do his duty, but especially the men that are put to the front. If the standard-bearer falls, how is the battle to hold? Now, Daniel, you are much looked at and watched. God has put you in an eminent place, therefore take care that you do not flinch one solitary jot—go and do as you have been accustomed—though the sky looks overcast with clouds of evil omen.

It would have been foolish daring rather than self-possessed courage in Daniel had he been accustomed, ordinarily, to shut his window, should he have selected this crisis to open it. If he had been accustomed to pray *twice* a day, I do not see why he should go, now, and pray three times. But he did as before. It was his habit and he would not be put out of it.

He would show that his conscience was obedient to God and owed no allegiance to man. He *could* not and *would* not yield anything through menace. What a despot might lay down as law, a degraded sycophant might accept as equity. But a just man is proof against the corruption of an unjust judge. It might be asked, perhaps, "Should not Daniel obey the king?" "Certainly, kings' laws are to be respected. But any law of man that infringes the Law of God is, *ipso facto*, null and void at once! It is the duty of every citizen to disregard every law of earth which is contrary to the law of Heaven!

So Daniel felt that whatever he owed to his temporal sovereign, he owed to his God a vast deal more. "But should not a man take care of his life? Life is valuable! Should he run such a risk?" Remember that if a man were to lose his soul in order to save his life, he would make a wretched bargain. If a man lost his life to save his coat he would be a fool. And a man who loses his soul to save his life is equally a fool—and more so still! So Daniel felt that the risk of being put into a den with lions was nothing to the risk of being put into Hell—and so he chose the smaller risk—and in the name of God he went straight on.

And I will tell you what Daniel would *not* have said if he lived in these days and had he been like some of my Brothers—I mean like some of my Brothers in the ministry—clergymen of a political Church, established by law. He would *not* have said, "This is not quite right! The decree of his Majesty's Privy Council is utterly at variance with my creed. But you see I occupy a position of great usefulness—and would you have me give up that position of usefulness that I hold—to let these governors and counselors, that are all such bad fellows, have the entire management of the realm? Everything will go wrong if I do not compromise my profession! Although it, perhaps, may not be quite consistent with conscience, it is pardonable in the light of policy. And besides, 30 days will soon pass away. And we must remember my usefulness."

Oh, I have heard men who teach little children to repeat the words, "In my baptism I was made a member of Christ, a child of God and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven," and they know that it is a lie! And yet they stick in their un-protestant Church, and say, "I remain here because of my usefulness"—my *precious* usefulness!—"for if I were to go out of the Church I should be leaving it to those bad persons who are in it." They know that as long as they are there, they are in complicity with men who are dragging back the Church to Romanism, as fast as ever they can, and yet they say, "I am so useful, and I should injure my usefulness"!

In the name of Almighty God, are we to do evil that good may come? If I thought I could save every soul in this place, or do any other stupendous thing by making the slightest compromise with my conscience, I dare not,

in the sight of the living God do it, for so I have not been taught by the Spirit of God! Consequences and usefulness are nothing to us! Duty and right—these are to be our guides! These were Daniel's guides. The empire of Persia might go wrong—Daniel could not help that—but, by the Grace of God, he would not go wrong himself. It might be that these villainous courtiers and lords of the council might have the sway. Be it so. Leave God to manage them. It was not for Daniel, even for 30 days, to give up prayer.

“Ah, but,” they would say, “you can pray in your heart. You need not bend the knee—you can pray in your soul.” But it will not do to sell *principle*, or to bide with strict *integrity* and sterling *truth* in the smallest degree. Every jot and tittle has its intrinsic value. Our bold Protestant forefathers were of a different breed from the present race of temporizing professors. Talk of Apostolic succession! By what strange process do you suppose that Fuller, Ridley, Latimer, Donue and the like worthies did transmit their miters and their benefices to the cowardly seed who now hold their titles and enjoy their livings? We are at a loss to understand! The identification baffles us! Do they inherit the same spirit, defend the same doctrines, or observe uncompromising allegiance to the same Gospel? We know they do not!

It seems to us that progenitors and progeny are wide apart as the poles. If Jesus Christ were here today, there are plenty of people who would sell Him for eight pence—they would not need 30 pieces of silver, but would sell Him for a smile of patronage or a nod of approbation! Oh that we had back the old Covenanters who would not swerve an inch! Look at John Bunyan when they bring him up before the magistrates and tell him he must not preach! “But I *will* preach,” he said, “I will preach tomorrow by the help of God.” “But you will be put in prison again.” “Never mind, I will preach as soon as I get out.” “But you will be hanged, or kept in prison all your life.” “If I lie in prison,” he said, “till the moss grows upon my eyelids, I can say nothing more than this, that with God's help, I will preach whenever I get a chance.”

Do not tell me that these are non-essentials! To men that will follow the Lamb where ever He goes, even the opening or the shutting of a window, if need be, is essential! Be jealous over what are called “trifles.” They may be mere straws, but they show which way the wind blows. We need the race of grand old bigots back again! We have been howling at bigots these many years and praising up universal “charity,” which means nothing else than denying that there are any Truths of God in the world to defend, or any army of saints in which to enlist! A Protestant, on one occasion, was bid to bow down before the cross when he was about to be knighted, and many others did so. “It is only a form, you know,” they said. “But,” said

he, "by God, I won't." And they called him, "By God," and afterwards others who stood out boldly in the same way were called, "By Gods," or, "Bigots." So that tone of refusal has become a term of reproach. Here is a grandest bigot of all! Daniel is his name! He will pray! They will throw him into a lions' den! "The bigoted fool!"

Ah, yes, but God did not discountenance his unswerving uprightness. He had said before his God that he would do the right, and the right thing he did, whatever might happen. Young men and young women, I would like you to go to school before Daniel and learn to say, "Whatever happens, we cannot lie, cannot do the wrong thing. We cannot believe what men teach us, when contrary to God's teaching. We cannot give up prayer and personal holiness, whether there is a lions' den or no lions' den. We will stand fast by that for God's own sake." May that same spirit come back to Englishmen, and if it ever does, then I guarantee you the shavelings of Rome will need to pack up and get straight away, for it is the bending men, the *willow* men, that will sell truth at any price. Oh that we may learn to sell it at *no* price, but to stand fast like pillars of iron for God, for Christ, for the Truth of God, for every holy thing!

Now I fear I ought to say, before I leave this series of reflections, that there are some who have no decision of character at all because they are not Christians. Some men are Christians, perhaps, though they have not decision enough to avow it—*sneaking* Christians! They have, they say, with their heart, but never with their mouth, confessed Christ. They have never been baptized as He bids them, and as they ought to be, according to His Word. And there are some that have made a profession, but it is a smuggled profession. Their friends at home hardly know it and they do not want them to know it. Oh, if I enlisted in Her Majesty's service and had my regimentals given me to wear, I would wear them! I should not like to have them packed away and go about in other clothes, for I should be afraid of being taken up as a deserter.

There are others who dishonor their profession and do not live as they should. And there are those who, if they were persecuted, would speedily throw off their profession. They can go with Christ with silken slippers over smooth-shaven lawns—but as to walking through mire and mud with Him—that they cannot do. Oh for the heart of a Daniel, every one of us, to follow Christ at all hazards.

**IV.** Our last point is DANIEL'S DELIVERANCE. With that we will conclude. The evil that threatened Daniel did come. He was to be put into a lions' den and into a lions' den he was put. So, young man, you say, "I will not do wrong." You hope to escape unscathed. Yet it may be that you will be discarded by your friends and discountenanced by your associates. Expect it and go through it. If you are a tradesman and by saying you will

not submit to an evil custom of the trade you will become a loser, be willing to be a loser—expect that the lions' den will be there—and that you will be put into it.

Daniel came there, but there was not a scratch upon him when he came out of it! What a splendid night he must have spent with those lions! I do not wonder that in later days he saw visions of lions and wild beasts. It seems most natural that he should—and he must have been allowed, as that night passed among these grim monsters, to see grand sights! In any case he must have had a glorious night. What with the lions and with angels all night to keep him company, he was spending the night-watches in grander style than Darius! And when he came out the next morning, so far from being a loser, he was a gainer!

The king approved him, admired him, loved him. Everybody in the city had heard that Daniel had been put into the lions' den. He was a great man and it was like putting the Prime Minister into the lions' den. And when he came out—with what awe they looked upon him! The king was not regarded half as much a god as Daniel. Daniel had a smooth time of it afterwards. The counselors never troubled him again—the lions had taken care of them. There would be no more plotting against him. Now he would mount to the highest place in the empire and no man would dare to oppose him for very dread of the same fate that had fallen upon his enemies and accusers. So Daniel had, to the end of his days, smooth sailing to the port of peace.

Now, believe me, to be decided for the right is not only the right thing but the easiest thing. It is wise policy as well as true policy. If you will not yield an inch, then somebody else must move out of the way. If you cannot comply with their proposals, then other people will have to rescind their resolutions. So you will find that, if you suffer, and perhaps suffer severely at first, for decision of character, you will get speedy recompense for all you endure and a grand immunity in the future. There will be an end to the indignities that are offered you. If it is not obstinacy, but real conscience that prompts you, you will rise to a position which otherwise you could not have attained. The opposition, so strong against you at first, will very likely lead to your enemies endorsing your views—and the dishonor you have meekly to bear will be followed by a deference flattering to your vanity—if not perilous to your future consistency.

Only put your foot down *now*. Be firm and unfaltering *now*. If you yield today, you will have to yield more tomorrow. Give the world an inch and it will take many a yard. Be resolved, therefore, that you will give no inch, that to the lions' den you would sooner go than there should be equivocation, prevarication, or anything approaching falsehood. However great the difficulty may be at the outset, yet do it and you will be unhurt—you will

be an immediate gainer by it—and, to the rest of your days, God will give you a better and happier life than you have ever had before. “When a man’s ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.”

You Christian soldiers in the barracks, be decided. Stand up for Jesus! You will be ridiculed at first, but you will live that down before long. But if you are cowardly, the ridicule will last many and many a day, and your fellow soldiers will take delight in laughing at you. If any of you are in a workshop, take courage, do not yield! Why should we not have our way, as they have theirs? Young men in business, take care you begin your business in an honest, straightforward manner, for, if you begin it with tricks and crooked stratagem, it will go on crooked. And then, if you try to get straight, you will find it very difficult. Begin as straight as a line, never swerve from it. Act on the outset as a Christian should.

What if employers should frown, or customers be vexed, or friends fail? Bear it! It will be the best policy in the long run. *That*, however, is not for you to consider. Do the right thing, whatever happens. Let us be as Daniel. Oh that the young among us would emulate the purpose of heart with which Daniel began life! Oh that the active and vigorous among us would seek, with Daniel’s constant prayerfulness, for that high gift of wisdom equal to all emergencies with which God so richly endowed him!

And, oh, that the harassed, tempted and persecuted among you would learn to keep a clean conscience in the midst of impurities, as Daniel did—to preserve, like he, faith and fellowship with the faithful and true God! Though you are living among strangers and foreigners, profane in all their thoughts and habits, may God give you the Grace to hold the statutes and commandments of the Lord as more to be desired than wealth or honor! Yes, dearer to you, as Daniel accounted them, than even life itself!

So shall you honor God, glorify Christ and bless and praise His precious name in a way in which nothing else but decision of character can possibly lead you to do. God grant us all to have Christ for a Savior and to live to His praise. Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Daniel 6.***

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# **DANIEL'S UNDAUNTED COURAGE**

## **NO. 815**

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 14, 1868,  
BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did before.”  
Daniel 6:10.*

Daniel had been exalted to very great worldly prosperity but his *soul* had prospered, too. Oftentimes outward advancement means inward decline. Tens of thousands have been intoxicated by success. Though they bade fair in starting in the race of life to win the prize, they were tempted to turn aside to gather the golden apples and so they missed the crown. It was not so with Daniel—he was as perfect before God in his high estate as in his lowlier days—and this is to be accounted for by the fact that he sustained the energy of his outward profession by constant secret communion with God.

He was, we are told, a man of an excellent spirit and a man abundant in prayer—his head was not turned by his elevation. And the Lord fulfilled in him His promise to “make His servant’s feet like hinds’ feet, that they may stand upon their high places.” Yet, although Daniel preserved his integrity he did not find a position of greatness to be one of rest. As the birds peck at the ripest fruit, so his envious enemies assailed him. And as the most conspicuous warriors most attract the arrows of the foe, so the honors of Daniel brought upon him the enmities of many.

Seek not then, Beloved, seek not then with an excess of desire, or an unrest of ambition to be great among the great ones of the earth! There are more precious things than honor and wealth. A Persian king, wishing to give two of his courtiers a token of his regard, gave to one of them a golden cup and to the other a kiss. He who had obtained the golden cup considered that he was hardly done by, and envied the courtier who received the kiss from the monarch’s own mouth! And let me say, let who will receive the wealth and honors of the world which make up her golden cup, if you receive a kiss of favor from the lips of God and feel the sweetness of it in your inmost soul, you have received more than they!

You have no reason whatever to repine though that kiss should come to you in poverty and sickness, but rather to rejoice that God has counted

you worthy, in His infinite Grace, to receive the more of spirituals though you have the less of temporals. Luther declared that all the greatness of the world was but a bone which God threw to a dog, "For," says he, "he gives more to the Pope and to the Turk than to all His saints put together," and so verily it is. To be great, distinguished and wealthy may be the lot of a Haman who shall be hanged upon a gallows, while God's *true* servant may sit at the gate and bear contempt as did Mordecai.

Better to pine with Lazarus than feast with Dives for the love of God *more* than compensates for temporary disadvantages. Better an ounce of Divine Grace than a ton of worldly goods. Though the good things come not as the left-handed blessings of outward prosperity, be you more than content if you win the right-handed benediction of *spiritual* joy.

I present to you the example of Daniel for your observation, today, believing that these are times when we need to be as firm and resolute as he, and that, at any rate occasions will come to every one of us before we win our crown, when we shall need to put our foot down firmly and be steadfast and unflinching for the Lord and His Truth. First, let me invite your attention to Daniel's habitual devotion—it is worthy of our study. We might never have known of it if he had not been so sorely tried—but fire reveals the hidden gold.

Daniel's habitual devotion. We are told that before, before the trial, he had been in the constant habit of prayer. He prayed much. There are some forms of spiritual life which are not absolutely essential, but prayer is of the very essence of spirituality. He that has no prayer lacks the very breath of the life of God in the soul. I will not say that every man who prays is a Christian, but I *will* say that every man who prays sincerely is so. Remember, men may pray after a fashion and even practice private prayer, too, and yet may be deceiving themselves. As the frogs of Egypt came up into the bedchambers, so does hypocrisy intrude itself even into the private places where men pretend to worship God!

But I do say that a cheerful constancy in sincere private devotion is such a mark of Divine Grace that he who has it may fairly conclude himself to be one of the Lord's family. Daniel always had *subjects* for prayer and *reasons* for prayer. He prayed for *himself* that in his eminent position he might not be uplifted with pride, might not be taken in the snares of those who envied him, might not be permitted to fall into the usual oppressions and dishonesties of Eastern rulers. He prayed for his *people*. He saw many of the house of Judah who were not in such prosperous circumstances as himself. He remembered those who were in bonds, as being bound with them. Those who were bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh he brought in the arms of faith before his God.

He interceded for *Jerusalem*. It grieved him that the city was laid waste—that still the brand of the Chaldean destroyer was upon Mount Zion, so beautiful—and once the joy of the whole earth. He pleaded for the return from the captivity which he knew was ordained of his God. He prayed for the glory of His *God*, that the day might come when the idols should be utterly abolished and when the whole earth should know that Jehovah rules in Heaven and among the sons of men. It would have been a delightful thing to have listened at the keyhole of Daniel's closet and to have heard the mighty intercessions which went up to the Lord God of Hosts!

We read next that with all his prayers he mingled thanksgiving. Do observe it, for so many forget this, "He prayed and gave thanks to God." Surely, it is poor devotion which is always asking and never returning its gratitude! Am I to live upon the bounty of God and never to thank Him for what I receive? Surely prayers in which there is no thanksgiving are selfish things—they rob God, and will a *man* rob God—rob God even in his prayers? Rob God and yet expect that his prayers should be successful?

Have I not often said in this place that prayer and praise resemble the process by which we live? We breathe in the atmospheric air and then breathe it out again—prayer takes in deep drafts of the love and Grace of God, and then praise breathes it out again—

***"Prayer and praise, with sins forgiven,  
Bring down to earth the bliss of Heaven."***

Good Daniel had learned to praise as well as to pray, and to offer to God that sweet incense which was made of diverse spices, of earnest desires and longings mingled with thanksgivings and adorations. It is worthy of notice that the text says, "Daniel prayed and gave thanks before his God."

This enters into the very *soul* of prayer—this getting before God. O Brothers and Sisters, do you not often catch yourselves praying to the wind, and in private uttering words as though you were only to be heard by the four walls which bound your little room? But prayer, when it is right, comes before God in realizing the majesty of the Throne of His Grace and seeing the blood of the Eternal Covenant sprinkled on it! Right prayer is discerning that God is gazing right through you, reading every thought and interpreting every desire. It is feeling that you, yourself, are speaking into the ear of God, and are now, as it were—

***"Plunged in the Godhead's deepest sea,  
And lost in His immensity."***

This is praying, when we draw near to God. I shall not care if you do not use a single word, if you feel the majesty of God to be so overwhelming that words are out of place—and silence becomes far more expressive when you bow with sobs, and tears and groans that cannot be uttered.

That is the prayer which wins its suit of God and is dear to the majesty of Heaven. Thus Daniel prayed and gave thanks—not before men to *be seen* of them, nor yet in private before himself to satisfy his conscience, but “before God”—of whom he had an audience thrice each day.

That little word, “his,” I must not let slip, however. He prayed and gave thanks before *his* God. He spoke not to God merely as God who might belong to any man and every man, but unto *his* God whom he had espoused by a solemn determination that he would not turn aside from His service—that determination having resulted from God’s having determined to select him and to make him His own man—peculiarly set apart unto His own praise. “His God.” Why, it seems to me to bring up that word “covenant”—his “covenant God”—as though he had entered into covenant with God according to the language of the Most High, “I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

True son of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob was this Daniel when he looked upon God as being his *own*, his property, could claim Him, could say, as we sometimes sing in that sweet Psalm, “Yes, my own God is He!” Oh, to feel that the Lord belongs wholly to me! *My* God, *my* God—as if no other man can claim Him! My Father, my Shepherd, my Friend, my Lord, and my God! Yes, here lies power in prayer—when a man can talk with God as his covenant God. That man cannot miss! Every arrow sticks in the center of the target when he pleads “before his God.” That man must conquer the angel at Jabbok’s brook who grips Him with both hands by a faith which knows its Heaven-worked claims!

It is not winning mercies from another’s God, nor pleading outside the Covenant, but the Believer feels that he is asking of his own God mercies already promised and made sure to him by oaths, and Covenant and blood. Some other particulars in the text are not quite so important, nevertheless, observe that he prayed three times a day. That does not tell you how often he prayed, but how often he was in the *posture* of prayer. Doubtless he prayed 300 times a day if necessary—his heart was always having commerce with the skies. But thrice a day he *formally* prayed.

It has been well said that we usually take three meals in the day, and that it is well to give the soul as many meals as the body. We need the morning’s guidance. We need the eventide’s forgiveness. Do we not also require the noontide’s refreshment? Might we not well say at noontide, “Tell me, O You whom my soul loves, where You feed, where You make Your flock to rest at noon.”

If you find from morn till eve too long an interval between prayer, put in another golden link at midday. There is no rule in Scripture as to how often you should pray and there is no rule as to *when* you should pray. It is left to the man’s own gracious spirit to suggest a season. We need not

come back to the bondage of the Mosaic Covenant—to be under rule and rubric. We are left to that free Spirit who leads His saints aright. Yet, three times a day is a commendable number. Notice, also, the *posture*. That, also, is of little consequence since we read in Scripture of men who prayed on the bed, with their face to the wall.

We read of David *sitting* before the Lord. How very common and acceptable a posture was that of *standing* before God in prayer! Yet there is a peculiar appropriateness, especially in private prayer, in the posture of *kneeling*. It seems to say, “I cannot stand upright before Your majesty. I am a beggar and I put myself in the position of a beggar. I ask of You, great God, on bended knee, in the posture of one who admits that he deserves nothing, but humbles himself before Your gracious majesty.”

The reason why he kneeled on the particular occasion mentioned in the text was, no doubt, because he always *had* kneeled and therefore always *would* kneel—he would not be driven from the posture, little as that might be, at a tyrant's word! No, if all earth and Hell should be against him, if he had found it more to God's honor to kneel than kneel still, he would, even though he should be cast into the lions' den for it! One more observation. We are told that Daniel kneeled upon his knees with his window open towards Jerusalem. This was not done with any view to publicity. It may be that nobody could see him, even when his window was open, except the servants in the court.

I suppose the house to have been erected as most Eastern houses were, with an open square in the center, and though he would be looking towards Jerusalem, the windows would be looking into the court where he could only be observed by those who might be residents in the house or visitors on business. Probably his fellow counselors knew the hour which he usually set apart for devotion and therefore called in so as to find him in the act. Besides, you must remember that though it would be strange, here, for a man to pray with his windows open where he could be heard, it was not at all strange among the Orientals. You will find the Pharisees and others not at all slow to perform their devotions in any place when the hour of prayer comes, and therefore it would not be regarded at all as being of a Pharisaic nature that he should pray with his window open.

The window being open towards Jerusalem may have been suggested by the prayer of Solomon, when he asked that if the Lord's people were banished at any time, when they sought the Lord with their faces towards that holy place God would hear them. It may have helped him, also, to remember that dear city towards which every Jew's heart turns with affection, even as the needle trembles towards its pole. The thought of its ruin assisted his earnestness. The recollection of its sin humbled him and the promises concerning it comforted him. He turned towards Jerusalem.

And what does this say to us? Brothers and Sisters, it tells us that we ought to take care when we pray, to have our window open towards Calvary! Neither turn you to the East, nor to the West, but let your spirits turn towards the Cross of Christ. That is the great point towards which all the faces of the faithful must continually be turned—where Jesus died, where Jesus rose, where Jesus intercedes before the Throne of Mercy! There it is that the eyes of faith must look. Always pray with your windows open towards Calvary! Look upon the precious blood! Gaze steadfastly upon the risen Lord! Behold the authority of His plea as before His Father He wins His suit for His people, and you will grow strong to wrestle until you prevail!

We must now turn to a second consideration, Daniel's action under trial. There is nothing that kings and queens are much fonder of than meddling with religion. Though the Prussian king tried to make a number of watches all tick together and could not do it, yet notwithstanding the experiment and its failure, there are always evil counselors who would force men's consciences to keep stroke. Folly is in the throne when monarchs patronize or oppress religion. Caesar always muddles when he meddles with the things of God.

In Daniel's day there was an act of uniformity passed in some respects similar to the famous act which was thrust upon this land. Darius ordained that no man should pray for 30 days. The other Act of Uniformity commanded that no man should pray at any time in public without his book. There is not very much to prefer between the two. When this act of uniformity was passed, several courses were open to Daniel. He might, for instance, have said, "This does not answer my purpose. I have a high position in society. I am chief president over all these dominions and though I am willing to suffer something for my religion, yet gold may be bought too dear, and therefore I shall cease to pray."

He might have found many precedents and many companions. What crowds, when it has come to a question between life and truth, between honor and Christ, have made the evil choice and perished infamously? Daniel does not seem to have raised that question. Yet he might have said, "Well, well, we must be prudent. God must be worshiped, certainly, but there is no particular reason for my worshiping Him in the usual room, nor even in the city where I live. I can retire in the evening or find some more secret spot in my own house—and especially there is no occasion to open the window. I can pray with the window shut and I shall be just as acceptable before God. I think, therefore, I shall keep my conscience clear, but not thrust out my religion in these evil days."

Daniel did not so reason. He was a lion-like man and scorned to lower his standard in the presence of the foe—for see, in his position, if he had

not prayed as before it would have been a scandal to the weak and a scorn to the wicked! The weak would have said, "See, Daniel is cowed by the decree." Then every poor Jew throughout the realm would have found an excuse for forsaking his principles. And the wicked would have said, "Note, he serves his God when all goes well, but see where he drifts when trouble comes!" Daniel would not seek the secrecy which prudence might have suggested.

Still, it might have suggested to him that he could pray *inwardly*. Prayers without words are just as acceptable to God. Could he not do this? He felt he could not, inasmuch as the *decree* was not inward and the king's opposition to religion was not inward. He did not believe in opposing *outward* falsehood by an inward truth. He did, in the language of the hymn we were singing, "strength to strength oppose." He would give distinct *outward* avowal of his own convictions in opposition to the *outward* persecuting edict. As Daniel did not happen to have one of those rotating, double-acting consciences, he did not try to import a new meaning into the terms of the decree or invent a compromise between it and his own convictions—he went straightforward in the plain path.

He knew what the edict meant and therefore down on his knees he went before his God in direct defiance of it! Whether the edict might be read in a milder sense or not did not trouble Daniel. He knew what Darius meant by it and what the captains and the counselors meant by it—and he knew, also, what he himself intended to do—and therefore he did the right thing! Before his God he dared the lions rather than soil his conscience with anything of evil. Observe with care what Daniel did. He made up his mind to act as he had done *before*. Note how quietly he acted. He did not say to any of his enemies, "I mean to carry out my convictions." Not at all! He knew that talk was lost upon them, so he resorted to *actions* instead of words.

He quietly went home when he found the law was passed—though grieved that such a thing was done—and without a single word of repining or caviling he sought his chamber. I do not find that he was at all distracted or disturbed. The words, "As he had done before," seem to imply that he went upstairs as calmly as he had been accustomed to do. His servants would not have known, from his behavior, that any law had been made! He *always* had gone at that hour to pray, and they could hear him pray just as earnestly as he ever had done. He was focused on God and therefore continued at perfect peace.

Note again how he acted unhesitatingly—immediately! He did not pause. He did not ask for time to consider what he should do. In matters of perilous duty our first thoughts are best. When there is anything to be lost by religion, follow out the first thought of conscience, namely, "Do the

right.” Who needs to question where duty points the way? Where God commands there is no room for reason to raise doubts. Yet I have no doubt if the devil could have whispered into the Prophet's ear, he would have said, “Now, Daniel, you had better consider a little while. You are in a position where you can materially help your friends. You are of very great authority in this court—you may be of assistance to the true religion. You do not know how many may be converted by your example. You ought not lightly to give up a position where you can do so much good.”

That argument I have heard hundreds of times when people have been urged to come out of false positions and do the right. But what have you and I to do with maintaining *our* influence and position at the expense of the Truth of God? It is *never* right to do a little wrong to obtain the greatest possible good. Your duty is to do the right! Consequences are with God! And, after all, it never can be, in the long run, a good thing either for you or for others to do wrong. You will observe, also, that Daniel did not act under excitement, but with a full knowledge of the result. The record expressly has it—“When Daniel knew that the writing was signed.”

Many people will do right in a hurry and under strong excitement will go further than they would have done in cold blood. But Daniel, probably shut out from the council by some crafty device of the counselors, no sooner heard that the statute stood good than, without parley, his resolution was formed and his mind made up. It was not for him to delay and to hesitate—he had all the data before him and obedience made her determination known. Count the cost, young man, before you profess to be a Christian! Do not espouse, upon a sudden, an enterprise for which you will be unequal. Devote yourselves to the Lord your God by His Grace, but let it be according to the command of Christ after having first made an estimate of that which will be required of you—and seek Grace from on high that you may accomplish what otherwise will be impossible.

I like those words, and must go back to them again, “as he had done before.” Here he makes no alteration! He takes not the slightest possible notice of the king's decree. At the same place, at the same hour, in the same posture, and in the same spirit the Prophet is found. This indicates to us the Christian's duty under persecution—he should act under persecution as he would have done if none had arisen! If you have worshiped God under the smile of your Christian friends, worship Him under the crown of the ungodly. If you have, as a tradesman, pursued a course of honest action in more prosperous times, do not, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, tamper with that honest course because the times have changed.

What has been right is right, and therefore abide by it. What you have done sincerely, still do and God will give you a blessing in it. Daniel could

not have performed that act of praying, when the lions' den was to be the penalty, if he had not fallen into the habit of constant prayer beforehand. It was his secret communion with God which gave him strength and vigor to push on. Because he was right he found it easier to *keep* right whatever the penalty might be. I dare say I address some young man who has come from the country from a godly family where true religion has been daily set before him. But now he is placed in a workshop where he is startled to find that Jesus is ridiculed and religion is a by-word. Now, Friend, so as you used to do at home—make no difference to please vain men—take care that you begin as you mean to go on.

I would not say merely, "Do not give up the spirit of religion," but, "Do not even yield the form." The devil never gives up on us—do not quit fighting him. He takes care to fight us with all his might—let us do the same to him. I believe hundreds of Christian men make a hard lot to themselves by little yielding at first, for generally is it so in this world that if a man is determined and makes up his mind, after a while the world will let him alone. In the barracks when the soldier kneels to pray, how often has he been the subject of a thousand ribald jests and so has *given up* all thought of bowing the knee? Yet we have heard of a *real* convert, who, when *he* came into the regiment, having been converted, knelt down to pray and as he *persisted* in so doing, his comrades said, "Ah, he's one of the plucky ones! He's a genuine fellow." And they left him alone, whereas, if he had *once* sneaked into his bed without prayer he would never after that have dared to kneel.

There is nothing like following Daniel's example by never giving in, for thus you will win the respect of those who otherwise would have sneered at you. How soon the world will find out our real meaning! We may *think* we are playing our game so prettily that they cannot make us out, and that we shall be pleasing the world and pleasing God, too, but it always comes to a dead failure. And then, while the world despises, we have not the comfort of our conscience to sustain us. Oh, if our fathers, the Puritans, would but have yielded a little—if they could have made but a nick in their consciences, as some are *now* doing—then, instead of being cast out of house and home and prevented from opening their mouths to preach Christ, their yielding and consenting would have kept them in ease and honor! But where, then, would have been that Gospel light which gladdens the nations? Where those pure and sacred institutions which they have handed down to us?

Now, at this hour, through their intrepid resolution they remain among the blessed, and men honor them. Let us not, the sons of brave fathers—let us not be cowards! Remember the days of Cromwell, and the times when the godless Cavaliers felt the edge of the Roundheads' sword—and

though we take not carnal weapons, but eschew them utterly—let us show our foemen that the manhood of England is in us still and we are of the same metal as our sires!

Let us turn to the third point, with which we conclude—the secret support of Daniel. There was something in the man which gave him this backbone. There was a secret something which made him so magnanimous. What was it? It resulted from several things. It sprang from the fact that Daniel's religion was not the offspring of passion, but of deep-seated principle. There are some men whose religion is like the flower which lives upon the surface—they soon dry up when the sun of persecution burns. But there are others who, like the forest trees, send down their roots into the deep soil of principle—who know what they know, have learned thoroughly what they have learned—and hold fast what they have received. And these, in the time of trial, are sustained by springs of secret Grace, and their leaf is not withered.

Because the Holy Spirit had inwrought into Daniel's spirit the principles of faith, he was sustained in the time of trial. But I doubt not that Daniel was also supported by what he had read of the works of God in the olden times. He was a great searcher of books and he had found that in olden times Jehovah was always victorious. The Prophet's eyes gleamed as he thought of Pharaoh and the Red Sea, as he remembered Og, king of Bashan, and the books of Arnon. And as his mind flew on to Sennacherib and the hook put into leviathan's jaws to turn him back by the way which he came, he was strengthened.

Remembering the works of the Lord, for which his spirit made diligent search, he felt quite certain that the living God would prove Himself true to His own. Besides, the Prophet's spirit was sustained by what he had himself seen. He had been brought in close contact with the three holy children who were brought before Nebuchadnezzar. Where Daniel was at that time we do not precisely know, but he must have been well aware of that heroic deed. He had seen king Nebuchadnezzar defied, had beheld the Son of God walking in the furnace with the three heroes, and had seen them come forth with not so much as the smell of fire passed upon them! Here was grand encouragement.

Daniel also had personal experience of his God. He stood before Nebuchadnezzar to tell him the dream, and the interpretation thereof. And yes, on a yet more dread occasion, without fear and trembling, he had faced the king Belshazzar when the thousands of his guests were shouting to their gods and the king and his wives and concubines in gorgeous state were drinking wine out of the bowls consecrated to Jehovah. That lone man stood erect amid the ribald crew, and pointing to the mysterious letters, read the terrible sentence, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin," a mo-

narch's doom proclaimed in his presence by an unarmed man! Was such a one likely now to be afraid!

He that trembled not before tens of thousands of fierce soldiery, shall he fear now, when nothing but lions are in his way? Not he! He had looked into the face of his *God* and would not fear the face of a *lion*! Jehovah had overshadowed him and the den into which he would be cast had nothing in it terrible to him. His own experience helped to strengthen him! He had this conviction that God could deliver him, and that if God did *not* deliver him, yet still such was his love to the God of Israel that he would be content to give himself to die.

It is blessed to have such a confidence as this! You good people who are tried and who may expect to be tried yet more, you will never stand unless you come to this—"God can deliver me. But if He does not deliver me, still I am well content to be a sacrifice for Jesus' sake." Ah, some of you would gladly be Christians, but in the time of trial you give it up! Like the fresh-water sailor, who, seeing the ship decked with all her colors and her fair white sails bellying to the wind, thinks it must be a fine thing to be a mariner! But he is not far out to sea before qualms have come upon him—he dreads the storm, and vows—"If I can but once get safe to shore, I had done with sailing forever."

Many have said, "We will follow the Lord with Daniel." Yes, and well-content they are to be with Daniel at Shushan in the king's palace! But when it comes to the lions' den, then, "Daniel, good-bye." Take heed to yourselves that you are not deceived with a fair profession which shall afterwards fail you! Daniel failed not because his love to his God rested deep in his inmost heart—it had become part and parcel of himself and sustained by the two hands of love and faith—he was graciously lifted over the rough and thorny places.

Remember that Daniel is a type of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus had enemies who sought to destroy Him. They could find nothing against Him except, "touching His God." They accused Him of blasphemy, and then afterwards, as they did Daniel, they brought a charge of sedition. He was cast into the den—into the grave. His soul was among the lions. They sealed His tomb with their signet, lest any should steal Him by night, but He arose as Daniel did, alive and unhurt, and His enemies were destroyed.

Now, if Daniel is a type of Christ, and the Lord Jesus is the great representative Man for all who are in Him, you, Believer, must expect that there will be those who will attack *you*. You must expect there will be those who will assail you especially in your religion. You must expect, too, that they will prevail against you for a time so that you may be cast into the den—that they will seek to fasten you in as though you were destroyed forever.

But there will be a resurrection not only of bodies, but of reputations, and you shall arise. When the trumpet shall sound, not merely the corporeal particles, which make the man, but the man's *memory* shall rise! His good name, which has been buried beneath the clods of slander, shall rise to life! While as for His enemies, they and their reputations shall find devouring destruction from the Presence of the Lord.

Oh, to be a follower of Jesus, the great Daniel! To tread in His footsteps wherever He goes! To be much with Him, whether in private or public! This is a thing to be desired and though I exhort you to it, I do not expect you to attain to it in your *own* strength! I point you to the Holy Spirit who can work this in you, and make you to be greatly beloved as was this Prophet of old.

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

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

# THE LIONS' DEN

## NO. 2859

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 1903.

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

***“O Daniel, servant of the living God, is your God, whom you serve continually, able to deliver you from the lions?”  
Daniel 6:20.***

THE empire of Babylonia and Chaldea passed into the hands of a new dynasty and king Belshazzar was slain in a night-assault upon his capital. On that very night, he had clothed Daniel in scarlet and made him the third ruler in the Kingdom. This was Providential, for, had Daniel been in obscurity, he would have been little likely to attract the notice of Darius. But, observing him in the palace, clothed in scarlet, Darius would naturally ask who he was and enquire into his antecedents. The fame of his wisdom would be quickly told and the fact of his having twice interpreted the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar, in former times, and of his having just then, with startling precision, foretold the downfall of Belshazzar and the capture of the city by the Medes and Persians, would be eagerly related. Hence it was not at all surprising that Darius took great notice of Daniel, weighed his character, observed his conduct and, after a while, exalted him to be prime minister of his realm.

Daniel's prosperity and honors excited the envy of the courtiers. Full of sullen spite and brimming over with jealousy, presidents and princes conspired together to cast him down with calumnious accusations. We are known to say that “any stick will do to beat a dog,” so they looked about for any charge with which they might assail him. I have no doubt they watched him constantly, waited eagerly for his halting—all the while basely flattering the man they wanted to trip up. Can they discover a flaw in his accounts? Can they question the impartiality of his judgment? Can they detect a lack of loyalty in the administration of his government? Can they find fault with his private life? No, but is there nothing against him? Is Daniel such a four-square man that he is more than a match for them? I can well believe that they hunted him here and there till their haughty faces grew haggard in the sin effort to find a cause of complaint—and that they set spies to skulk about his house and mark his movements. And, in fact, they stooped to the meanest stratagems, little heeding how much they compromised themselves if they might but compass his downfall. But his integrity was proof against all their devices. The more closely they observed him, the more clearly they discerned that

he was always diligent, discreet and devout. So conscientious and so uniformly consistent was Daniel, both in his character and his conduct, that every effort to entangle him in the meshes of their conspiracy proved to be vain.

At length the devil, who does not often run short of devices, puts them up to a fresh plot. O Satan, you are full of all subtlety! "Let us contrive a new law," they say, "that shall bring his piety and his patriotism into conflict. He is a Hebrew by birth and he believes, with all his heart, in only one God. Our divinities he despises. Towards our temples he shows a silent scorn. He sets no value on the magnificent statues that we venerate. Three times in the day he has been accustomed to offer prayer to an invisible Protector whom he calls, 'the living God, Jehovah'—surely these peculiarities will supply us with a pretext and so we shall entrap him." So they laid their evil heads together and devised as cunning a snare as they could possibly invent. And yet, clever as they were, they perished in the trap they had prepared! They managed to involve the king, himself, in their iniquitous device and to entangle him in such a way that he must either sacrifice his favorite courtier, or compromise his own truthfulness and violate the sacred traditions of the empire! A royal statute was framed and a decree published forbidding any petition to be asked of God or man for 30 days. How preposterous!

But when was there ever a despot who was not, sooner or later, deserted of his wits? The passion for power, when indulged without restraint, will lead a man to the utmost foolishness and urge him to a madness of vanity. In such a false position stood the monarch who was easily persuaded to issue the infamous edict desired. In this strait, how will Daniel acquit himself? Will he count it prudent to desert his post and get out of the way? No. Daniel had a soul above such policy. Yet you might imagine that if he must pray, he would go down into the cellar, or offer his supplications to God in some retired place where he need not challenge notice. His petitions will be heard in Heaven without respect to the place from which they are presented. Or it might have been expedient to suspend the vocal utterance of prayer and offer his supplications silently. Daniel, however was a servant of the living God and, therefore, he scorned thus to compromise and play the coward. Well does one of the old writers call him, *Coeur de Lion*, for he had the heart of a lion! Into that den of lions he went, a lion-like man, not cruel, like the beasts of the forest, but far more courageous! His conscience towards God was clean and the course he pursued before his fellow creatures was clear. His sense of the Truth of God would not suffer him to be a trimmer. He does not change his habit, but goes upstairs, though he might have known that it was like climbing the gallows. He drops upon his knees, puts his hands together, with his windows open toward Jerusalem in the presence of all his adversaries—and there he prays three times a day as he had done before. He prays openly, not ostentatiously. He prays in the spirit of a Protestant rather than in the fashion of a Pharisee. He sought no honor, but he shunned no danger. To encounter shame, or to endure

reproach, if necessary, for the cause of righteousness, had long been his fixed habit—and now that it threatens to bring on him swift death, he swerves not!

Hear those quick feet as they patter along the streets of Shushan! All the presidents and princes are coming together! There is mischief brewing, for they are going to seek an interview with the king. They are anxious to inform his majesty that they have caught Daniel committing the horrible crime of prayer! Was not this a new offense? Oh, no! The first man that ever died fell a victim to his religion and so, I suppose, for many and many a century, this was one of the foulest offenses a man could commit against society! Those who serve the living and the true God are sure to challenge the sneers of the time-servers in any age. There are many, nowadays, who hate nothing as much as a religious man! All the epithets in the catalog of scandal are too good for the man who offers homage to God in everything. An infidel may be reputed honest, intelligent and worthy of respect—but a genuine Christian is at once denounced as a hypocrite! Away with such a fellow—his conscience is as offensive as his creed! There is toleration for everybody who conforms to the fashion of the day, but no toleration for anyone who believes that the laws of Heaven should regulate life on earth.

So they told the king that the laws of his empire must be kept inviolate. Good, loyal souls as they were, they would not have a statute broken for the world! There is an end to your monarchy if your royal proclamations are not to be respected! They are so jealous for the common law and so earnest for the king's honor that they must, at all hazards, even if it is at the risk of seeing their dear friend, Daniel, put into the lions' den, maintain the dignity of the king and assert the majesty of his imperial edict! The king perceives that he is caught, but thinks the matter over and, finding no alternative, gives Daniel up to the conspirators.

Alas! I see the godly man flung in among the lions, but what do I hear? Do I hear his bones cracking? Can I hear a shriek from the Prophet? Is there a noise of the howling of those savage beasts of prey? There is an awful hush while the king puts his seal upon the stone—shall we step down and peer into the den to see what is going on there? No sooner had Daniel arrived at his destination than an angel of God encamped in that dungeon. Stretching his broad wings, he seems to have fixed his station in front of those fierce beasts. The safety of Daniel was secured! The mouths of the lions were shut and they lay down like lambs. Perhaps Daniel found a comfortable pillow for his night's rest upon the shaggy body of one of those monsters that would have devoured him had not the heavenly visitant hushed them into silence by his presence! Or perhaps the appearance of the angel was as a flame of fire and worked an illusion before the lions' eyes, so that Daniel seemed to them to be surrounded with flame, or robed with fire. At any rate, that night the prophecy of the latter days—that the lamb shall lie down with the lion, was fulfilled to the letter! God, in His Providence and Grace, preserved His servant!

We can easily imagine that, like Paul and Silas, when Daniel did not sleep, he made the lions' den vocal with his songs and that the lions growled the bass while God's angel stood there listening to such music as he had never heard before! And when the morning dawned he then sped his way up to Heaven as the king came to fetch Daniel out of his prison house. So Daniel was delivered and his foes were confounded. There is the story. Now, what lessons are we to learn from it?

**I. First, I want to set before you DANIEL'S EARLY AND ENTIRE CONSECRATION TO THE SERVICE OF GOD.**

The king said, "Your God, whom you serve continually." This was no empty compliment. His scrupulous uprightness had become so habitual that it was like an instinct of his nature. Daniel began to serve God in his youth. There are no saints to be compared with those whose childish minds were imbued with heavenly Truths as soon as their infant lips began to lisp them. Just as there are no sinners so inured to wickedness as those who are bred and trained in haunts of vice, tutored from their cradle to utter profane words and prone to act as they think, bravely, in defiance of every precept of the Decalogue till they become proficient in every kind of profligacy. They, who give their morning to God, shall find that, in beginning early, they can keep pace with their work all day. Happy Daniel, thus continually to serve his God from his youth up! Yet it was not the good fortune of his birth that gilded his name with glory. Far from that—it was his sad lot to be carried away captive from his native land while but a stripling! Alienated from the home of his ancestors, he was taken to the palace of Nebuchadnezzar and there, with three other youths, he was entered as a bursar in a heathen school to be instructed in the strange literature of a strange nation and so to become one of the king's learned men!

His loyalty to the faith of his forefathers was at once put to the test. Certain food that was repugnant to his conscience, was served up every day. Probably it had been offered in sacrifice to a false god. Daniel feels that he would be polluted by partaking of it. He, therefore, with his companions, refuses either to eat the king's meat or to drink the king's wine. As a total abstainer, he drank nothing but water and, as a vegetarian, he ate nothing but simple plants. With no desire to please his palate, it was his delight to serve his God continually. Another man might have thought it mattered little what he ate and drank, but, for Daniel, the jots and tittles of Divine Revelation had a meaning. He dared not go contrary to the Law of his God, even with regard to meats and drinks. Though far from the land that Jehovah cared for, he longed to live in the Light of God's Countenance. Strict obedience to God has a swift reward. His face soon became fairer than the faces of those who fed on the royal diet!

At length, the time arrives when Daniel is to be brought from private tuition into public notice. Nebuchadnezzar has been distressed by a dream which his astrologers cannot comprehend and his soothsayers try in vain to search out. To Daniel, alone, who served his God continually, the secret is revealed. Of that vision I do not now attempt to speak—but

with what nobility of heart does Daniel stand before the king! He does not tremble before the earthly potentate, nor does he conceal the name of the God in Heaven who inspires him with wisdom. He recalls the forgotten dream and forthwith he is made a great man in the realm—yet he still goes on to serve his God continually! Obscurity could not hinder him, publicity could not mislead him. Again the king dreams. again Daniel boldly explains, though that explanation is to the effect that the haughty monarch shall be driven as a lunatic from the abodes of men!

For a while, Daniel retires into the shade. You hear nothing of him till Belshazzar ascends the throne, but he is still serving his God. I doubt not, sometimes ministering to his poorer brethren and visiting the sick, but often in his chamber, by prayer, and by study of the Scriptures, seeking and finding communion with the Most High. All of a sudden Belshazzar summons him to his presence. There is a mysterious writing on the wall which can be read by no eyes and interpreted by no lips but his. He is not disconcerted, but, at the call of royalty, to court he goes. Oh, with what simple dignity, with what sublime composure, with what heroic courage does the man of God tell the proud monarch, who might cut him in pieces if he willed, of his immediate doom—"You are weighed in the balances, and are found wanting"! If you want to find a counterpart of John Knox in the Bible, I do not know, leaving out Elijah, where you will find a rival to Daniel. How confidently he speaks, "This is the writing"! And again, "This is the interpretation." His word commends itself to the conscience—no man dares to gainsay it.

He is promoted to the highest honor in the realm—now what will he do? There has been a change of monarchs, but there is no change in Daniel. No time-server, he stands to his principles at all times. "Servant of the living God," is still his title! He had taken for his motto, when he began life, "I serve God," and he retains the motto to his life's close. The glory of his God was his one objective throughout all his days—and he never swerved. He is now lifted to a higher post of dignity than he had ever been raised to before. He is prime minister of the greatest monarch of the age, yet he abhors the idolatry of the heathen and maintains his allegiance to him who rules in the heavens. They can find no flaw in him, though the eyes of envy watch him from early morn to dewy eve! O my Brothers and Sisters, it is a hard thing to serve God in high places! Many a man seems to adorn the Doctrine of God our Savior when humbly earning his livelihood by the toil of his hands, and eating his bread in the sweat of his face, but, afterwards, when advanced to ease and opulence, he has turned his back upon his friends and forsook the Lord. Be very jealous of yourselves if you are rising in the world. Riches are deceitful. It is not easy to walk on a high rope—what lamentable Providences have befallen those who have thus risked their lives! Let us be the more circumspect when we are called to walk in high places. Popularity and fame, riches and honor are among the sharpest trials of integrity that mortal man can pass through. But Daniel could endure them all without his head growing giddy, for he served his God continually.

Now note the effect of what Daniel did. It is comparatively easy to follow the Lord in bright days, but the sun of prosperity suddenly darkens and the man of God is encompassed with perils. If he continues in his holy course, he will forfeit the king's favor and lose his life in the most dreadful manner. What will Daniel's determination be? Oh, the true grit is in him! He is a blade of the true Jerusalem manufacture and is not to be broken. He will do just as he did before! He opens his window and in the same posture, down on his knees, he prays as he did before! Glory be unto the God of Daniel, who made and who kept such a man with his head clear in the crisis, with his heart pure in the midst of persecution and his feet steadfast to the end!

Ah, dear Friends, some of us little know what these pinches mean. There are a few of you who do—you have endured torture without accepting deliverance. I have felt a holy pride in some of you when I have seen how you have borne trial. Witness the man who has a shop which brings him in more profit on a Sunday than it does all the rest of the days of the week, and who says, "It must be one thing or the other. I cannot go to the Tabernacle and keep my shop open, too—which shall it be?" His faith proves stronger than his fear! The shutters are closed on the first day of the week. His business goes—he loses everything and yet he does not regret it. He parts with ill-gotten gain without a grudge and goes back to hard manual labor with a moral satisfaction and a manifest ease of conscience that he never knew before! Dear souls, your pastor is proud of you! I feel that I can thank God and take courage since the Gospel of Christ educates and brings up such simple, honest servants of the living God! And when I have heard of young men serving in a shop, who, when asked to do something positively dishonest, have at first mildly answered that they could not—but when told that they must either comply or retire—have boldly said, "Then we will leave," I have felt how highly honored I am of God to have such men in our ranks.

My eminent predecessor, Dr. Gill, was told by a certain member of his congregation, who ought to have known better, that if he published his book, *"The Cause of God and Truth,"* he would lose some of his best friends and that his income would fall off. And the Doctor said, "I can afford to be poor, but I cannot afford to injure my conscience." The devil and the deceit of your own heart will readily suggest that you must look after your family—and some good Christian people mistake prudence for piety. I daresay, had Daniel gone to consult Mr. Prudent Thrifty and asked his advice, he would have said. "Well, you see, it is a very important thing for us to have you at the head of affairs. I do not think you ought to throw away such an opportunity as you have of doing good. It is not absolutely necessary for you to pray for thirty days! Would it not be better for you to trim a little and yield a point or two? You do distinguished service to our cause and, by keeping your position, you will be putting your foes to a non-plus. By compromise you will obtain concessions. Worldly wisdom is worth your study." This is the way that fools are beguiled and in this way many Christians, alas, drift from their moor-

ings. To plead the present distress is, for the most part, a mere pretence. "Let us do evil that good may come," never was in the code of Old Testament or New Testament Truth!

I remember a notable instance, some years ago, of this fallacious reasoning. A reflection was cast on the career of a distinguished clergyman who resigned his connection with the Established Church and, after much consideration, allied himself with the Baptists. "Did he gain credit," it was asked, "or increase his congregation by the change?" What of that? The answer is easy. Let conscience assert its supremacy, for circumstances do not weigh a feather in the scale. Long departed from among us, we may still speak of him as the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel—and he was right and righteous in his decision, as one who feared the Lord in the face of any loss. If, by stopping where he thought he ought not to stop, or by conforming to what he believed to be a corrupt corporation, he could have saved multitudes of souls, the good done to others would not have extenuated the guilt incurred by himself! You and I have nothing at all to do with consequences! Be it ours to hearken to the voice of the Lord and obey His high behests. When God prompts our conscience to a course of action, the slightest demur will recoil with a sense of intolerable guilt. Though the heavens should fall through our doing right, we are not to sin in order to keep them up! At the call of duty, never parley with danger. Should everything seem to go amiss with us after we have done the right thing, there is no cause for regret. Remember that our conduct is the maker of our character. You men of faith, hoist your colors! Leave to your God the providing! Stick to the obeying. Learn your duty and do it bravely. "Through floods and flames," if Jesus leads, follow on, never dubious that your welfare is assured.

Here, dear Friends, I would remark that the only service to God which is real, genuine, remunerative, is this continual service that sticks at nothing. Any hungry dog will follow you in the streets if you do but entice him with a piece of meat, or a bit of biscuit. How closely he keeps to your heels! But, after a while, the bait is gone and the dog retreats. That is like many a professor. There is some little pleasure in religion, or some advantage, and so he follows Christ, but, after a while, there is an attraction elsewhere and, impelled by greed rather than gratitude, he pursues it. Thus do false professors forsake Christ, whom they never did really follow. But I have seen a man on horseback, splashing the mud about and I have seen his dog keeping close at the horse's heels, up and down hills, whether the roads were smooth or rough—what did it matter to the faithful hound? His master was before him, so on he went! That is the only kind of dog I would care to own and I believe this is the only sort of follower that our Lord Jesus Christ is willing to acknowledge. Oh, those time servers who look one way and pull the other, like the ferry-men upon the stream! As for Lord Fair-Speech, Lord Time-Server, Mr. Smooth-Man, Mr. Anything, Mr. Facing-Both-Ways, Mr. Two-Tongues and all the members of their club, Mr. By-Ends included, the entire com-

pany of them will be swept away when the Judge comes with the besom of destruction!

I know you feel the force of this Truth. How you loathe a friend who will not stick to you in dark times! Do you remember that companion of yours who used to call in the evening and sit and chat with you? What a dear fellow he seemed! You always thought he was a sincere friend. You liked him much and you confided in his judgment as you often took counsel together. And all went well till, one day when the dark clouds began to gather over your head. It made a serious change in your circumstances. What was it? A severe loss in business, or perhaps a bankruptcy—now you cannot keep such a well-spread table, or wear as good a hat as you used to—there is not so much nap on your Sunday coat. You look rather less thriving than in days of yore. What has become of your friend? Ah, never mind, let him stay where he is for you have not suffered much loss by getting rid of him. He was never worth knowing, before, but you have found out his worthlessness, now, and I advise you to have nothing more to do with him. Do you not despise the character of such a man? Do you not feel in your heart, “Well, I can forgive him, but I will have nothing more to do with such a fellow”?

This is but a picture of yourselves if you try to follow Jesus Christ only when you are in the society of His people and as easily lend yourselves to sing a frivolous or lewd song when you are with the ungodly. What is that man's profession worth who lets his tongue run loose with flippant speech and vain conversation when he gets into the company of such friends as are known to be sons of Belial? Oh, that we had more Daniels who would serve the Lord continually! The only way to build up a character which will be proof against the temptations of the age and of your own immediate surroundings is to commit your cause to God, as Daniel did. Be much in prayer! Prayer keeps the Christian steadfast. You may make a loud profession, but it will not last without prayer. Amidst work and worry, heavy responsibilities and incessant anxiety, you had need often renew the confession of sin and weakness on your bended knees. Then, again, you must have a lively faith in the living and true God, as the Prophet had, for only this can sustain you in such a warfare. Is your faith genuine, of the right metal? Spurious faith soon loses its edge.

The Christian is in hard straits if he finds that when he needs courage and comfort most, all his strength and joy have departed! Prove your faith in the petty skirmishes of the passing hour, if you would have it endure the perilous conflicts of an evil day. Have you a religion that did not begin with rigorous self-denial. Then, get rid of it! If you have a religion that suits your constitutional fondness for ceremonies, your aesthetic taste for culture, your habitual passion for music, beware of it! The root of all real religion is simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Away with every counterfeit. That faith which lives only on Jesus, rests solely on Jesus, builds wholly on Jesus and shows itself in earnest prayer will give you a consistency and decision of character that will make you like Daniel all your days!

## II. Now, secondly who WAS THIS GOD WHOM DANIEL SERVED CONTINUALLY?

Let me ask—*Is Daniel's God worthy of our worship?* I ask the question in all earnestness because I feel positive that multitudes of men have a religion that, in their own judgment, is hardly worth debating about, far less worth dying for. It must have been a sorry spectacle to watch a Papist going to the stake or the scaffold as many Protestants have gone, for the maintenance of a fiction or a lie! I should be surprised to see an Agnostic lay down his life for the defense of nothing. But what shall we say of the living and true God whom Daniel delighted to honor? Is He worth living for, worth serving, worth dying for? Doubtless the Prophet's devotion grew stronger with the proof he made of the Lord's goodness and greatness. With childlike faith he clung, at first, to simple precepts that he would not transgress. The Revelations he afterwards received seem like rewards for his unfaltering integrity. In his direst emergencies, God manifestly delivered him. He had no other longing for life than communion with the Lord of All the Earth! From the Christian point of view, he was a "man greatly beloved." To the outside heathen, he was "a servant of the living God." But let us repeat the question, that we may have the pleasure of answering it for ourselves. Is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ worthy of our love and our life? Words are lacking to tell the gratitude and joy that we cherish towards God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love with which He loved us even when we were dead in sins!

By faith I understand that the blessed Son of God redeemed my soul with His own heart's blood and, by sweet experience, I know that He raised me up from the pit of dark despair and set my feet on the rock. He *died* for me—this is the root of every satisfaction I have! He put all my transgressions away. He cleansed me with His precious blood. He covered me with His perfect righteousness. He wrapped me up in His own virtues. He has promised to keep me, while I abide in this world, from its temptations and snares! And when I depart this life, He has already prepared for me a mansion in the Heaven of unfading bliss and a crown of everlasting joy that shall never fade away! To me, then, the days or years of my mortal sojourn on this earth are of little concern, nor is the manner of my decease of much consequence. What more can I wish than that while my brief term on earth shall last, I should be the servant of Him who became the Servant of servants for me?

You, dear Friends, must be the best judges of your own religion, whether or not it is worth suffering for. If it is not full of immortality, I would not advise you to risk your reputation on retaining it. If it is only a fair profession, you may well blush for it as a foul delusion. The fleeting fashion of the time has its market value, but the sterling Truth of God is a commodity that never fluctuates. Have you found Him of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth? Your religion is genuine if Christ Himself is the All-in-All of it. Is He your own dear Savior? Then you have pardon and peace, happiness in this present time and Heaven in prospect—happier lot no heart can wish for!

Then there comes another question—*Is Daniel's God able to deliver us from the lions?* My dear Friends, you who are suffering just now for the Cross of Christ, you who know what it is to be losers for Jesus, to stand out and to endure pains and penalties as Daniel did—you are well aware that the lions are fierce and furious creatures. They are not stuffed animals, having the name without the nature of those beasts of prey! So, the sufferings of a Christian are not sentimental—they are real! Those lions had not their teeth knocked out, they were not transformed into lambs. They could have devoured Daniel if they had been permitted to do so. It would be foolish to talk of your troubles as trifles, but for the Grace of God they might have been enough to drive you back into the world and to reduce you to despair! Full often, your steps have well-nigh slipped. The lions have sharp teeth and they would have devoured you—only Divine Grace has found a means of delivering you out of their mouths.

I ask the man who has given up a profitable appointment because he would not be false to his convictions, whether, on shorter commons he has not found the sweeter luxury of contentment? I ask him whether he has not enjoyed, on a harder pillow, more refreshing sleep? I appeal to you, one and all, if a sense of rectitude has not invariably a soothing effect and a gentle stimulus? I know, Brothers and Sisters, that those of you who have passed through such trials will bear me witness that there is a sustaining influence vouchsafed to you while you are cast, as it were, into the lions' den. Some of you are enduring the ordeal, now, but others, who have got farther on, have been rescued from dire peril. In most cases that have come under my notice, when anyone has ventured loss for Christ, he has presently reaped some substantial advantage—and his loss has, in the end, proved to be his gain.

Many a man has, in this manner, proved God's Providence. For an honest scruple, he has been put out of a position that supplied him with a scant livelihood. Contentment, with a bare pittance, was his only outlook. Loosed from his moorings, he feared lest he should be lost—yet he afterwards traced his enlarged prosperity to that very date! God, who is rich in mercy, has soon found for that man a far better position than he could have held had it not been for his forfeiting the other. And even if your deliverance is not thus speedy and sudden—if, like David, you should say, "My soul is among lions: I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword," yet shall you sing, like David—"My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise."

But should we even dwell among lions till we die, what joy shall it be to leave the lions and be linked with saints and holy angels in the beatific hereafter! The higher reward is bestowed on the higher service and brighter crowns encircle their brows who have suffered most bitterly and most bravely. You and I have but few and slender opportunities, in this soft and silken age, of showing our love to our Lord by the surrender of liberty and life for His sake. There are no stocks or racks, no stakes or gallows for martyrs now. These are smooth and slippery time, yet, if we are

so inclined, we can work with the will, with the self-denial and self-sacrifice of missionaries! For the love of Jesus, we can dare to die under a cloud with no hope of being canonized. Faith and patience are martial virtues which it may be quite within our province to illustrate in humble rather than heroic fashion.

You may wonder why I keep on in this strain. I am aiming at instances which are much more common than some of you may imagine. There are many worshippers gathered within these walls whose constant attendance at what is sneeringly called "a conventicle," exposes them to no reproach and, in some instances, would rather win them a measure of esteem. There are others, to my knowledge, who can never enjoy the privileges of the Lord's people without encountering grievous provocations and bitter malice.

In a congregation of this magnitude, the confidential words spoken to the pastor by the solitary ones would often startle those who sit in their family pews. Confession of Christ frequently causes division in a household. Husband and wife are, for His sake, in hostility. Mother and daughter cannot agree. Taunt and jibe are difficult to bear with equanimity. Perhaps it touches men in their trade and it goes hard with the breadwinner when faithfulness takes away his bread and cheese. My sympathy, however sincere, is of small account—would to God I could inspire you with more fortitude! Let me challenge you to quit yourselves like men! Let me exhort you to play the Daniel! Is your God the living God able to deliver you out of the den of lions? I hope you will be able to cheerfully respond, "I believe He can! I believe He will! But if not, though I abide in the den till I die, I will rest quietly there with the Angel of His Presence as my guardian for I know He will bring me, when I have suffered a while, to everlasting Glory!"

"Is your God, whom you serve continually, able to deliver you from the lions?" Let me put this question in one or two lights and thus draw our reflections to a close. Leaning over, like that Persian king, I look down into a greater den of lions than he ever descried. It is dark. The stench is foul and 'midst the dim shadows I discern struggling forms and figures. Tormentors, whose faces are hidden, stretching women upon racks and torturing men with switch and leather flogs. And, yonder, a spot where, on hundreds of stakes, martyrs have been burned to the death. In the far distance, a wild horse and a human victim tied to his heels to be dragged to death. Strange and horrible spectacle that, out yonder!—a long procession of men who were scourged, who were stoned, who were beheaded, who were sawn asunder—saintly men were they, of whom the world was not worthy! Leaning over the mouth of this great lion's den, I ask the persecuted saints of all ages—Has your God been able to deliver you? And with a cheerful shout, loud as the voice of thunder, they cry, "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us!"

I look down upon another lions' den. It is still dark, but not so dreary. Night reigns in sacred shade and solitude. The stars are hid, but tapers

burn in chambers dimly lit. There, sons and daughters of sorrow are tossed on beds of sickness. Thus they have lain for months, perhaps for years—all hope of health extinguished, all prospect of pleasure passed. Their limbs paralyzed, their sight failing, their hearing dull—calamities of every kind have befallen them. God has permitted the great lions of affliction to come howling round and to tear away all their comforts and their joys till they are left without any of that cheerful fellowship with nature which seasons mortal life with sweet relish.

Some of you are robust in health—your head never throbs, your heart never aches, you are hardly conscious that you have any nerves. Small account do you take of the secret, silent, saintly heroism of sufferers whose pilgrimage on earth is blighted with pain. Oft have I been their companion in tribulation. I appeal to these tried and afflicted children of God. Tell me, you Daniels, has your God been able to deliver you out of the mouths of the lions? And I hear each one say, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul!” And all join in chorus, saying, “Not one good thing has failed of all that the Lord our God has promised! Our shoes have been iron and brass, and as our days, so has our strength been.”

Will I strain my parable too far if I turn my eye upon another lions' den? It lies in a deep valley. The night hangs heavy. The beasts of prey are diseases that skill and shrewdness, time and talent have striven in vain to tame. Like lions, strangely dissimilar in outward fashion, but strongly resembling them in instinct, they pounce on their victims and seal their doom. We call this place “the Valley of the Shadow of Death.” I think I am gazing, now, on the forms of shivering men and women as they are dragged down by the lions. One after another, my familiar friends descend into the grave and I ask them, in the hour of their departure, “Is your God, whom you serve continually, able to deliver you from the lions?” Calm is their countenance and clear their voice, as each one chants his solo, “O Death, where is your sting? O Grave, where is your victory? Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!” So, at length, this lions' den, too, loses all its terror.

Then I look into another den. It is almost empty. There is a lion in it, a grim old lion, but I do not see so much as a bone to tell the tale of its victims. No trace of its ravages is left behind. On this soil there once were countless thousands of the slain, but it is empty, now. All of a sudden I look up and, lo, I see myriads of immortal souls and they all tell me, “Our God delivered us from the grave, and rifled the tomb of its prey. By a glorious Resurrection, He has brought all His ransomed people forth to meet their Lord at the Great Day of His appearing. There shall they stand before the Throne of God, for He has broken the teeth of the lion and rescued all His children from the power of the adversary!”

—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 SAFE PROSPECTIVE

## NO. 886

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JULY 8, 1869,  
BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“At the time appointed the end shall be.”  
Daniel 8:19.***

Human nature anxiously desires to know something of the future. If we were told tonight that we could repair to a certain spot where we might lift the veil of our own history and foresee the course of our own lives during the next few years, I am afraid very few of us could be trusted to absent ourselves from such a place, or miss such an opportunity. This anxiety to know the future and that strange credulity which gives heed to every species of so-called “prophets” and omens, has caused men and women to be the easy dupes of designing impostors in all ages—from the ignorance of the unlettered Egyptian, up to the cleverness of modern professors.

I might almost mention learned doctors who practice divinations, prophecy concerning things to come and bring in Holy Scripture to back up their prognostications. Everywhere that kind of spirit which leads men to amuse themselves with light literature leads them, also, to read the Bible with a view to espy the future and would lead them to resort to any kind of invention by which they might hope to have a glimpse of the unfolded scroll. Be persuaded, however, my Brothers and Sisters, that with the exception of some grand feature, some magnificent outline which God has revealed, the future is absolutely shut from human eye!

And as to the details which concern your life or mine, it is utterly impossible that we should ever become acquainted with them by any manner of horoscope, or soothsaying, or bibliomancy. We shall know them soon enough by the gradual development of experience, but it is idle and mischievous to attempt to know them till they transpire. Why is it that the future is thus shut out from our view? *Is it not because the present is enough to occupy our talents?* Rightly to serve our God in this present hour will take all the strength we have and all the strength we can obtain from Him. Sufficient unto the day is not only the evil thereof, but the service thereof.

Men who live too much in the past and go beyond that which is rightly conservative become of little service in the world. And men who are tempted to regulate their movements by forecasts of the future will always become abstracted, speculative, empirical—full of sentiment and void of diligence—but certainly of no service whatever in the stern battle of today. Believe me, Man, all your manhood is needed for the all-engrossing *now!*

Use it. Your best way to ensure a happy, a holy and a glorious future is to mind the present and to keep your eye fast on your Master's will concerning you in this, the hour which is flitting over your head, molding your character and working out your destiny.

God has concealed the future from us, probably, with a view to relieve our career through the world of dull monotony and infuse into it new phases of stirring interest. *Life would not wear such a lively aspect if it were all spread out in a map before us on the day of the commencement of our pilgrimage.* Much of the pleasantness of a journey lies in unexpected views and scenes which burst upon the traveler as he climbs a hill or descends into a dale. If he could see all at once—one long, unvarigated avenue—it would become weary walking for him. But the very freshness and novelty of the events—adventures and contingencies constantly occurring—help to make life exciting, if not happy.

I thank God for many a mercy which has come to me fresh from the mint of His Providence. I could not have imagined that such a well-timed godsend could have come to me in such an unexpected manner—it had all the marks of novelty about it—as if the Lord had been pleased to coin it and put it into my hand. Has not God also hid the future from us *that we may not labor under the sense of being like “dumb driven cattle,” who have no will and no freedom, but both do and suffer what they are compelled by an irresistible agency?*

Now, I believe in predestination, yes, even in its very jots and tittles. I believe that the path of a single grain of dust in the March wind is ordained and settled by a decree which cannot be violated. I believe that every word and thought of man, every fluttering of a sparrow's wing, every flight of a fly, the crawling of a beetle, the gliding of a fish in the depth of the sea—that everything, in fact—is foreknown and foreordained. But I do *equally* believe in the free agency of man, that man acts as he wills, especially in moral operations—choosing the evil with a will that is unbiased by anything that comes from God—biased only by his own depravity of heart and the perverseness of his habits.

I believe in man's free agency in choosing the right, too, with perfect freedom—though sacredly guided and led by the Holy Spirit—but in such a way that his disposition is trained to choose and prefer the right and the true, not violently driven in the teeth of his own reluctance. He is free in his agency, for the Son of God has made him free. I believe that man is as free as if everything were left to chance and that he is as accountable as if there were no destiny whatever. Where the two Truths of God meet I do not know, nor do I *want* to know. They do not puzzle me, since I have given up my mind to believing them both.

They are thought by some to be antagonistic, the one contrary to the other. I believe them to be two parallel lines. They run side by side and perhaps even in eternity there is no point of contact between these two

grand Truths. But if the predestination were a revealed thing and we could see it, it would then become utterly impossible for human nature to receive the idea of freedom, or to believe itself to be at all independent in its action. Man would, to repeat the line of Longfellow's, feel himself to be but one of a herd of "dumb, driven cattle," made to do, whether he willed or not, just what had been ordained.

Moreover, Brothers and Sisters, is it not to be counted for a thousand mercies in one that all the future is concealed from us, *since that future is of a very checkered character*, casting, as one has said, beams of hope and shadows of fear over the stage both of active and contemplative life? Some of it is bright with pleasure—much of it is dim with sorrow. What, then, if we knew the pleasure would come, should we not begin to reckon upon it? Surely the current of time would flow on heavily until the pleasant day arrived! Perhaps we would be really drawing bills at a very heavy discount upon the future if we knew it sufficiently to forestall the season of prosperity—so that when it *did* come we should be already satiated with it by foretaste and so fail to enjoy the good when *present* which we had gloated on in prospect.

And as for the troubles, the perils and the afflictions that await us—if we knew of them beforehand—we should be pretty sure, with our natural tendency to graceless unbelief and morbid anxiety, to begin to carry the burden before the day came for us to carry it. We should be crossing all the bridges between here and Heaven long before we came to them. We should be reefing all the sails before the storm came. We should be escaping indoors before the first drop of rain fell. We should be so constantly engaged in making anxious provision for the future that the comforts of today would glide away and the joys and opportunities of the present would be despised. We should foster the weakness we lament and cherish the cowardice we disdain. Our sinews would be slackened, our limbs disjointed, our hearts would be frightened with terror.

No, my Lord, it would be a fatal gift if You would bestow upon any one of us the power to know his own future. It were an unhappy thing for any one of us to be able to look beyond this present time. We need not distress ourselves, however, for we shall not receive such a gift of prophecy—we shall not be permitted to lift the veil that hides the morrow. We shall have to go on praying, "Give us *this day* our *daily* bread." We shall have to continue living upon the manna that drops by the day and upon the strength which shall be sufficient for the daily need. It is as we often sing—

***"Day by day the manna fell;  
Oh, to learn this lesson well!  
Still by constant mercy fed,  
Give me, Lord, my daily bread.  
'Day by day,' the promise reads—  
Daily strength for daily needs.  
Cast foreboding fears away—***

***Take the manna of today.”***

It is, however, important for us to remember two or three things with regard to the future. First, *that all in the future is appointed*—that especially those desirable ends we are looking for are the subjects of appointment. And that in connection with those ends and those events, there are certain appointments of mercy which should, tonight, give us comfort.

I. First, then, dear Friends, it is well for us to remember that EVERYTHING IN THE FUTURE IS APPOINTED. Nothing shall happen to us which God has not foreseen. No unexpected event shall destroy His plans—no emergency shall transpire for which He has not provided. No peril shall occur against which He has not guarded. There shall come no remarkable need which shall take Him by surprise. He sees the end from the beginning and the things that are not as though they were.

To God’s eye there is no past and no future. He fills His own eternal now. He stands in a position from which He can look down upon the whole and see the past, the present and the future at a single glance. All, all, all of the future is foreseen by Him and *fixed* by Him. We may derive no small comfort from this fact, for, suppose one goes to sea under the most skillful captain—that captain cannot possibly know what may occur during the voyage and with the greatest foresight he can never promise an absolutely safe passage. There may be dangers which he has never yet encountered—Atlantic waves, tornadoes and hurricanes that may yet sweep the good ship away and they that sailed out of port merrily may never reach the haven.

But when you come into the ship of Providence, he who is at the helm is the Master of every wind that shall blow and of every wave that shall break its force upon that ship! And He foresees, as well, the events that shall happen at the harbor for which we make, as those that happen at the port from which we start. He knows in His own soul every wave with its height and breadth and force. He knows each wind. Though the winds seem to be left without control, He knows each wind in all its connections and the speed at which each shall travel. How safe we are, then, when embarked in the good ship of Providence, with such a Captain who has forearranged and foreordained all things from the beginning even unto the end!

And, furthermore, how much it becomes us to put implicit confidence in His guidance! Hold your peace, Man, even from counsel—for your thoughts are vain where your understanding is baffled—

***“When my dim reason would demand  
Why this or that You do ordain,  
By some vast deep I seem to stand,  
Whose secrets I must ask in vain.  
Be this my joy, that evermore  
You rule all things at Your will  
Your sovereign wisdom I adore,***

***And calmly, sweetly, trust You still.”***

It should always be remembered in connection with this subject that *we are no believers in fate—seeing that fate is a different doctrine altogether from predestination.* Fate says the thing is and must be—so it is decreed. But the true doctrine is—God has appointed this and that, not because it *must* be, but because it is *best* that it should be. Fate is blind, but the destiny of Scripture is full of eyes. Fate is stern and adamant and has no tears for human sorrow, but the arrangements of Providence are kind and good. The greatest good for the greatest number and the Glory of God above all, are the ends that are in it subserved.

Do not imagine that God has simply out of His own arbitrary will determined this and that. He does as He wills, but He always wills to do that which is in conformity with His high and glorious Nature. He never wills an unjust thing. He never wills a really unkind thing. All the appointments of His Providence, especially towards His people, are ruled in mercy, in tenderness, in love and in wisdom and all are conducive to their highest interest and their greatest happiness. Oh, but this is a blessed Truth of God!

Oh, it is sweet, to be able to say, “From this day forth, whatever happens to me, be it little or be it great, I am content. Though I am altogether unaware what it shall be, I am not sorry that I am unaware of it—for this one thing I know—there shall happen nothing but what God permits. I shall be left to no demon’s power. I shall not be cast away like an orphan. I shall not be beyond my Father’s eyes and my Father’s hands—all shall come and last and end as shall please Him—and it shall always please Him that everything that comes shall work for my good if I am one of His people. I may not see it at the time, but it will be so whether I see it or not! All shall happen, every event, in its proper place, every pain according to its proper measure. Everything that makes me sing, and cry and groan. Every loss and every cross. Every slander. Everything that seems to hinder me or to thwart my wishes—all shall come and be ruled and managed to make the end which God has promised to bring salvation to my soul and Glory to Himself.”

O Beloved, I do not know where those go for comfort who have not accepted this Truth, but I do know that after you have done all you can in toiling for your daily bread, or, as in my case, you have done all you can in the discharge of Christian service, it is a blessed thing, in times of serious difficulty and perplexing dilemma, to fall right back into the arms of the ever-ruling God, and say, “You do all things well. Though things go ill according to my judgment, yet Your judgment is better than mine and You do all things right and let Your name be glorified.” If one could think that there was somewhere one grain of dust floating in the atmosphere that was not under Divine superintendence, one might wish to escape from it as from a plague!

If one could believe that there was an hour of the night, or say a single second throughout the *year* in which the hand of God was withdrawn from Nature, or a single event in which God was not concerned, and His will was not consulted, one might tremble till that black storm had passed, or till that dread event, like a vial full of evil, had been effectually poured out and put away. But now each hour is safe, for God has made it so! Each place of difficulty and of danger shall still be secure to the faithful servants of the Lord. Each time of peril shall still be a time of blessed safety to the man that rests beneath the wings of the eternal God. He who learns to see God in calm and in storm, in either and both, cares not much which it is, but leaves it to his God to choose. He who sees the *giving* hand of God as well as the *taking* hand, will not repine at either, but will say, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away and blessed be the name of the Lord."

I would, with special earnestness, beg you to believe *that God is in little things*. It is the *little* troubles of life that annoy us the most. A man can put up with the loss of a dear friend, sometimes, better than he can with the burning of his fingers with a coal, or some little accident that may occur to him. The little stones in the sandal make the traveler limp, while great stones do him little hurt, for he soon leaps over them. Believe that God arranges the littles! Take the little troubles as they come—remember them to your God because they come from Him. Believe that nothing is little to God which concerns His people. To Him, indeed, your greatest concerns may be said to be little, and your little anxieties are not too mean for His notice.

The very hairs of your head are all numbered! You *may*, therefore, pray to Him about your smallest griefs. If not a sparrow lights upon the ground without your Father, you have reason to see that the smallest events in your career are arranged by Him and it should be your joy to accept them as they come and not make them causes of offense either to others or to yourselves. This is a Truth of God on which you may rely implicitly, and exercise yourselves continually, until you lull the sharpest pains, calm the most feverish excitements and obtain the sweetest repose that a spirit weary, but restless, can indulge in. It is the antidote of fear.

I commend this positive certainty to you with the utmost confidence. *Everything in the future is appointed by God*. As men you will account it reasonable. As disciples you will believe it, for it is plainly revealed, and as Christians I trust you may rejoice in it heartily, for it must be a theme of rejoicing that all is in the hands of the great King. The Lord is King! Let His people rejoice!—

***"The Lord is King; who then shall dare  
Resist His will, distrust His care,  
Or murmur at His wise decrees,  
Or doubt His royal promises?  
Oh, when His wisdom can mistake,***

***His might decay, His love forsake,  
Then may His children cease to sing,  
The Lord Omnipotent is King.***

**II.** But now, secondly, there is A SPECIAL APPOINTMENT WITH REGARD TO CERTAIN ENDS. I am not going to pursue the connection, but the text itself will suffice me, for it says, “at the time appointed the end shall be.” Now, there are certain “ends” to which you and I are looking forward to with great expectancy. There is *the end of the present trouble*—let us think of that. I do not know what your particular trouble may be, but this I know—as surely as you are in the furnace you will be anxious to be delivered out of it. Whatever submission we may have to the Divine will, it is not natural for us to love affliction—we desire to reach the end and come forth from the trial. “At the time appointed the end shall be.”

*You have been slandered in your character*—a very frequent trial to God’s servants—and you are irritated and vexed and in a great haste to answer it—to rebut the calumny and to vindicate your reputation. Be still. Be very quiet and patient. Bear it all. Stand still and see the salvation of God, for light is sown for the righteous and He will bring forth your righteousness like the light and your judgment as the noonday. “At the time appointed the end shall be.” When the dogs are tired they will leave off barking and when the Lord bids them be still, they shall not dare to move a tongue against you. “At the time appointed the end shall be.”

*You are in poverty.* It is some time since you had a situation in which you could earn your daily bread. You have been walking wearily up and down those hard London streets—you have been searching the advertisement sheet—you have looked everywhere for something to do. You gaze upon the dear wife and pitiful children with ever-increasing anxiety. Are you a child of God? Have you learned to cast your burden upon the Lord? Then, “at the time appointed the end shall be.” There shall yet be deliverance for you. “Trust in the Lord and do good and so shall you dwell in the land and verily you shall be fed.” The ravens are fed at this day, as they were in David’s day—and He that feeds the ravens will not let His children starve. Patiently wait the appointed time. Industriously seek to find it, but still with patience submit to the Divine will.

It may be, dear Friend, that you are passing out of another trial which it shall not be possible for me to describe. Indeed, it is one which you cover up and keep to yourself. And of all sorrows, those are among the most severe when the heart knows its own bitterness and a stranger intermeddles not with it. You have been seeking in prayer for help out of this trial and you have believed that the help would come, but it has been long delayed. It is now month after month that you have put up storm signals and yet the blessed lifeboat of your heavenly Father’s mercy has not come out to your almost wrecked vessel. Be still and know the salvation of God. “At the time appointed the end shall be.”

The time is not for *you* to appoint. To set times for God to answer prayer is always wrong. He who gives has the right to choose the time of the gift. Beggars must not be choosers. God has appointed the time of your visitation and at the time appointed let Hell and earth do what they may, it shall surely come! Only be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord and in the quiet confidence of faith possess your soul—for the end of your trial and trouble shall surely come at the time appointed.

It may be, Brethren, that the end you are desiring is *greater usefulness* and you have been panting after this for years. In that class, or in that village chapel—or whatever other form of labor it is that you have undertaken—you have been groaning out your very soul, asking the Lord that He would give you the Holy Spirit more plenteously. You have tried to get rid of everything that might hamper you in your work, or that would prevent the Lord's using you. You have pleaded to be delivered from all wrong motives and all gross and carnal desires and yet, for all that, the blessing tarries. Do not give up the work! Do not play the Jonah! There have been many who have done it who have found no whale to swallow them, or if the whale swallowed them there has been an end of them. You keep to your work, still, for "at the time appointed the end shall be."

God will not suffer the faithful worker to work in vain. Your labor of love shall not be in vain in the Lord. You know not when the prosperity is to come. Some do not live to see their own work. If so they may take up the language of Moses and say, "Let Your work appear unto Your servants"—let us do the work—"and Your glory unto their children." Let our children live to see the result of our work and the Glory of God through it and we shall be well content. "At the time appointed"—to every honest and earnest servant of Christ—"the end shall be."

Beloved Friends, you are looking forward, some of you, *to the end of your life's battle*. Life is to the genuine Christian an incessant fight. The moment we are converted the battle begins. We think, sometimes, that corruption will be destroyed and that we shall find no indwelling sin to beset us. I have heard some of God's servants talk about indwelling sin being destroyed in them. I only wish I could have any hope that it would be so in *me*—instead of this I find that to will is present with me, but how to perform that which I would, I find not.

When I would serve God, still there is an evil heart of unbelief that checks me in it all. And I believe that if men could see their own hearts right, that is about the experience of *every* child of God. It is a warfare from the first to the last and until we get to Heaven we may never talk about putting up our sword into its scabbard and taking our rest. But, glory be to God, "in the time appointed the end of this warfare shall be." It is war with Amalek in perpetuity, according to the oath of God, "Because the Lord has sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from genera-

tion to generation.” But once let us enter into the true Canaan and it shall be war with Amalek no more, for the Lord shall tread Satan, himself, under our feet, while inbred sin shall be cast far away and we shall be without fault before the Throne of God!

No temptation arising from the world shall reach us. No suggestion from Hell shall grieve us. No angry temper shall disturb us. No thought of pride. No suggestion of the flesh shall come in to mar our matchless purity, but we shall serve God day and night in His Temple! The beauty of holiness shall be upon us—in the time appointed the blessed end shall be. So, too, with *the service of our lives*. I think no servant of God is tired of serving his Master. We may be tired *in* the service, though not tired *of* it. I have heard a story of the celebrated Mr. William Dawson who used to call himself “Billy” Dawson, much to the point.

On one occasion, when he and some other Methodist friends were spending the evening together, a dear friend of mine happened to be present and heard what passed. They were praying that Mr. Dawson’s life might be spared for many years to come, that such an earnest man might be kept in the Church for the next 20 or 30 years. At last, as they were just in the middle of prayer, William Dawson said, “Lord, don’t hear ‘em! I want to get my work done and go Home! I don’t want to be here any longer than there is need to be!” And the Brethren stopped their prayers—thunderstruck as they witnessed his emotion!

Now I believe that feeling will often pass over the earnest working Christian. “Oh,” he says, “I am not lazy. I am not idle. But still, I would like to get my work done.” ‘Tis your lazy workmen that are all the day long getting through their job, but the industrious man would just as soon make a good day of it and get a great deal done in a short time. Well, lest that feeling should ever grow into impatience, the text whispers into our ears, “At the time appointed the end shall be.” You shall go out to reap for the last time. There shall be a last sermon and a last prayer and there shall be a last look of anxiety over backsliders. There shall be a last tear of sorrow over the impenitent. There shall be a last motion of the soul over those that have deceived you and disappointed your hopes. It shall be all finished. The top stone of your life-work shall be brought out with shouting of, “Grace, Grace,” unto it! You shall lay your crown at His feet from whom you received it and you shall hear Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord.” “In the time appointed the end shall be.”

With many a child of God life is not merely a warfare spiritually and a work for God outwardly, but *it is attended with much suffering*. I speak not now of martyrs, men so little esteemed in their own age that they fell by the hand of the public executioner, yet so honored by posterity that a bright halo encircles their memory. I rather refer to those whose heroic faith has endured an agony of physical suffering with a sacred composure

of mind. Have you ever heard of the infirmities under which Richard Baxter labored? He was a man whose vigorous sermons were supplemented by such voluminous writings that his works are a prodigy of toil! Or need I remind you of Robert Hall? He, almost within our own memory, was accounted the prince of modern preachers for his eloquence.

Why, it has been said that he would be no mean proficient in medical pathology who could describe the complicated diseases of either of these men. Yet they ceased not to toil! Pain was, to their idea, no excuse from service. They found recreations from their own groans in warning sinners of the more dreadful groans of lost souls. But my heart's pity is towards full many a dear saint for whose complaint there is no remedy but patience. Ah, I know many servants of God whose every breath seems to be a pang—their poor bodies are in such a condition that life is like protracted death! Sometimes in the long and weary night, especially when poverty is associated with sickness and friends become fewer and fewer every year, it is no wonder that the sufferer cries, "Why is His chariot so long in coming? Where is my Beloved gone? Why does He not admit me into the pastures of rest?"

Well, weary sufferer, "in the time appointed the end shall be." I think we may put all together and say that we would not wish to postpone that day. What folly to wish to be longer out of Heaven than we must! But we would not wish to antedate that period, for the Master must know best and for us to be there an hour before His time—if such a thing were possible—would not be to be in Heaven at all, for to be in Heaven is to be in perfect conformity with the Divine will. A good soul who was asked whether she would live or die, said she would rather leave it with God. "But," they said, "if the Lord permitted you to choose, what would you do?"

"Why," she said, "I think I would not choose, but I would ask God to be good enough to choose for me and then I would choose what *He* chose for me." And that is the best state of heart to be in. The end is appointed. The very day and hour of death are settled. And the means by which we shall receive the death-shock—whether we shall drop dead in the street, or whether we shall die in the pew—such a thing has happened in this Tabernacle—or whether we shall lie in protracted weakness, the tenement being gradually taken down and the soul gazing steadfastly into the excellent Glory by the month together before she takes her flight. Whichever it is to be, God has settled it all and He has settled it all for the best.

Sometimes in thinking of it, if one might make the choice, it seems that it must be delightful to have a sudden death—to shut one's eyes on earth and open them in Heaven. I could never understand that prayer in the Litany which many people think very excellent—it may be so and it may be that my idea of it is wrong in which they pray to be delivered from sudden death. I would never think of praying such a prayer and never shall! I

do not know of any privilege that seems to be greater than that of sudden death. One gentle sigh and away you are gone! Like a dear servant of God, Mr. Watts Wilkinson, who prayed that he might never know death and he died in his sleep—his prayer was heard and he was taken Home in the midst of slumbers soft and sweet.

How blessed, like Isaac Sanders, of St. Ann's, Blackfriars, and Dr. Beaumont, the Wesleyan minister, to expire in the pulpit, to be in your Master's service and called away! Well, you have not got your choice, so that whichever form you might most dread you need not encourage any timid apprehensions, for you shall not have the disposal of the matter. The Lord will be careful to take you Home in a heavenly way, for He will send such a chariot for His servants as shall be most suitable to them. I do not think they go to Heaven in a beggarly procession, but that God fetches the guests who are to dwell with Him forever, each one of them, in a suitable manner and so shall you be taken up to dwell with God in the way which your own heart would choose if infinite wisdom were to counsel you.

**III.** One more thought before we close. All things are appointed and especially these sacred and blessed ends. But remember that besides the ends, ALL THE MEANS TO THE ENDS are also appointed—all that intervenes is appointed, too. Balance this thought with the other. My trouble appointed! Yes, but there is an appointed portion of Divine Grace that shall sustain me under it—Grace exactly according to the measure of my necessity while under the tribulation.

Temptation appointed! Yes, but there is appointed extraordinary help to deliver the soul from going down into the Pit and to pluck the foot out of the net, lest by any means one sheep of Christ should be devoured by the lion of Hell. You fear sickness, because that may be appointed—but it is also appointed, "I will make all his bed in his sickness," and that appointment carries you over the other. It is appointed, perhaps, that you should be in need—but then it is appointed that better should be your dinner of herbs than the stalled ox of the wicked.

You know it is appointed unto you to die, at least, unless the Lord should suddenly come in His Glory—but then it is appointed unto you to rise again and the death appointed is not the death of common men! It is when sleeping in Jesus the trumpet of the archangel shall awaken you! And what of the Divine Grace appointed? Is it not appointed that up from the grave you should rise in a nobler image than that which you now wear, even in the image of your Lord and covenant Head? What if it is appointed that the body should lie among the clods of the valley? Yet it is equally appointed that these very hands should strike the celestial strings of the golden harp and these very eyes should see the King in His beauty!

Rejoice, then, that the appointments of God concerning every one of His children are sure and effectual. You must be with Christ where He is to

behold His Glory. You must be a partaker of His everlasting blessedness. He will not suffer you to perish, nor will He leave you to be cast away. If all the other matters are appointed, so are these great and glorious things appointed—they shall come about in their appointed time and so shall your heart give to God constant praise!

And now, dear Friends, *there is nothing in this Truth of God that can give any comfort to those who are not reconciled to God.* It is a great and terrible Truth to those who are not God's friends. At the time appointed the end shall be. What a winding up awaits those who will encounter the doom of the impenitent, no tongue can describe. There will be an end to haughty and contemptuous skepticism and an end to careless apathetic unbelief. There will be an end to the indulgence of fleshly lusts and an end to the enjoyment of creature comforts. There will be an end to the longsuffering with which God has borne with you so patiently and an end to the sound of Mercy's voice ringing in your ears, admonishing you to repent.

Who among you can foresee that time appointed? Ah, I would you were reconciled to God, poor Sinner, for if not, living and dying as you are, the events that shall transpire will grow blacker and blacker to you. All that shall happen in the future, especially in eternity, will bring you only woe after woe and you will forever have to cry, "One woe is past and behold another woe comes and yet another!" Like Job's messengers, your miseries will follow at each other's heels. Why rebel against the King of Heaven? Why set your will against the Divine will? He speaks to you tonight—in the cool of the evening He appeals to you, and He says, "Return unto Me. Arise and seek your Father's face."

And if you would be reconciled, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ! Trust Christ with your soul. Trust Him implicitly! Trust Him sincerely! Trust Him now, and you are reconciled at once and then, from now on, the great and terrible wheels of Providence have no terror for you—for all things work together for good to them that love God—to them that are called according to His purpose. May the blessing of God abide with you evermore.

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# PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH NO. 2788

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JULY 20, 1902.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,  
ON THURSDAY EVENING, JUNE 20, 1878.

*“Cause Your face to shine upon Your sanctuary.”  
Daniel 9:17.*

A TRUE-HEARTED Believer does not live for himself. Where there is abundance of Grace and great strength of mind in the service of God, there is sure to be a spirit of unselfishness. It was so with Daniel, who was a model man in the matter of decision of character and a holy, believing walk before the Lord. That “man greatly beloved” was, in all respects, faithful to his convictions. No lion’s den could silence his courageous prayer. No presence of mighty monarch or of his festive guests could turn him aside from delivering his fateful message.

Yet Daniel was not satisfied. Whatever might be his own condition, he remembered what Jerusalem was and what the people to whom he belonged were and, in the depths of his soul he sorrowed, notwithstanding all that God’s Grace had worked within him. I firmly believe that the better a man’s own character becomes and the more joy in the Lord he has in his own heart, the more capable is he of sympathetic sorrow and, probably, the more of it he will have. If you have room in your soul for sacred joy, you have equal room for holy grief and, depend upon it, you will have both of these emotions if the Lord has perfectly consecrated you and purposes to use you for His Glory.

Daniel was also a man of many visions. With the exception of John, whom Daniel greatly resembles, it has scarcely fallen to the lot of any man, unless it is Ezekiel, to have so many wondrous visions of God. Yet his visions did not make him visionary. There are many persons who could not be trusted to see the tip of an angel’s wing—for they would become so proud, afterwards, that there would be no holding them. But he who is fully consecrated to God may see vision after vision and he will make a practical use of what he sees—and try to find out something to be done, something to be repented of, something to be prayed for—something that shall be for the good of the Church of God.

Daniel had also been studying the prophecies, and he knew, by what he had discovered, when certain predictions would be fulfilled. But he was not, like some students of prophecy in our day, utterly unpractical. They seem to be so taken up with the future that they do nothing in the present! They are so fully occupied in looking up to the sky, with their mouths wide open, waiting for the coming of the Lord, that they forget

that the very best way to wait for the coming of the Master is to be found doing His will! “Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when He comes, shall find so doing.” What Daniel learned from the study of the Sacred Books, he turned to practical account and, finding that a certain time was near, of which good things were foretold, he set his face toward the Lord and began to pray—not for himself, but for his people, many of whom were at Jerusalem, hundreds of miles away from him, or scattered in various places all over the face of the earth. For them he used those bright and sparkling eyes which had looked up into the celestial fires. For them he used that thoughtful and enlightened mind which had studied the Oracles of God. For them he used those knees which were so familiar with the attitude of prayer and, getting alone by himself, he wrestled mightily—as Jacob had done of old—only Daniel’s pleading was for a far greater number of people who were in a still direr trouble—and he, too, wrestled until he came off more than a conqueror!

I am anxious, dear Friends, that Daniel’s prayer should, by the blessing of God’s Spirit, inspire us with the spirit of prayer—and that his example, in forgetting himself and remembering his people, would help us to be unselfish and lead us to care for our people—even God’s people—to whom we have the honor and privilege to belong. Patriotism is an instinct which is found, I think, in every true Englishman. And most of the other nations of the earth can also boast of their patriots. Let it never be said that the Church of God has no feeling of patriotism for the Holy City, for the Heavenly Land and for her glorious King enthroned above. To us, Christian patriotism means love to the Church of God, for—

**“There our best friends, our kindred dwell,  
There God our Savior reigns.”**

Let us have loyalty, by all means, but, chiefly, loyalty to Christ! Let us have true patriotism, but, especially that patriotism which consists in love to “the land of the living” of which Christ is the one King and Ruler.

In meditating upon Daniel’s prayer, “Cause Your face to shine upon Your sanctuary,” I shall, first of all, speak upon *the holy place*—“Your sanctuary.” Then, secondly, we will consider *the earnest prayer itself*. And, lastly, we will think of *the conduct consistent with such a prayer as this*.

**I.** First, then, Daniel speaks of THE HOLY PLACE. “Your sanctuary.” Of course, he refers to the Temple at Jerusalem, which was then in utter ruin. It had been broken down and burned by the Chaldeans and Daniel, therefore, rightly calls it desolate—but fervently prays that God would cause His face to shine even upon its ruins!

My first remark is that *the Temple at Jerusalem was typical of the Church of God*. We are never to regard any building now upon earth as a sanctuary, a *holy place*. We do, very incorrectly, speak of places as being consecrated to Divine worship, but it is utterly impossible that there should be any more holiness in any one building than in another. Holiness is not an attribute of material substances—it does not appertain to iron, stone, mortar, brick, or timber. It is something which belongs to the mind and to the spirit of man and, from the time of our Lord, there has been no building which was even typically holy. Sitting on the well at Sy-

char, he said to the woman of Samaria, "The hour comes when you shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father...The hour comes and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeks such to worship Him." Stephen declared to the Jewish Sanhedrim, "The Most High dwells not in temples made with hands," and proved the truth of his statement by quoting the Lord's own declaration by the mouth of the Prophet Isaiah, "Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool: what house will you build Me? says the Lord." Talk of *holy* buildings—can anything that man has made be as holy as yon bright blue sky which the Lord has spread out like a curtain, and as a tent to dwell in? Talk of *holy* water—can any water be holier than that which drops in blessed showers straight from Heaven?

"But," says someone, "if the Temple was typical, of what was it a type? Why, of the Church of God! There is still a Temple upon the earth, but it is a Temple not made with hands—a Temple reared not by human masons, and hewers of stone, and carpenters, and other artificers, but built by God Himself! This Temple is the Church of God. "Which church?" asks someone. There never was more than one—that is, the Church which Christ has redeemed with His own blood. The living stones, which compose this living Temple, were all chosen by God from before the foundation of the world! They are, one by one, being quarried by effectual Grace and built up by the power of the Divine Spirit, so as to grow unto a holy Temple in the Lord!

So we learn that as the Temple was typical, so also was it *unique*. There were never two temples at one time. True, there was a second, which was built upon the foundations of the first. Still, there was only one at a time—the second was the continuation of the former one with less of splendor. All through the land of Canaan there was only one spot where sacrifice might be lawfully offered—only one shrine where, on high occasions, the multitudes met together for worship. And, in like manner, there is only one Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Which church is that?" someone again asks. None of them all—but there are some people, in all the visible churches, who belong to the one sanctuary of God. We may hope that even in those churches which have most departed from primitive simplicity, there is a remnant according to the election of Grace! And that there is a still larger proportion among those who keep more closely to the Word of God and to the Truth of God as it is in Jesus. You cannot say of any part, or of the whole of what is called the visible church, that it is the sanctuary of God—it is a sort of shell in which the real Church of God is encased and which it helps, perhaps, to preserve—but which it also certainly disfigures.

There is an elect people to be found on earth. Do you ask, "Who are they?" I answer, "The Lord knows them that are His." They are a people redeemed from among men by a special and peculiar purchase of our Lord—a people quickened with one life, in whom there is but one living and incorruptible seed, which lives and abides forever—a people in mystical, real, spiritual, indissoluble union with their great Covenant Head, the Lord Jesus Christ—a people who are, some of them, very poor and

quite unknown. Some of them, however, are in the high places of the earth—a few may be found even there. They are scattered up and down in the world and some of them do not know one another, but the Lord knows them all. And whether they know it or not, there is a communion between them all.

Some friends talk about exclusive communion, but it is impossible to practice such a thing, for all true communion is with Christ the Head, and also with all the rest of the members, just as, in the body, every member communicates with every other member and, unless it should cut itself off, and kill itself, it must commune with all the rest. It may tie little pieces of red tape around itself and try to stop the circulation of the blood, but, as long as there is life, the heart beats through the whole body. Every pulse has its effect upon the whole, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot—and so is it with the communion of saints. We are all one body! One life pulsates through all the living Church of the living God. There was but one Temple and there is but one Church.

People try to get a visible form of that one Church, but I believe that is utterly impossible. The Church of Rome claims to be that one Church—and we know what sort of a church it is! And, on the other hand, there are certain brethren who profess to be the one assembly of God. Well, I will not say what kind of church they have made, but I believe that all schemes for comprehending all the saints in one visible church must fail. Adam never saw Eve until God had perfectly fashioned her—and you will never see the Church, the Bride of Christ, till she is perfect and complete! And when she is, you will clap your hands with joy at the sight of the exquisite beauty which God shall have given to her before she is presented to her Heavenly Bridegroom. The process of perfecting her is going on now—and Christ's Bride is being "curiously worked" out of material taken from Christ's own side. And she will be able to say to Him, "Your eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfected." Yes, He sees and He knows it all.

There was but one Temple, then, and there is but one Church, the sanctuary of God, and for that Church we ought to pray. This should correct the idea of some who, when they pray for God to bless His sanctuary, mean, "Lord, bless little Bethel! or, "Lord, bless the parish church!" or, "Lord, bless the extremely orthodox community to which I belong!" or "Lord, bless the select few that gather to hear our dear minister!" I say, "The Lord bless all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and, wherever there lives upon the face of the earth a man who has anything of the Grace of God in him, the Lord lift up His Countenance upon him! May He deliver him from all errors and mistakes into which even God's children fall in a measure, and may He bring them all to the one Lord, the one faith and the one baptism!" If there is good evidence that anyone is, indeed, a living one in God's one true, spiritual Temple, shall we not all wish every blessing to such an one in the name of the Most High?

The Temple at Jerusalem was, further, *the fabric of wisdom*. It could only have been built by a Solomon. And Solomon found a band of men whom God had prepared to carry out the extraordinary work of the Temple, for, from its marvelous foundations, which have been lately unco-

vered, even to its topmost pinnacle, it excelled all the architecture which the world had ever seen! But the Church which God is erecting is a far more wonderful work of wisdom infinitely superior to that of Solomon! Wisdom planned it in election. Wisdom has worked marvelously and continues to work in the calling out of the saints. Wisdom fits each living stone for its proper place and puts each one into its right position. When it shall be all finished, it will be the marvel of all intelligence as they see what a matchless sanctuary God, and not man, has reared, and note how, in every single detail, His Infinite Wisdom is manifest!

The Temple that Solomon built was also *the result of great cost*. Immense wealth was lavished upon it and you do not need that I should try to tell you at what cost the Lord is building up His true sanctuary here among men. The cost of any one of us, if we are, indeed, living stones, no arithmetic can ever calculate! Nowhere but in the heart of Christ could our ransom price be found—and even that heart had to be pierced to find it. Well does Peter say, “You were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” How marvelous, then, is that Temple which is erected at such a cost! Everything about it is according to God’s riches in Glory by Christ Jesus. Solomon’s Temple, glorious though it was, had not about the whole edifice so much of splendor as God displays in even the least of the living stones which He builds upon the one foundation, Jesus Christ our Lord!

Again, the Temple of old *was the shrine of God’s indwelling*. It was the one place under the old dispensation of types, now done away with, where God dwelt in visible manifestation among His ancient people. We are told that a peculiar light shone between the wings of the cherubim over the Ark of the Covenant and that pillar, which looked like a cloud by day, flamed like a mighty beacon by night! It was there that men must go, or, at least, to that spot that they must look if they sought the Lord. And therefore it was that Daniel worshipped and prayed with his windows open toward Jerusalem. At the present time, the one place in all the world, where God dwells, is His Church. You can find Him anywhere upon the earth as the Creator, but the Glory of the Godhead comes out most brilliantly in Redemption, for it is of His redeemed people that it is written, “I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” God has not said, of any one country, “England, America, Russia, Spain, shall be Mine.” But Moses truly said, “the Lord’s portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.”

It is in His Church that God dwells. Sometimes men take us into some gorgeous building with ornamental roof and wondrous architecture and, as we are led up to a brass railing, we are told that, inside that barrier, it is peculiarly holy. And then we are pointed to some steps and we are told that at the top of those step, it is much holier than it is anywhere else. To my mind, it is an amazing thing that men should entertain such absurd notions for which there is not the slightest shadow of a foundation! But you get where there is a true child of God—and *there* the place is holy. I declare that I have often stood on holy ground, but it has been by the bedside of some poor, expiring saint with whom the Lord has been dwel-

ling and through whom He has manifested the wonders of His Grace. That is where God dwells—in that godly woman dying in the workhouse! That is where He dwells—in that humble-minded man plodding at the plow tail to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow! That is where He dwells—in that saintly woman who endures a daily martyrdom for Christ's sake—and in that man whose holy life adorns the Doctrine of God, his Savior, in all things! These are the true holy places—the sacred shrines of God wherein the Holy Spirit delights to dwell!

The Temple at Jerusalem was also *the place of God's peculiar worship*—and where is God worshipped now, Beloved, but in His living Church? A number of us may meet together and call ourselves Christians, and think that we are worshipping God, but, unless we are really regenerate and the Spirit of God is in us, there is no true worship. You cannot offer acceptable worship to God by forms, or ceremonies, or the sweetest music, or even in the simplest style of worship in the most plain meeting house, or by sitting still, and saying nothing, as the members of the Society of Friends do, unless you worship God, who is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth! It is heart-work, soul-work, the work of the Spirit of God drawing us near to God which alone is acceptable to Him. I dare say it yet again—there is no worship under Heaven that can be pleasing to God except the worship of the one true Church, the sanctuary of God—and that Church is composed of believers in Jesus, whose hearts are knit together into one in Christ!

The Temple at Jerusalem was also *the throne of Jehovah's power*. It was out of Zion that He sent forth His rod and from that sacred shrine that He spoke, by His ancient Prophets, the Word that was full of power. Who could stand against Him when He was angry and spoke in His fury out of His Holy Place? And Christ's power, through the Holy Spirit, still goes forth from His Church. The man who is to preach with power, must be one of those who are quickened by the Holy Spirit and through whom the Spirit speaks with Divine energy. Mere human eloquence is nothing in this matter! Nor is learning, by itself, of any account! Though you may have gone to 20 universities and received from them all the degrees with which men delight to bedizen them, all is in vain without the Spirit of God! It is the life of Christ in a man, the Holy Spirit being with him, that enables him to speak with power! It is the work of the Church of God to evangelize the world. It cannot be evangelized from any other source. God will not send angels to do that which He has committed unto men and, certainly, He will not employ the wicked to declare His statutes—so His Church must do it. The living waters flowed forth from Jerusalem. Light, instruction and the Oracles of God went forth from Jerusalem of old. And now they must go forth from the Church of God, which is among men to this day. Let us, each one, take care that we have our share in this blessed employment!

See, then, what the sanctuary of God is. Our Lord Jesus Christ, speaking of the Temple of His body, said to the unbelieving Jews, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up." But now He is gone from us and we know Him no more after the flesh—but we still have God among us! That God is the sacred third Person of the ever-blessed

Trinity in Unity—the Holy Spirit—and though we may not say that He is Incarnate among men, yet we can truly say that He dwells among men. There is still a Divine indwelling, the Holy Spirit is here on earth right now, dwelling in His people, as Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “Know you not that your body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you?” The whole body of Believers put together makes up the one great spiritual Temple, which is the sanctuary of the living God!

**II.** Now, secondly, I must speak more briefly upon THE EARNEST PRAYER—“Cause Your face to shine upon Your sanctuary.”

And, first, I note that it is a prayer *quite free from selfishness*. Daniel does not even say to the Lord, “Cause Your face to shine upon me.” Have you not, Beloved, sometimes felt that you could almost forego the Light of God’s Countenance, yourself, if He would but bless His Church? O Souls, if God will but save some of you—if God will but make you into pillars in His eternal Temple, some of His saints will be well pleased even if they themselves have to go mourning on their own account!

Further, Daniel’s prayer was *the child of thought*. He had thought over the condition of the Temple at Jerusalem and, thinking it over, he had become troubled in his mind. It was lying desolate, but he knew that there was a promise that it should be rebuilt. He thought over these two things—he let his soul lie soaked in the Truth of God about His sanctuary—and then he prayed. It often happens that there is very little power in those prayers that leap out of our lips without premeditation—born in a minute, like gnats, and dying just as soon. But the prayer that lies in the soul, like eggs in a nest, and that has to be sat upon, as it were, and hatched, and brought forth—there is life in such supplication as that and that is the kind of prayer which prevails with God! Such was the prayer of Daniel.

It was also *a prayer which cast itself entirely upon God*—“Cause Your face to shine upon Your sanctuary.” He does not say, “Lord, send more Prophets.” Or, “Raise up new kings.” Or, “Do this or that,” but only, “Cause Your face to shine upon Your sanctuary.” Oh, that we might learn how to pray so that God would be the Subject as well as the Object of our supplications! O God, Your Church needs You above everything else! A poor, little, sick, neglected child needs 50 things, but you can put all those needs into one if you say that the child needs its mother. So, the Church of God needs a thousand things, but you can put them all into one if you say, “The Church of God needs her God.”

There was also *great faith in this prayer*—“Cause Your face to shine upon Your sanctuary.” Daniel seems to say, “Lord, it scarcely needs Your command, it only needs You to smile upon Your sanctuary and all shall be well!” But, Daniel, the Temple is all in ruins! There was scarcely a column standing upon its proper pedestal—and hardly one stone left upon another. “Ah,” he says, “that is true. But, Lord, cause Your face to shine upon Your sanctuary.” The face of God is as the sun when it shines in its strength. The favor of God is not merely something to His Church, but it is everything! The revelation of His love to His people is not simply a blessing, but it is all the blessings of the Covenant in one! Cause Your

face, O infinitely glorious Jehovah, to shine upon Your Church here below! Will you not, Beloved, all join in that prayer?

It was, however, *a very comprehensive prayer* because wherever God's face shines upon His Church, note what happens. First, her walls are rebuilt. Desolations, when God shines upon them, glow into perfection! We shall soon see our church members multiplied and all things in proper order if the Lord will but shine upon us! Then shall you see each one of the Lord's servants in his right place, ministering before the Lord. I hope we all pray for ministers, but I am afraid we do not pray for them as often and as earnestly as we ought. But, Lord, if You will cause Your face to shine upon Your sanctuary, we shall have ministers enough and of the best sort, too! If Your face is but turned Zionward, You will find the man who will tell of the love of Jesus. When the Lord shines upon a Church, then its worship will be acceptable to Him—even the most humble form of it will be acceptable in His sight. We know, Beloved, what it is to have God's face shining upon us, do we not? How sweet the service is then! How intense the prayers! How fervent the praise! How you feel fed! How glad your souls are! In this land of weeping skies and gathering clouds, we know what it is to have a long time of dullness—but how different is the prospect when the sun shines forth in its glory—and how different is our worship when the Lord lifts upon us the Light of His reconciled Countenance!

Then, too, truth will be proclaimed in all its clearness. We shall not have to complain of the cloudy preaching of which we hear so much nowadays, or of the men whose cleverness consists in confusing the minds of their hearers, or, to speak in plain language, in inventing lies to contradict the blessed Word of God and to seek to undermine everything for which we have ever had respect and regard! They have tried to quench Hell, and to pull down Heaven! There is nothing that their unholy fingers have not sought to pollute! But if God shall cause His face to shine upon us, we shall have the old Truth of God declared once again in all its clearness.

Then, too, we shall see the beauty of holiness in all the members of God's spiritual Church. We may well pray for that, for there are many professors, in the present day, who are the enemies of the Cross of Christ—enemies because they manage to get into the Church and then dishonor it by their ungodly conduct. O Lord, cause Your face to shine upon Your Church, that all Your people may walk in the beauty of holiness!

Then, also, there will be delightful fellowship. In the sunlight of God's Presence, we have fellowship with one another, and with the Lord Jesus Christ, and our hearts are exceedingly glad.

And then there will be power in the testimony. With God's face shining upon His sanctuary, His Word goes forth from His servants with energy and force which none can resist. Join, then, Beloved, in this prayer of Daniel, "Cause Your face to shine upon Your sanctuary." Do it for the Church's own sake. What a sad thing it is when the Church is like Samson after the Lord had departed from him—when she shakes herself, as at other times, but can perform none of her former feats! What wretched Sabbaths some of our Brothers and Sisters have to spend when they go

and listen to a profitless ministry and mingle with Brethren as dull, and cold, and dissatisfied as themselves! Join also in this prayer for the world's sake. If the Church has not the Lord to shine upon her, what is the poor world to do? What hope, what light, what knowledge of the Truth of God, what salvation can come to a perishing world of sinners except through a living Church? What are your own children to do without this shining of God's Countenance? If you take them to a place where the worship is dull and lifeless—if they are compelled to listen to something that never interests them at all, and to go where there is no one to care about their souls, you may live to see them grow up to break your hearts. Therefore pray God to bless His Church for your dear children's sake.

And, then, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, for the Holy Spirit's sake—for a lifeless Church is a dishonor to God—and the better a Church has been, the more of a nuisance does it become when the Presence of God is gone from it. May the Lord grant that we may never know what this means in our own case and, for all these reasons, let us pray to God to cause His face to shine upon His sanctuary.

**III.** Now I am to conclude by briefly reminding you of THE CONDUCT THAT IS CONSISTENT WITH THIS PRAYER. If you and I have been praying this prayer—and I hope we have—what kind of conduct will be consistent with it?

Well, first, we shall consider the state of the Church. Some professing Christians do not seem to me as if they ever thought of the Church at all. Some do not think much about the church with which they are connected. Do all of you, who are members of this church, know whether the Sunday school is getting on well or not? Now, speak the truth—do you? Did you ever make any enquiry about it? Then there are various Societies for the spread of the Gospel connected with this church—do all of you know that there are such Societies and do you help them all you can? Come, now, put the matter to your own consciences! Then there are numbers of people who are members of various little churches, but who never care anything about other churches. They are like the mouse that lived in a box and when the lid was opened, one day, it came out into the cupboard and said that it had no idea that the world was so big! Yet it was only then looking at the inside of a cupboard! And there are many professing Christians who have not a much wider range of vision than that mouse had in the cupboard—they have no idea of the size of the Church of Christ, or of its various interests. That should not be the case with any of us who are members of the Church of the living God! Let us look over all that is in our Master's house! Let us count His flocks and His herds, and see how everything that is His flourishes and increases.

The next thing for us to do is *to lay to heart the evil or the good of Zion*. Consider it well and then be grieved if you see sin triumphant, or error rampant—and do not perceive that the cause of God is advancing in the world! I am afraid there are many nominally Christian people who look, every morning, to check the price of eggs, who have not examined the last Missionary Society's Report, nor have they any clear idea as to the increase or decrease of the work of the Lord. This ought not to be true of

any professed follower of Christ! How can we expect the Lord to cause His face to shine upon His sanctuary when His people have little or no care about that sanctuary?

Then, if we begin to think, and begin to care, *we shall try to do what we can for God's Church*. It is all very well for a man to pray, but the value of his prayer very much depends upon its sincerity, and that sincerity will be proven by his doing something that will help to answer his own prayer. What are you doing, my Brother? What are you doing, my Sister, to promote the Glory of God in His sanctuary? All the living members of the body of Christ contribute something to the general welfare of the whole body. The little finger would be missed if it were cut off and there is not a tiny valve near the heart, nor a minute vessel anywhere in the human system which could be taken away without inflicting an injury upon the whole body. Just so is it in the Church of Christ—we cannot afford to spare any part of the mystical body of Christ. But what use are you, Brother, in that body? What are you doing, Sister, for the well-being of your fellow members? There is something which you should be doing, or else you would not have any portion in the Lord's spiritual sanctuary.

But when we have done all that we can, *let us pray much more than we ever have done*. Oh, for a praying Church! I rejoice that ever since I have been with you, the spirit of prayer has never died out among us and I earnestly entreat you never to let it do so. May our Prayer Meetings be sustained in fervor and increased in number! Praying is, after all, the chief matter. Praying is the end of preaching! Preaching has its right use, and must never be neglected, but real heart devotion is worth more than anything else. Prayer is the power which brings God's blessing down upon all our work. I beg you, day by day, as you walk the streets, to have this petition in your hearts and in your mouths, "Cause Your face to shine upon Your sanctuary." O God, bless Your Church all over the world—in Europe, in America, in Asia, in Africa, in Australia! Everywhere prosper Your work among the heathen, and in our own highly-favored land, too, cause Your face to shine upon Your sanctuary." And do not cease to present that prayer until, to the fullest possible extent, it shall be answered. And when will that be? When He comes, for whose coming we look with joyful expectation! The Lord blesses you for Christ's sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
PSALMS 114; 48.**

**Psalm 114.** *When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language; Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion. The sea saw it, and fled: Jordan was driven back. The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs. What ailed you, O you sea, that you fled? You Jordan, that you were driven back? You mountains, that you skipped like rams; and you little hills, like lambs? Tremble, you earth, at the Presence of the Lord, at the Presence of the God of Jacob; who turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.*

I did not interrupt the reading of the Psalm by any exposition. It is a perfect whole and could not well be divided without spoiling it. We may admire the poetry as well as the Inspiration of this Psalm. It begins with rugged abruptness—"When Israel went out of Egypt." It only gives just a hint of the discomfort of the Israelites while in Egypt, arising from the fact that they did not understand the Egyptians—"strange language." No doubt they were often beaten by their taskmasters for not obeying orders, when they really did not understand what must have seemed to them the barbarous speech of their Egyptian oppressors. But God led them up out of the house of bondage, the tribe of Judah leading the van, and all the people following in due order.

How beautifully the Psalmist describes the dividing of the Red Sea! He represents the waters as perceiving the Presence of God and fleeing away, not because Israel came to the bank, but because God was in the midst of His people—"The sea saw it and fled"—as if abashed at the Presence of its Maker, alarmed at the terror of Jehovah's might. So was it with the Jordan, that swiftly-flowing river was "driven back" by a very special miracle. The dividing of the Red Sea was a marvelous act of God's power, but the driving back of that rushing river has some extraordinary points about it peculiar to itself. And all this happened because God was there. The sea flees before Him, the river is driven back by Him. In like manner, my Brothers and Sisters, if God is in the midst of our church, nothing can withstand its onward march! If the Lord is in any man, that man need not even think or talk of difficulties, for, with God nothing is impossible!

So mighty was the influence of God's Presence that the mountains themselves began to move and even to skip like rams, and to leap like lambs. There was some fear there, for they trembled in their solid sockets, "at the Presence of the God of Jacob." There was joy, too. We speak of "the everlasting hills," yet the Psalmist depicts them as moving as easily as the lambs frisk in the meadows in the springtime—"The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs." How grand is the poetic utterance! "What ailed you, O you sea, that you fled? You Jordan, that you were driven back?" "You could no longer rush in your accustomed channel, but must needs return to the source from where you came. What ailed you, O you mountains, that you trembled as if a palsy had seized upon you? 'What ailed you, O you little hills?'"

Now comes the answer, which yet is not given in the form of an answer. The Inspired poet, in order to heighten the grandeur of his language, kept the name of God out of the Psalm until he came to the end, when he thus answered his own riddle—"Tremble, you earth, at the Presence of the Lord, at the Presence of the God of Jacob; which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters"—another miracle, for God multiplied His marvels. Having brought His people out of Egypt and led them through the wilderness, and made the hills to move at His majestic Presence, now He performs a converting work—changing the rock into a lake, so plenteous was the effusion of water—and making the flint to gush into a veritable river which followed the children of Israel through the wilderness, for, as Paul says, "they drank of that spiritual

Rock that followed them, (the margin is, “that went with them,”) and that Rock was Christ.”

**Psalm 48:1-3.** *Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of His holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge.* It was so with the literal Jerusalem and it is so now with the Church of Christ, of which, “the city of the great King” was a type. God still dwells among men. His Spirit abides with His people and His Church stands securely upon the rock of His eternal purposes, evermore the same.

**4.** *For, lo, the kings were assembled.* The adversaries who boasted that they would destroy Jerusalem—“the kings were assembled,”

**4-7.** *They passed by together. They saw it, and so they marveled; they were troubled, and hasted away. Fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail. You broke the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.* The adversaries of Zion looked up at the city set on that high hill and they despaired of being able to capture it. And, in like manner, those who attack the Truth of God as it is in Jesus—if they did but know how well it is garrisoned by the Omnipotence of Jehovah, they, also, would faint with fear and give up the assault. If they do not, the Lord can break them in pieces as He broke the ships of Tarshish with His strong east wind.

**8-14.** *As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD of Hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it forever. Selah. We have thought of Your loving kindness, O God, in the midst of Your Temple. According to Your name, O God, so is Your praise unto the ends of the earth: Your right hand is full of righteousness. Let Mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad because of Your judgments. Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark you well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that you may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God forever and ever: He will be our Guide even unto death.* According to Alexander and Bonar, this last clause should be read, “He will be our Guide at death and over death.” He will lead us across the Jordan, and be our God and our Guide in the land that flows with milk and honey, wherever we are bound. So, glory be unto the God of Abraham—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, forever and ever! Amen.

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

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

# **DANIEL—A PATTERN FOR PLEADERS**

## **NO. 3484**

**A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1915.**

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,  
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 25, 1870.**

***“O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, listen and do; defer not,  
for Your own sake, O my God, for Your city and Your  
people are called by Your name.”  
Daniel 9:19.***

DANIEL was a man in very high position in life. It is true he was not living in his own native land, but, in the Providence of God, he had been raised to great eminence under the dominion of the country in which he dwelt. He might, therefore, naturally have forgotten his poor kinsmen—many have done so. Alas, we have known some that have even forgotten their poor fellow Christians when they have grown in Grace and have thought themselves too good to worship with the poorer sort when they have grown rich in this world's goods. But it was not so with Daniel. Though he had been made a president of the empire, yet he was still a Jew—he felt himself still one with the seed of Israel. In all the afflictions of his people he was afflicted, and he felt it his honor to be numbered with them and his duty and his privilege to share with them all the bitterness of their lot. If he could not become despised and as poor as they, if God's Providence had made him to be distinguished, yet his heart would make no distinction—he would remember them and pray for them, and would plead that their desolation might yet be removed.

Daniel was also a man very high in spiritual things. Is he not one of God's three mightier in the Old Testament? He is mentioned with two others in a celebrated verse as being one of three whose intercessions God would have heard if he had heard any intercessions. But though thus full of Grace, himself, (and for that very reason), he stooped to those who were in a low state. Rejoicing as he did before God as to his own lot, he sorrowed and cried by reason of those from whom joy was banished. It is a sad fault with those Christians who think themselves full of Grace, when they begin to despise their fellows! They may rest assured they are greatly mistaken in the estimate they have formed of themselves. But it is a good sign when your own heart is fruitful and healthy before God, when you condescend to those who backslide and search after such as are weak, and bring again such as were driven away. When you have, like your Master, a tender sympathy for others, then are you rich in Divine things! Daniel showed his intimate sympathy with his poorer and

less gracious Brothers and Sisters in the way of prayer. He would have shown that sympathy in other ways had occasions occurred, and no doubt he did—but this time the most fitting way of proving his oneness with them was in becoming an intercessor for them.

My objective here and now will be to stir up the people of God and especially the members of this Church, to abound exceedingly in prayer—more and more to plead with God for the prosperity of His Church and the extension of the Redeemer's Kingdom.

First, our text gives us *a model of prayer*. Secondly, *it and its surroundings give us encouragement for prayer*. First, then, our text gives us—

### I. A MODEL OF PRAYER.

I think I may notice this first as to the antecedents of the prayer. This prayer of Daniel *was not offered without consideration*. He did not come to pray as some people do, as though it were a thing that required no forethought whatever. We are constantly told we ought to prepare our sermons and I surely think that if a man does not prepare his sermons he is very blameworthy. But are we never to prepare when we speak to God, but only when we speak to man? Is there to be no preparation of the heart of man when we open our mouth before the Lord? Do not you think we often, both in private and public, begin to pray without any kind of preparation? The words come and then we try to quicken them rather than the desires coming first and the words like garments to clothe them?

But Daniel's considerations lay in this, first—he studied the Books of God. He had with him an old manuscript of the Prophet Jeremiah. He read that through. Perceiving such-and-such things spoken of, he prayed for them. Perceiving such-and-such a time given, and knowing that that time was almost come, he prayed the more earnestly! Oh, that you studied your Bibles more! Oh, that we all did! How we could plead the promises! How often we should prevail with God when we could hold Him to His Word and say, "Fulfill this, Your Word, unto Your servant, whereon You have caused me to hope." Oh, it is grand praying when our mouth is full of God's Words, for there is no word that can prevail with Him like His own! You tell a man, when you ask him for such-and-such a thing, "You yourself said you would do such-and-such." You have him then! And so when you can lay hold on the Covenant Angel with this consecrated grip, "You have said! You have said!" Then you have every opportunity of prevailing with Him. May our prayers, then, spring out of our Scriptural studies—may our acquaintance with the Word be such that we shall be qualified to pray a Daniel prayer!

He had, moreover, it is clear if you read the prayer, *studied the history of his people*. He gives a little outline of it from the day in which they came out of Egypt. Christian people should be acquainted with the history of the Church—if not with the Church of the past, certainly with the Church of today. We make ourselves acquainted with the position of the Prussian army and we will buy new maps about once a week to see all

the places and the towns. Should not Christians make themselves acquainted with the position of Christ's army and revise their maps to see how the Kingdom of God is progressing in England, in the United States, on the Continent, or in the mission stations throughout the world? All our prayers would be much better if we knew more about the Church—and especially about our own Church! I am afraid I must say it—I am afraid there are some members of the Church that do not know what is going on—hardly know what is meant by some of our enterprises. Brothers and Sisters, know well the Church's needs as far as you can ascertain them! And then, like Daniel, your prayer will be a prayer founded upon information—and with the promises of God and the fact of the Church's needs, you will pray prayers of the Spirit, and of the understanding. Let that stand for earnest consideration.

But next, Daniel's prayer was *mingled with much humiliation*. According to the Oriental custom which expresses the inward thought and feeling by the outward act, he put on a coarse garment made of black hair called sackcloth, and then taking handfuls of ashes, he cast them on his head and over the cloth that covered him—and then he knelt down in the very dust in secret. These outward symbols were made to express the humiliation which he felt before God. We always pray best when we pray out of the depths—when the soul gets low enough she gets a leverage. Then we can plead with God. I do not say we ought to ask to see all the evil of our own hearts. One good man prayed that prayer very often. He is mentioned in some of the Puritan writers—a minister of the Gospel. It pleased God to hear his prayer and he never rejoiced afterwards. It was with great difficulty that he was even kept from suicide, so deep and dreadful was the agony he experienced when he did begin to see his sin as he wanted to see it! It is best to see as much of that as God would have us see of it. You cannot see too much of Christ, but you might see too much off your sin! Yet, Brothers and Sisters, this is rarely the case. We need to see much of our deep needs, our great sins, for ah, that prayer shall go highest that comes from the lowest. To stoop well is a grand art in prayer. To pour out the last drop of anything like self-righteousness! To be able to say from the very heart, "Not for our righteousness' sake do we plead with You, O God, for we have sinned, and our fathers, too." Put the negative, the weightiest negative, upon any idea of pleading human merit! When you can do this, then are you in the right way to pray a prayer that will move the arm of God and bring you down a blessing! Oh, some of you ungodly ones have tried to pray, but you have not bowed yourselves. Proud prayers may knock their heads on mercy's lintel, but they can never pass through the portal! You cannot expect anything of God unless you put yourself in the right place, that is, as a beggar at His footstool—then will He hear you, but not until then.

Daniel's prayer instructs us in the next point. *It was excited by zeal for God's Glory*. We may sometimes pray with wrong motives. If I seek the

conversion of souls in my ministry, is not that a good motive? Yes, it is. But suppose I desire the conversion of souls in order that people may say, "What a useful minister he is"? That is a bad motive which spoils it all. If I am a member of a Christian Church and I pray for its prosperity, is not that right? Certainly, but if I desire its prosperity merely that I and others may be able to say, "See our zeal for the Lord! See how God blesses us rather than others?" That is a wrong motive. The motive is this, "Oh, that God could be glorified, that Jesus might see the reward of His sufferings! Oh, that sinners might be saved, so that God might have new tongues to praise Him, new hearts to love Him! Oh, that sin were put an end so that the holiness, righteousness, mercy and power of God might be magnified!" This is the way to pray—when your prayers seek God's Glory, it is God's Glory to answer your prayers! When you are sure that God is in the case, you are on a good footing. If you are praying for that which will greatly glorify Him, you may rest assured your prayer will speed. But if it does not speed, and it is not for His Glory, why, then you may be better content to be without it than with it. So pray, but keep your bowstring right—it will be unfit to shoot the arrow of prayer unless this is your bowstring—"God's Glory, God's Glory!" This above all—first, last, and midst—must be the one objective of your prayer.

Then coming closer to the prayer, I would have you notice *how intense Daniel's prayer was*. "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, listen and do, defer not, for Your own sake." The very repetitions here express vehemence. It is a great fault of some people in public prayer when they repeat the name, "O Lord, O Lord, O Lord," so often—it often amounts to taking God's name in vain and is, indeed, a vain repetition! But when the reiteration of that sacred name comes out of the soul, then it is no vain repetition—then it cannot be repeated too often and is not open to anything like the criticism which I used just now. So you will notice how the Prophet here seems to pour out his soul with, "O Lord, O Lord, O Lord," as if, if the first knock at Mercy's door does not open it, he will knock again and make the gate shake! And then the third time come with another thundering stroke if, perhaps, he may succeed! Cold prayers ask God to deny them—only importunate prayers will be replied to! When the Church of God cannot take, "No," for an answer, she shall not have, "No," for an answer! When a pleading soul must have it—when the Spirit of God works mightily in him so that he cannot let the Angel go without a blessing, the Angel shall not go till He has given the blessing to such a pleading one! Brothers and Sisters, if there is only one among us who can pray as Daniel did, with intensity, the blessing will come! Let this encourage any earnest man or woman here that fears that others are not excited to prayer as they should be. Dear Brother, do you undertake it? Dear Sister, in God's name, do you undertake it? And God will send a blessing to many through the prayer of one. But how much better would it be if many a score of men and women here, yes, the entire Church of God, were stirred up to this, that we give Him no rest until He establish-

es and makes Jerusalem a praise on the earth! Oh, that our prayers could get beyond praying, till they got to agonizing! As soon as Zion travailed—you know that word—as soon as she travailed she brought forth children. Not till it comes to *travail*—not till then—may we expect to see much done! God send us such travailing to each one of us—and then the promise is near to fulfilling!

But coming still to the text, and a little more closely, I want to observe that this remarkable *prayer was a prayer of understanding* as well as earnestness, for some people in their earnestness talk nonsense—and I think I have heard prayers which God might understand, but I am sure I did not. Now here is a prayer which we can understand as well as God. It begins thus, “O Lord, hear.” He asks an audience. This is how the petitioner does if he comes before an earthly majesty—he asks to be heard. He begins with that, O Lord, hear. I am not worthy to be heard. If You shut me and my case out of hearing, it will be just.” He asks an audience—he gets it—and now he goes at once to his point without delay, “O Lord, forgive.” He knows what he needs! Sin was the mischief, the cause of all the suffering. He puts his hand on it. Oh, it is grand when one knows what one is praying for! Many prayers wander—the praying Persian evidently thinks he is doing a good thing in saying certain good phrases, but the prayer that hits the target in the center is the prayer it is good to pray! God teach us to pray so. “O Lord, forgive.”

Then observe how he presses the point home. “O Lord, listen and do.” If You have forgiven—he does not stop a minute, but here comes another prayer quick on the heels of it—Do good Lord, interpose for the rebuilding of Jerusalem—do interpose for the redemption of Your captive people! Do interpose for the reestablishment of sacred worship! It is well when our prayers can fly fast, one after another, as we feel we are gaining ground. You know in wrestling (and that is a model of prayer) much depends on the foothold, but oftentimes there is much depending upon swiftness of action. So in prayer. “Hear, me, my Lord! You have heard me, forgive me. Have I come so far, then work for me—work the blessings I need.” Follow up your advantage—build another prayer on the answer that you have. If you have received a great blessing, say, “Because He has inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him. Because He has heard me once, therefore will I call again.” Such a prayer proves the thoughtfulness of him who prays. It is a prayer offered in the spirit and also with understanding.

And now one other thing. The prayer of Daniel was *a prayer of holy nearness*. You catch that thought in the expression, “O my God.” Ah, we oftentimes pray at a distance—we pray to God as if we were slaves lying at the foot of His Throne—as if we might, perhaps, be heard, but we are not sure. But when God helps us to pray as we should, we come right to Him, even to His feet, and we say, “Hear me, O my God.” He is God—therefore, we must be reverent. He is my God, therefore we may be famil-

iar—we may come close to Him. I believe some of the expressions that Martin Luther used in prayer, if I were to use them, would be little short of blasphemy, but as Martin Luther used them, I believe they were deeply devout and acceptable with God because he knew how to come close to God. You know how your little child climbs your knee. He gives you a kiss and he will say to you many little things that if a person in the market were to say, you could not bear—they must not be said. No other being may be so familiar with you as your child. But oh, a child of God—when his heart is right—how near he gets to his God! He pours out his childlike complaint in childlike language before the Most High. Brothers and Sisters, this is to be noted well, that though he is thus pleading and in the position of humiliation—he is still not in the position of slavery! It is still, “O my God”—He grasps the Covenant. Faith perceives the relationship to be unbroken between the soul and God and pleads that relation! “O *my* God.”

Now the last thing I shall call your attention to in this model prayer is this, that *the Prophet uses argument*. Praying ought always to be made up of arguing. “Bring forth your strong reasons” is a good canon for a prevalent prayer! We should urge matters with God and bring reasons before Him—not because He needs reasons, but He desires us to know why we desire the blessing! In this text we have a reason given, first, “Defer not for Your own sake,” as much as if he had said, “If You suffer this people of Yours to perish, all the world will revile Your name and Your honor will be stained. This is Your own people and because they are Your property, suffer not Your own estate to be damaged, but save Jerusalem for Your own sake.”

Then next, He puts it on the same footing in another shape, “For Your city and Your people.” He urges that this people were not like other people. They had truly sinned, but still there was a relationship between them and God that existed between God and no other people! He pleads the Covenant, in fact, between Abraham and Abraham’s seed and the God of the whole earth. Good pleading that! And then he puts in next, “For they are called by Your name.” They were said to be Jehovah’s people. They were named by the name of the God of Israel. “O God! Let not a thing that bears Your name be rolled about like a common thing! Suffer it not to be trailed in the dust—come to the rescue of it! Your stamp, Your seal is upon Israel. Israel belongs to You, therefore come and interpose.” Now from this I gather that if we would prevail we should plead arguments with God—and these are very many—and discreet minds, when they are fervent, will readily know how far to go in pleading, and where to stop. I remember one morning a dear Brother now present praying in a way that seemed to me to be very prevalent when He spoke thus, “O Lord, You have been pleased to call Your Church, Your Bride. Now we, being evil, have such love towards our spouses that if there were anything in the world that would be for her good, we would not spare to give it to her. And will You not, O Husband of the Church, do the same

with Your Spouse and let Your Church receive a blessing, now that she pleads for it?" It seemed good arguing, after Christ's own sort, "If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" Get a promise and spread it before the Lord, and say, "O Lord, You have said it—do it!" God loves to be believed in. He loves you to think He means what He says. He is a practical God. His word has power in it and He does not like us to treat His promises as some of us do, as if they were waste paper, as if they were things to be read for the encouragement of our enthusiasm, but not to be used as matters of real practical truth! Oh, plead them with God! Fill your mouths with reasoning and come before Him. Make this your determination, that as a Church, seeing we need His Spirit and need renewed prosperity, we will not spare nor leave a single argument unused by which we may prevail with the God of Mercy to send us what we need! Thus much, then, upon this as a model prayer. Now I shall need a little longer time to speak upon—

## II. THE ENCOURAGEMENT WHICH THE TEXT AND ITS SURROUNDINGS GIVE TO US IN PRAYER.

Brothers and Sisters, it is always an encouragement to do a thing *when you see the best of men doing it*. Many a person has taken a medicine only because he has known wiser men than himself take it. The best and wisest of persons in all ages have adopted the custom of prayer in times of distress and, indeed, in all times. That ought to encourage us to do the same. I heard a dear Welsh brother speak last Thursday evening who interested and amused me, too, but I cannot profess to repeat the way in which he told us a Biblical story. It was something in this way. He told it as a Welshman, and not quite as I think I might. He said that after the Lord Jesus Christ had gone up to Heaven, having told His disciples to wait at Jerusalem till the Spirit of God was given, Peter might have said, "Well, now we must not go out preaching till this blessing comes, so I shall be off a-fishing." And John might have said, "Well, there is the old boat over at the lake of Gennesaret. I think I shall go and see how that is getting on—it is a long time since I saw after it." And each one might have said, "Well, I shall go about my business, for it is not many days hence when He is coming, and we may as well be at our earthly calling." "No," says he, "they did not say that at all, but Peter said, 'Where shall we hold a Prayer Meeting?' And Mary said she had got a nice large room that would do for a Prayer Meeting. True it was in a back street and the house was not very respectable and, 'Besides,' says she, 'it is up at the very top of the house, but it is a big room.' 'Never mind,' says Peter, 'it will be nearer to Heaven.' So they went into the upper room and there began to pray, and did not cease the Prayer Meeting till the blessing came."

Then the Brother told us the next story of a Prayer Meeting in the Bible. Peter was in prison and Herod was so afraid that he would get out

again that he had 16 policemen to look after him. And the Brothers and Sisters knew they could not get Peter out in any other way than one—so they said, “We will hold a Prayer Meeting.” Always the way with the Church at that time, when anything was amiss, was to say, “Where shall we have a Prayer Meeting?” So Mistress Mark said she had got a good room which would do very well for a Prayer Meeting. It was in a back street, so nobody would know of it, and they would be quiet. So they held that Prayer Meeting and began to pray. I do not suppose they prayed the Lord to knock the prison walls down, nor to kill the policemen, nor anything of that kind, but they only prayed that Peter might get out—and they left how he was to get out to God. While they were praying there came a knock at the door. “Ah,” said they, “that is a policeman come after another of us. But Rhoda went to the door to look, and when she looked she started back in fright! What did she see? She looked again, however, and she was persuaded that it was no other than Peter! She went back to her mistress and said, “There is Peter at the gate.” Good souls! They had been praying that Peter might come out, but they could not believe it, and they said, “Why, it is his spirit—his angel.” “No,” said the girl, “I know Peter well enough. He has been here dozens of times and I know it is Peter”—and in came Peter, and they all wondered at their unbelief! They had asked God to set Peter free, and free Peter was! It was the Prayer Meeting that did it! And rest assured we should, everyone, find it our best resource in every hour of need to draw near to God—

***“Prayer makes the darkest cloud withdraw.  
Prayer mounts the ladder Jacob saw,  
Gives exercise to faith and love,  
Brings every blessing from above.  
Restraining prayer, we cease to fight!  
Prayer makes the Christian armor bright!  
And Satan trembles when he sees  
The weakest saint upon his knees.***

It is prayer that does it—and this fact should encourage us to pray!

*The success of Daniel’s prayer* is the next encouragement. He had not got to the end of his prayer before a soft hand touched him and he looked up—and there stood Gabriel in the form of a man! That was quick work! So Daniel thought, but it was much quicker than Daniel expected, for as soon as ever he began to pray, the word went forth for the angel to descend. The answer to prayer is the most rapid thing in the world! “Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear.” I believe electricity travels at the rate of two hundred thousand miles in a second—so it is estimated, but prayer travels faster than that, for it is, “Before they call I will answer.” There is no time occupied at all! When God wills to answer, the answer may come as soon as the desire is given. And if it delays, it is only that it may come at a better time—like some ships that come home more slowly because they bring the heavier cargo. Delayed prayers are prayers that are put out to interest awhile, to come home not only with the capital, but with the compound interest, too! Oh,

prayer cannot fail—prayer cannot fail! Heaven may as soon fall as prayer fail! God may sooner change the ordinances of day and night, than He can cease to reply to the faithful, believing spirit-worked prayer of His own quickened, earnest, importunate people! Therefore, because He sends success, Brothers and Sisters, pray much!

It ought to encourage us, too, in the next place, to recollect that *Daniel prayed for a very hard case*. Jerusalem was in ruins. the Jews were scattered. Their sins were excessive. But, nevertheless, he prayed and God heard him. We are not in so bad a case as that with the Church—we have not to mourn that God has departed from us—our prayer is that He may not, even in any measure, withdraw His hand. I pray God that I may long be buried before He shall suffer this Church to lose His Presence. There is nothing that I know of in connection with our church life that is worth a single farthing, if the Spirit of God is gone. He must be there. Brothers and Sisters, if you are not prayerful. If you are not holy. If you are not earnest, God will not keep pastors, deacons, Elders and Church members living near to Him! The sorrow of heart which one will feel if one is kept right cannot be expressed. May the Lord prevent our declining. If you are declining, may He bring you back. Some of you, I am afraid, are so—getting cold. Now and then I hear of a person who finds it too far to come to the Tabernacle. It used to be very short at one time, though it was four or five miles. But when the heart gets cold, the road gets long. Ah, there are some who want this little attention and the other. Time was when they stood in the aisle, in the coldest and draftiest place—if the Word was blessed to them, they did not mind it. May God grant that you may always be a living people, for years and years to come, until Christ Himself comes! But oh, you that are living near to God, make this your daily, hourly, nightly prayer, that He would not withdraw from us for our sins, but continue to stretch out His hand in loving kindness, even until He gathers us to our Father!

It ought, further, to encourage us in prayer to remember that Daniel was only one man, and yet he won his suit. But if two of you agree as touching any one thing, it shall be done—but a threefold cord, a fifty-fold cord—oh, if out of our four thousand members, every one prayed instantly, day and night, for the blessing, oh, what prevalence there would be! Would God it were so!

Brothers and Sisters, how about your private prayers—are they what they should be? Those morning prayers, those evening prayers, and that mid-day prayer, for surely your soul must go up to Heaven, even if your knees are not bent—are those prayers as they should be? It will bring leanness upon you—there cannot be a fat soul and neglected prayer! There must be much praying if there is much rejoicing in the Lord.

And then your family prayers—do you keep them up? I was in a railway carriage the other day and a gentleman said to me, who was sitting beside me, “My son is going to be married tomorrow—going to be married

to one of your members.” “I am glad to hear it,” I said. “I hope he is a Believer.” “Oh, yes, Sir. He has been a member of your Church for some years. I wish you would write me something to give them tomorrow.” Well, you know how the carriage will shake, but I managed to jot down something on a little bit of paper with a pencil. The words, I think, that I put were something like this, “I wish you every joy. May your joys be doubled. May your sorrow be divided and lightened.” But then I put, “Build the altar before you build the tent. Take care that daily prayer begins your matrimonial life.” I am sure we cannot expect our children to grow up a godly seed if there is no family prayer! Are your family prayers, then, what they ought to be?

Then next, let me say to each one, how about your prayers as members of the Church? Perhaps I am the last person that might complain about a Prayer Meeting. It really is a grand sight to see so many of you, but I must confess I don't feel quite content, for there are some members whom I used to see, but don't see now. I know I see some fresh ones and we are never short of praying men, but I want to see the others as well! I know those who are constantly at Prayer Meetings can say it is good to be there. Often it is the best evening in the week to us, when we come together to entreat for the blessing! Do not, I pray you, get into the habit of neglecting the assembling of yourselves together for prayer. How often have I said, “All our strength lies in prayer”! When we were very few, God multiplied us in answer to prayer. What prayers we put up night and day when we launched out to reach the Gospel in a larger building! And what an answer God sent us! Since then, in times of need and trouble we have cried to God and He has heard us. Daily He sends us help for our college, for our orphanage, and for our other works, in answer to prayer! Oh, you that come here as members of the Church, if you do not pray, the very beams out of these walls and the stones will cry out against you! This house was built in answer to prayer. If anybody had said that we, who were but few and poor, could have erected such a structure, I think it would have sounded impossible! But it was done—you know how readily it was done, how God raised us up friends, how He has helped us to this day. Oh, don't stop your prayers! You seem to me, good people, to be very like that king who, when he went to the dying Prophet, was told, “Take your arrows and shoot” and he went to the window, and he shot but once—and the Prophet was angry and said—“You should have shot many times, and then you would have utterly destroyed your enemies.” And so we pray, as it were, but little. We ask but little, and God gives it. Oh, that we would ask much and pray for much—and shoot many arrows, and plead very earnestly!

Look at this city of ours. I would not say a derogatory word against my country, but I am afraid there is not much to choose between the sin of London and the sin of Paris. And see what has come of Paris! One could hardly live in that city and know all the sin that was going on there without fearing that nation's sin would bring a national chastisement! And

oh, this wicked City of London, with its dens of vice and filthiness! You are the salt of the earth, you that love Christ, let not your salt lose its savor! God forbid that you should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for this wicked people! Everywhere, sea and land, is compassed by the adversaries of the Truth of God to make proselytes. I beseech you, compass the Mercy Seat, that their efforts may be defeated! At this time there ought to be special prayer. When God in Providence seems to be shaking the Papacy to its base, now should we cry aloud and spare not! Out of these convulsions God may bring lasting blessings. Let us not neglect to work when God works. Let the hand of the man be lifted up in prayer when the wing of the angel is moved in Providence. We may expect great things if we can pray greatly and wrestle earnestly.

I call you in God's name, to the Mercy Seat! Draw near there, with intense importunity—and such a blessing shall come as you have not yet imagined! Pray for some here present that are unconverted. There are a good many of them. They will not pray for themselves—let us pray them into prayer! Let us pray to God for them until they, at last, pray to God for themselves! Prayer can unlock Mercy's door, for others as well as for our own people! Let us, therefore, abound in prayer, and God, send us the blessing, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
DANIEL 9:1-11.**

**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. Daniel was himself a Prophet, but he studied the Inspired prophecies of Jeremiah. If such a man reads Scripture, how much more ought we! Whatever the Light of God we may suppose to dwell within us, we shall do well to walk by the mere sure Word of prophecy.*

**3-5.** *And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes. 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, we have sinned, and have committed iniquity. And have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and from Your judgments. Daniel certainly had rebelled less than any of his countrymen and yet he is the first to make confession on their behalf. So, my Brothers and Sisters, when we have confessed our own sins, and have found mercy, then we should begin to be intercessors for others! We should make confession for the sins of our families, for the sins of our city, for the sins of our country. If no longer*

need we plead for salvation for ourselves because we have obtained it, let us give the full force of our prayers for the benefit of others!

**6.** *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.* It greatly increases sin when we sin against warnings sent from God. Daniel confesses this.

**7-9.** *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. 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 gracious verse that is! Surely it might be printed in letters of gold, and every trembling, penitent sinner might look at it till, at last, beams of light should dart into the darkness of his despair!

**10, 11.** *Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His ways 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.*

—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 DAWN OF REVIVAL, OR PRAYER SPEEDILY ANSWERED NO. 734

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 10, 1867,  
BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“At the beginning of your supplications the commandment came forth,  
and I am come to show you; for you are greatly beloved.”  
Daniel 9:23.*

PRAYER is useful in a thousand ways. It is spiritually what the old physicians sought after naturally—namely, a catholicon—a remedy of universal application. There is no ease of need, distress, or dilemma, in which prayer will not be found to be a very present help. In the case before us Daniel had been studying the book of Jeremiah, and had learned that God would accomplish seventy weeks in the desolation of Jerusalem, but he felt that there was still more to be learned, and he set his face to learn it.

His was a noble and acute mind, and with all its energies he sought to pry into the prophetic meaning. But he did not rely upon his own judgment—he betook himself at once to *prayer*. Prayer is that great key which opens mysteries. To whom should we go for an explanation if we cannot understand a writing, but to the author of the book? Daniel appealed at once to the Great Author, in whose hand Jeremiah had been the pen. In lonely retirement the Prophet knelt upon his knees and cried unto God that He would open up to him the mystery of the prophecy, that he might know the full meaning of the seventy weeks and what God intended to do at the end of them, and how He would have His people behave themselves to obtain deliverance from their captivity.

Daniel made his suit unto the Lord to unloose the seals and open the volume of the book, and he was heard and favored with the knowledge which he might have sought for in vain by any other means. Luther used to say that some of his best understandings of Holy Scripture were not so much the result of meditation as of prayer—and all students of the Word will tell you that when the hammers of learning and Biblical criticism have failed to break open a flinty text, oftentimes prayer has done it, and nuggets of gold have been found concealed therein. To every student of the Word of God who would become a well-instructed scribe we would say, “With all the means which you employ. With all your searching of commentaries. With all your digging into the original languages. With all your research among learned Divines, mingle much fervent prayer.”

As the Lord said to Israel, “With all your offerings you shall offer salt,” so does wisdom say to us, “With all your searching and with all your studying, offer much prayer.” Rest assured that the old maxim, “To have prayed well is to have studied well,” is worthy to be written not only upon the walls of our studies but upon the tablets of our hearts. If you will place the Book of Inspiration before your attentive eyes and ask the Lord

to open up its meaning to you, the exercise of prayer itself shall be blessed by God to put your soul into the best state in which to get at the hidden meaning which lies concealed from the eyes of the worldly wise—but which is clearly manifested to meek and lowly souls—when they reverently seek the guidance of their heavenly Father.

The particular point in the text to which I would direct your attention, this morning, is that Daniel's prayer was answered at *once*—while he was yet speaking! Yes, and at the beginning of his supplication. It is not always so. Prayer sometimes tarries like a petitioner at the gate until the king comes forth to fill her bosom with the blessings which she seeks. The Lord, when He has given great faith, has been known to try it by long delays. He has suffered His servants' voices to echo in their ears as from a bronze sky. They have knocked at the golden gate, but it has remained immovable, as though it were rusted upon its hinges.

Like Jeremiah they have cried, "You have covered Yourself with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass through." Thus have true saints continued in patient waiting for months, and there have been instances in which their prayers have even waited years without reply! Not because they were not vehement, nor because they were unaccepted, but because so it pleased Him who is a Sovereign, and who gives according to His own pleasure. If it pleases Him to bid our patience exercise itself, shall He not do as He wills with His own? Beggars must not be choosers either as to time, place, or form. Brethren must not take delays in prayer for denial—God's long-dated bills will be punctually honored—we must not suffer Satan to shake our confidence in the God of Truth by pointing to our unanswered prayers.

We are dealing with a Being whose years are without end—to whom one day is as a thousand years—far be it from us to count Him slack by measuring His doings by the standard of *our* little hour! Unanswered petitions are not unheard. God keeps a file for our prayers. They are not blown away by the wind—they are treasured in the King's archives. There is a registry in the court of Heaven where every prayer is recorded. O tried Believer, your sighs and your tears are not fruitless! God has a tear bottle in which the costly drops of sacred grief are put away and a book in which your holy groans are numbered! And by-and-by your suit shall prevail.

Can you not be content to wait a little? Will not your Lord's time be better than your time? By-and-by He will comfortably appear, to your soul's joy, and make you put away your sackcloth and ashes of long waiting, and put on the scarlet and fine linen of full fruition! However, in the case of Daniel, the man greatly beloved, there was no waiting at all. In Daniel's case the promise was true, "Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear." The angel Gabriel was made to fly very swiftly, as though even the flight of an angel was hardly swift enough for God's mercy. Oh how fast the *mercy* of God travels, and how long His *anger* lingers!

"Fly," He said, "bright spirit. Try your utmost power of wing! Descend to my waiting servant and fulfill his desire." Brethren, my heart's desires and earnest longings are that at the commencement of our supplication we may have an answer from the Throne of God! This is the commencement

of our prayers only in a certain sense, for prayer has never ceased here—for the last few months the public meeting for prayer every morning and every night has been sustained by earnest Brothers and Sisters—but we are now at the commencement of a month of more special prayer and I pant for an early visitation of Divine Grace.

It will be a very blessed encouragement to us, a stimulus to more intense ardor, an argument for greater confidence in God if we should be favored, with Daniel, to receive gracious answers to our supplications at their very commencement! In speaking of such a mercy, two points press for consideration. First, reasons for justly expecting so early a blessing. And secondly, forms in which we earnestly desire and hopefully expect it.

**I.** First, have we any REASONS TO EXPECT THAT AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF OUR SUPPLICATION THE COMMANDMENT OF MERCY WILL COME FORTH? Rest assured that we have, if we are found in the same posture as Daniel, for God acts towards His servants by a fixed rule. Let self-examination be now in vigilant exercise while we compare ourselves with the successful Prophet.

God will hear His people at the commencement of their prayers if the condition of the supplicant is fitted for it. The nature of such fitness we may gather from the state of Daniel's mind and the mode of his procedure. Upon this, our first noteworthy observation is that Daniel was determined to obtain the blessing which he was seeking. Note carefully the expression which he has used in the third verse—"I set my face unto the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplication." That *setting of the face* is expressive of resolute *purpose*, firm *determination*, undivided *attention* and fixed resolute *perseverance*. "I set my face towards the Lord."

We never do anything in this world until we set our faces thoroughly to it. The warriors who win battles are those who are resolved to conquer or die. The heroes who emancipate nations are those who count no hazards and reckon no odds, but are resolved that the yoke shall be broken from the neck of their country. The merchants who prosper in this world are those who do their business with all their hearts and watch for wealth with eagerness. The half-hearted man is nowhere in the race of life—he is usually contemptible in the sight of others—and a misery to himself. If a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing well! And if it is not worth doing thoroughly, wise men leave it alone.

Especially is this a truth in the spiritual life. Wonders are not done for God and for the Truth of God by men asleep upon their back, or out of their beds but still asleep! Souls are not saved by men who scarcely know or care whether they are saved themselves! Errors are not dashed from their pedestals by those who are careless concerning truth and count it of little value. Reformations have not been worked in this world by men of lukewarm spirit and temporizing policy. One fiery Luther is of more value than twenty like the half-hearted Erasmus who knew infinitely more than he felt, and perhaps felt more than he dared to express.

A man, if he would do anything for God, for the Truth, for the Cross of Christ, must set his face and with the whole force of his will resolve to serve his God. The soldier of Christ must set his face like a flint against all opposition, and at the same moment set his face towards the Lord with

the attentive eyes of the handmaiden looking towards her mistress. If called to suffer for the Truth of God, we must set our face towards this conflict as Jesus set His face towards Jerusalem. He who would conquer in this glorious war, and overcome the Lord at the Mercy Seat must be resolved! Resolved with his whole soul—resolved after matured thought—resolved for reasons which are too weighty for him to escape—resolved that from the Throne of Grace he will not depart without the blessing.

Never, never shall a man be unsuccessful in prayer who sets his face to win the promised mercy. Granted that you are seeking what you ought to seek for, that you are seeking it *through* Christ and by *faith* in Him, the one qualification to success that we recommend to you, Brothers and Sisters, is the setting of your faces towards the attaining of it. If there are but a dozen men in this, my Church, who have set their faces for a revival, we shall surely have it! Of this my heart knows no doubt. If there are but half-a-dozen, like Gideon's men that lapped—if, I say, there are but six who are unwavering, and will not be baulked by difficulties, or turned back by disappointments—as sure as God is God, He will hear the prayers of such!

No, if it came down to but two or three, the promise is to *two* of us who are agreed as touching one thing concerning the kingdom. Yes, more—if two could not be found, if there were but *one* faithful saint left, provided that he were endowed with the spirit and ardor of Daniel—he would yet prevail as Daniel did of old! We must not fail in the setting of our face towards the Lord. I humbly but devoutly ask God, the Holy Spirit, to give you, my beloved in the Lord Jesus, both men and women, members of this Church, a solemn resolution that in the work in which we are engaged for God you will not be satisfied unless the largest answers are granted.

This was the first proof that God might safely give Daniel the blessing at once, for the Prophet's heart was fixed in immutable resolve, and there was no turning him from the point. Now, if a beggar is resolved to have his request, you may as well give in at once—it is wasting both his time and yours to put him off with delays—we think it best to give it to him at once, and so does our heavenly Father with us.

Next, Daniel felt deeply the misery of the people for whom he pleaded. Read that expression, “under the whole Heaven has not been done as has been done upon Jerusalem.” The condition of that city—lying in ruins, her inhabitants captives, her choicest sons banished to the ends of the earth—afflicted him very sorely. He had not a light superficial acquaintance with the sorrows of his people, but his inmost heart was embittered with the wormwood and the gall of their cup. Brethren, if God intends to give us souls He will prepare us for the honor by causing us to *feel* the deep ruin of our fellow creatures, and the fearful doom which that ruin will involve unless they shall escape from it.

I would have you school yourselves till you obtain a *horror* of the sinner's sin—surely not so strange a task if you remember your *own* former estate and present tendencies! How fiery was that oven through which your spirit passed when the hand of God was heavy upon you both by day and night? I want you, my Brothers and Sisters in the Lord Jesus, to get a

clear view of the wrath of God which threatens your own children, your own friends, your fellow seat-holders, your neighbors, your kinsfolk—unless they are saved.

If you could get into your heart as well as into your creed the sincere belief that, “the wicked shall be turned into Hell with all the nations that forget God.” If you could remember that even those who hear the Gospel have no way of escape if they remain impenitent, and that if they reject Christ there remains nothing for them but “a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation.” If your soul could be made to melt for heaviness because of the woes of lost spirits, and because so many of your fellow men will, within a little while, be lost—lost as these others are, past all recall, beyond all hope, or all dream of alleviation—surely you would become awfully earnest about souls!

We would hear praying of a mighty sort if Believers sympathized with men in their ruin! Then groans and tears would not be so scarce! Then the soul, pouring out itself in groans which cannot be uttered, would be but an ordinary thing! Then shall we prevail with God through the precious blood of Jesus when we feel intensely the sinner’s need! If there are some here who really feel the terrors of the world to come and are bound under those terrors, and moved to wait and wrestle at the Mercy Seat till souls are rescued from their sins, there is no fear but what at the very commencement of our supplication the commandment to bless us will go forth!

In the next place, Daniel was ready to receive the blessing because he felt deeply his own unworthiness of it. I do not know that even the 51<sup>ST</sup> Psalm is more penitential than the chapter which contains our text. I bade you remark, while we were reading it, how the Prophet confesses the people’s sin and styles it by three, four, five or more descriptive epithets, all expressive of his deep sense of its blackness. Read the chapter and note how he humbly acknowledges sins of commission, sins of omission, and especially sins against the warnings of God’s Word and the entreaties of God’s servants.

The Prophet is very explicit. He lays bare his heart before the Lord. He tears off every film from the corruption of the people. He exposes the wound to the inspection of the Great Surgeon and asks Him to send it health and cure. I believe that the Lord is about to bless that man, personally, to whom He has given a deep sense of sin. And certainly that Church which is willing to make confession of its own sinfulness and unworthiness is on the eve of a visitation of love.

Let us go, then, to our God—I pray that the Holy Spirit may enable us to go to Him—each man and woman making confession for himself apart. Individual confession is needed! I have sins which, perhaps, you might not discover in you. Sins, which it were not possible for you to commit because you are not placed in my station. You, too, have in your families, in your business, in your private and public lives, sins with which I am not acquainted. Each man has a point of sin where he is separated from his fellows. And each man must therefore make his own confession, apart, with the fullest honesty, with the deepest humiliation. And each one must

add to his acknowledgements the humble prayer, "Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me, and know my thoughts!"

My dear fellow Members, are you conscious, each one, of your own personal iniquity towards the Lord your God? Then let not this day pass till a full confession has been made! And should there remain, dear Brethren, in us as a Church any transgression unconfessed, I hope the Lord may lead us to confess it. If we have been proud of our numbers. If we have been exalted by success. If there should be any bickering among us. If any Christian here has any ill feeling towards another, let not this day go down till all such evil is removed! I am very conscious that, in the midst of so large a Church, much sin may remain undetected. O for great searching of heart!

Beloved, you will certainly spoil our hopes and cause us to miss the blessing unless every evil thing is put away. Let this be a day for purging out the old leaven that we may keep the feast not with the leaven of malice, but in holiness as becomes the disciples of Jesus. The idols must be utterly abolished! And till we put them all away we cannot expect to receive a blessing from the Lord our God. "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." Let us bless His name for His exceedingly great goodness to us as a Church and sing of all His loving kindness which He has shown to us these 13 years!

Let us confess our unworthiness, our coldness, and deadness, and lethargy, and wanderings of heart, and the backsliding of many among us! And then, having confessed our faults, we may expect that at the very commencement God will visit us! When the vessel is empty, Heaven's fountain will fill it. When the ground is dried and chapped and begins to open her mouth with thirst, down shall come the rain to make fat the soil. When we feel a sense of need, deep and crushing, then shall a blessing shine forth from the Presence of the Most High. "At the beginning of your supplication the commandment came forth."

But again, dear Friends, we have not exhausted the points in Daniel which deserve our imitation. You will notice that Daniel had a clear conviction of God's power to help His people in their distress. His lively sense of Divine power was based upon what God had done in the olden time. One is interested to note in the history of the Jews, how in every dark and stormy hour their minds reverted to one particular point of their history! Just as the Greek, in the days when Greece was living Greece, would remember Thermopylae and Marathon and feel his eyes sparkle and every sinew grow strong at the thought of the heroic day when his fathers slew the Persians and broke the yoke of the great king!

So with nobler emotions, because more heavenly, the Israelite always thought of the Red Sea and what the Lord did to Egypt when He divided the waters, and they stood upright as a heap that His people might pass through! Daniel, in the prayer says, "You have brought Your people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and have gotten You renown, as at this day." He lays hold upon that deed of ancient prowess and pleads, in effect, after this fashion: "You can do the same, O God, and glorify Your name anew, and assure deliverance to Your people."

My Brothers and Sisters in the bonds of the Lord Jesus, you and I may at this moment draw comfort from the fact that this God who divided the Red Sea is our God forever and ever! And is at this hour as mighty as when He overthrew the horse and his rider in the mighty waters. We worship the God who loves His chosen now even as He did of old. It is written, "But as for His people, He led them forth like sheep," and so He leads us. He led them through the wilderness and brought them to the promised rest. And even thus will He bring us to our eternal home.

O God, You that went forth before Your people, go forth before us after the same fashion! Though doubts and fears roll before us like a sea, remove them, we beseech You! Though our iniquities clamor behind us, swallow them up in the Red Sea of Jesus' blood! Though we march through the wilderness, yet give us Heaven's manna and let the Rock distil with living streams! Though we deserve not to be visited by Your love, yet are we not Your people and the sheep of Your pasture? Are we not called by Your name? Have You not bought us with Your blood? Bring us into the promised land! Give us the heritage of Your people and bless us with the blessings of Your chosen! We too, if we are sensible of past mercies to the Church of God, and to ourselves personally, shall then be ready to receive present mercy.

But once more, the most apparent point about Daniel's prayer is his peculiar *earnestness*. To multiply expressions such as, "O Lord! O Lord! O Lord!" may not always be right. There may be much sin in such repetitions, amounting to taking God's name in vain. But it is not so with Daniel. His repetitions are forced from the depths of his soul, "O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hearken and do!" These are the fiery volcanic eruptions of a soul on fire, heaving terribly! It is just the man's soul needing vent. Jesus Himself, when He prayed most vehemently, prayed three times, using the same words.

Variety of expression sometimes shows that the mind is not altogether absorbed in the object, but is still able to consider the mode of its utterance. But when the heart becomes entirely swallowed up in the desire, it cannot stay to polish and fashion its words—it seizes upon any expressions nearest to hand—and with these it continues its entreaties. So long as God understands it, the troubled mind has no anxiety about its modes of speech. Daniel here, with what the old Divines would have called multiplied ingeminations, groans himself upward till he gains the summit of his desires!

To what shall I liken the pleadings of the man greatly beloved? It seems to me as though he thundered and lightened at the gate of Heaven! He stood there before God and said to Him, "O You Most High, You have brought me to this just as you did Jacob to the Jabbok. And with You all night I mean to stay and wrestle till the break of day. I cannot, will not let You go except You bless me." No prayer is at all likely to bring down an immediate answer if it is not a fervent prayer. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." But if it is not fervent we cannot expect to find it effectual *or* prevalent. We must get rid of the icicles that hang about our lips. We must ask the Lord to thaw the ice caves of our soul and to make our hearts like a furnace of fire heated seven times hotter.

If our hearts do not burn within us we may well question whether Jesus is with us. Those who are neither cold nor hot He has threatened to spew out of His mouth! How can we expect His favor if we fall into a condition so obnoxious to Him? Our God is a consuming fire and He will not have communion with us until our souls grow to be like consuming fires, too. Unless we are warm with love to God we cannot expect the love of God to manifest itself in us to its highest degree.

Now I know some of you are cold enough. But I thank God we have a great many very warm-hearted earnest Christians in connection with this Church—Christians, I will here make bold to say, that I never expected to live to see—such true and lovely saints. I have seen Apostolic piety revived in this Church! I will say it before the Throne of God—I have seen as earnest and as true a piety as Paul or Peter ever witnessed! I have seen in some here present such godly zeal, such holiness, such devotion to the Master's business as Christ Himself would look upon with joy and satisfaction. But there are others who are members of the Church who never enter heartily into our projects of labor, nor yet unite with our solemn assemblies of prayer.

What shall I say of them? If I were to speak sharply they would only say that I scolded them with severity, and that might not serve my turn, for I desire their best interests. Shall I not rather say to them, "My dear Brothers and Sisters, if you are, indeed, with us. If you have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, we do beseech you, ask the Lord to make you more earnest than the most earnest of us have ever been! And ask Him to make you, if you have been laggards, to now take the front place! If you have been slow either in the generosity of your giving, or in the earnestness of your pleading, ask the Lord that you may, from this day on, double your pace and do more in the time that remains for you in this life than others might be expected to do who have not before now been so backward as you have been!

Of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum—if the whole Church in this place shall be brought to set its face to be conscious of the deep need of sinners, to confess its own sin, to be mindful of God's mercy, and to be vehemently, passionately in earnest for a blessing, I cannot, for my own part, see the slightest reason why at the commencement of the supplication the commandment should not go forth!—

***"Let us pray! The Lord is willing,  
Ever waiting, prayer to hear!  
Ready, His kind words fulfilling,  
Loving hearts to help and cheer."***

Thus much upon that first reason. We may expect a speedy answer to prayer when the condition of the suppliant is as God would have it.

Secondly, I believe we have every reason to expect a blessing when we consider the mercy itself. That which we, as a Church, are seeking is, if I understand your hearts and my own, just this—we want to see our own personal piety deepened and revived, and we want to see sinners saved. Well, is not that, in itself, so good a thing that we may expect the Giver of every good and perfect gift to give it to us? We need not ask the sun to shine—is it not its very office as a sun to do so? We ask God to give us

this good thing—is it not according to the Nature of the Father of Lights to bestow on us such mercies? We seek that which is for the good of His Church—the Church which He has purchased with His own blood!

A brother once remarked in prayer that none of us would let our spouse ask again and again for any good thing and refuse her—if it were in our power to give her anything under Heaven we would feel it our greatest delight to do so! And shall the bride, the Lamb's wife, find her Husband less kind than we poor evil mortals are to our wives? No. If Christ's Church pleads with her own Husband, she cannot be refused! Depend upon it, her royal Husband will give her according to His infinite fullness! What we ask is for God's Glory. We are not seeking a gift which may glorify *us* or may exalt some one of our fellow men. We crave not victory for the arms of a warrior. We ask not success for the researches of a philosopher. We seek nothing which can bring honor to human prowess or to human wisdom. We seek that which will put crowns upon the head of our gracious God, and we seek it with the one pure desire that He may be glorified!

Above all, we ask that which is dear to the heart of Christ. He is the Friend of sinners—for sinners He lived, for sinners He died, for sinners He rose, for sinners He pleads, for sinners He reigns in Glory—and if we come to God and say to Him, “By the blood and wounds of Jesus, by the griefs of Gethsemane, and by the groans of Calvary, hear us!” how can it be that we shall be kept waiting? No, I gather that if such is the burden of the prayer, at the beginning we shall receive it.

Thirdly, there is another thing which encourages me, namely, the nature of the relations which exist between God and us. Is not that a choice word, “O man greatly beloved”? “Yes,” you will perhaps say, “it is easy to understand why God should send so swift an answer to Daniel, because he was a man greatly beloved.” Ah, has your unbelief made you forget that *you* are greatly beloved, too? You, my dear Brothers and Sisters, as a Believer in Jesus Christ, will not be at all presumptuous if you apply to yourself the title of, “Man, greatly beloved.” I will ask you a few questions which will prove your title. Must you not have been greatly beloved to have been bought with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot?

When God spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for *you*, must *you* not have been greatly beloved? Let me ask you about your experience. You lived in sin, and rioted in it. Must you not have been greatly beloved for God to have had patience with you? You were called by Grace and led to a Savior, and made a child of God and an heir of Heaven. Why, that proves, does it not, a very great and super-abounding love? Since that time, whether your path has been rough with troubles, or smooth with goodness, I have no doubt it has been full of proofs that you are a man greatly beloved! If the Lord has chastened you, yet not in anger! If He has made you poor, you have been greatly beloved in your poverty.

I know this, when I look back upon my own life, I must confess my unworthiness and acknowledge my sin most sincerely. And yet I dare to feel and to say that I am a man greatly beloved of my God! He has given me such distinguished mercies to enjoy when I have deserved not even the least of them, that I cannot help saying, “He crowns me with loving kind-

nesses and tender mercies.” I make my boast in the tender mercy of my God all the more freely because I am sure that you, my Beloved, also are specially beloved of Heaven!

The more unworthy you feel yourselves to be, why, the more evidence you have that nothing but unspeakable love could have led the Lord Jesus to save such a soul as yours! The more unworthiness the saint feels, the more proof of the great love of God in having chosen him and called him and made him an heir of bliss. Now, if there is such love between God and us, let us ask very boldly. Do not let us go to God as though we were *strangers*, or as though He were unwilling to give—we are greatly beloved!

“If He spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things.” Come boldly, Brother! Come boldly, Sister, for despite the whisperings of Satan and the doubts of your own heart, you are greatly beloved! And Jesus says, “Ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.” Who will refuse to ask when such encouragements are suggested to our minds? But enough! I am afraid I shall weary you on this point, and I need a long time on the second. But time has gone. Therefore a few minutes must suffice. O swift-winged Time, I could gladly delay you when such a theme is on hand!

**II.** If we are to gain the blessing at the commencement, IN WHAT FORM SHOULD WE PREFER TO HAVE IT? Could I have my heart’s desire, I would crave a blessing for every one of you. I wish the blessing would come on me at the commencement, that I might preach with more power and pray with more fervor, and that my own spiritual life might be of a more healthy and vigorous character.

I wish the blessing might come on you, my dear Brethren, deacons and elders, for in the management of such a Church as this you need much more Grace than falls to the lot of ordinary men. I pray that you may be made examples to this flock, true guides in this, our Israel. I wish that the Holy Spirit may fall on all of you workers for Christ who will be here this afternoon. The Lord bless you Sunday school teachers. May you weep in your classes today! Pray for your children before you begin to talk with them! May my dear friends who teach our great classes of men and women have a rich blessing this afternoon!

May it be seen in Mrs. Bartlett’s class and Mr. Ranks’ class and the others, that the Lord is with you, indeed, and of a truth. It would be a great token for good if this very day we felt the first waves of a great revival. I wish the Lord’s power would come upon some of His people who do nothing—that they may be dreadfully *miserable* this afternoon—that they may be so *unhappy* that they cannot keep at home but be compelled to start out and do good! You who are working, may God help you to work with heart and soul, not doing it officially as of routine, but doing it with your very *life*, as though your heart’s blood warmed in the work, and your soul’s breath were in every word you spoke.

You who do so little, O may the Master constrain you to amend your ways! It would be a very blessed sign of Grace if every one of us felt this day, “Perhaps there is something more I could do *for* Christ. I shall do it at once. Perhaps there is something I might give *to* Christ, some department of Christian labor shall have a special donation from me. Perhaps I have a

talent which I have never used, like an old sword hanging on the wall. This day of battle every weapon must be used, and I have not used mine. Now, before the Lord I lift my hand to Heaven, and I ask that if I have *anything*, even though it is the smallest talent, if I have not used it, may He help me to use it at once."

This is such a dark world that we must not waste the tiniest piece of candle. The night is so dark that even a glowworm must not refuse to give its feeble ray. Each one of us must give personal service to Christ! Do you not know that all God's people are priests? Those lying priests, nowadays, put on their gaudy trappings like the priests of Baal, and come forward and say, "We are priests." Priests of Dagon, priests of Baal, priests of Hell, but not God's priests! God's priests are those who are alive from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit—and every man and every woman here who loves Jesus is a priest to God!

O brethren, God would have you all act as priests, and not to say, "We have a minister, let him serve God for us." I will have nothing to do with *your* responsibilities! Serve God yourselves! It is as much as I can do to serve Him—only by His Grace am I upheld under my own load. In fact, my own responsibilities are so heavy that I cannot bear them! But as for being a proxy for any one of you, I cannot be anything of the kind! *Personally* you were bought with blood! *Personally* you hope to enter Heaven! *Personally*, then, consecrate yourselves this day unto the Lord, and if you do so, oh, what a blessing it will be! May God send a new and quickened life into His people at the commencement of our supplication!

I was turning over in my mind how early and sweet a blessing it would be if the Lord would give us today, this morning, this evening, this afternoon, some conversions! Who shall we especially plead for? What kind of conversions do we desire? What if the Lord would call by Grace some of the children of the Church members? What a blessing that would be! Oh for salvation for our sons and daughters! Pray for them, parents! Pray for them! Pray now, and the Lord will hear you!

Or suppose He were to give to some dear Brother here the soul of his wife for whom he has prayed so long? Or to some of you, my Sisters, your husbands who are still in the gall of bitterness? I would take it as a special favor if the Lord would give us our dearest friends. I look forward during this month with the hope that we may see some in our own households—our servants, our children—and our unconverted friends and acquaintances saved. But we are not selfish! We should think it a priceless blessing if some of you who have been seat-holders for years were to yield to Sovereign Grace!

I am afraid for many of you because you have felt the power of the Gospel in a measure. But there is some darling sin you cannot give up—which sin will be your everlasting ruin! I remember M'Cheyne says, "Christ gives last knocks." That is a very sorrowful thought. He knocks at the door, but there is such a thing as a "last knock," and some of you will get your last knock before long. He will never knock again! You will never have another warning nor another invitation, but He will say, "Let him alone, let him alone." You, perhaps, will feel all the easier, but ah, if you do not wake here, you will wake up in Hell! And if before long God does not startle you

into repentance, you will be startled into everlasting despair. O, may God give us your souls this day!

It would be no small mercy if the Lord would give us many of the casual hearers who will be here tonight, or are now here this morning. I cannot understand why it is these aisles are always crowded, and why on Sunday night the doors have to be closed and thousands shut out! Why, men rush into this House as eagerly as if they came here to get gold and treasure! They *seem* so earnest and so eager, and push and tread, one upon another. Surely God must bless some of them! We never know who are here—men from the utmost ends of the earth—of all nations, kindreds, and tongues! Crowds who never heard the Gospel at all. I am so thankful to think of them, because when they do hear it, if they have never heard it before, they are, perhaps, more likely to be blessed by it than those who have grown hardened under the sound of it.

O, for a mighty cry! A prevailing cry! A Heaven-shaking cry! A cry that would make the gates of Heaven open! A cry which God's arm could not resist! The cry of all the saints here, knit together in love, with holy vehemence, using the great plea of the atoning sacrifice and making this the burden of their cry, "O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years. In wrath remember mercy." Let the gracious visitation begin in *this* place! But if God so pleases, we shall be equally content if it begins anywhere else—let Him but throw the stone into the stagnant pool of His Church—and I can see the first circle going round these galleries and many of you saved! I can see the next circle enclosing the neighboring churches! I can see it spread over London—I can see the widening amphitheatre taking in the whole of this United Kingdom! I can see it cross the Atlantic—till all round the world God's kingdom spreads, and days of refreshing come from the Presence of the Lord!

Now let us say in His sight, if He does not please to hear us at the commencement of the supplication, yet it is our desire to wait upon Him until He does. O You, our Beloved, if the day does not break nor the shadows flee away. If You will still remain hidden behind the mountains of separation, yet we wait for You as they that wait for the morning! And we watch and long as the watchman watches for the rising of the sun. But do not tarry, O our God! Make haste, our Beloved! "Be You like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether," for Your name's sake. Amen.

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# **SHUTTING, SEALING AND COVERING— OR, MESSIAH'S GLORIOUS WORK NO. 1681**

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 24, 1882,  
BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“Seventy weeks are determined upon your people and upon your holy city,  
to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make  
reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting  
righteousness, and to seal up the vision and  
prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.”  
Daniel 9:24.*

The Lord God appointed a set time for the coming of His Son into the world. Nothing was left to chance. Infinite Wisdom dictated the hour at which the Messiah should be born and the moment at which He should be cut off. His advent and His work are the highest point of the purpose of God, the hinge of history, the center of Providence, the crowning of the edifice of Grace and, therefore, peculiar care watched over every detail. Once in the history of the world has the Son of God appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself and this is the event before which all other events must bow. The studious mind will be delighted to search out the reasons why the Messiah came not before and why He did not tarry till yet later ages. Prophecies declared the date, but long before, Infallible Wisdom had settled it for the most profound reasons. It was well that the Redeemer came—it was well that He came in what Scripture calls the fullness of time, even in these last days.

Note, again, that the Lord told His people somewhat darkly, but still, with a fair measure of clearness, when the Christ would come. Thus He cheered them when the heavy clouds of woe hung over their path. This prophecy shone like a star in the midst of the sorrow of Israel! So bright was it, that at the period when Christ came, there was a general expectation of Him! Holy men and women, diligent in the study of the Scriptures, were waiting for Him—Simeon was waiting for the consolation of Israel—and Anna looked for redemption in Jerusalem with others of like mind. Not only the Jews, but the Samaritans expected Him, for the woman at the well exclaimed, “I know that the Messiah comes, which is called Christ.”

Even in heathen lands there was remarkable cessation from stir and battle; an unusual peace reigned over all the nations and the hush of expectation ruled the hour—

*No war, or battle's sound,  
Was heard the world around—  
The idle spear and shield were high up hung;  
The hooked chariot stood  
Unstained with hostile blood;*

***The trumpet spoke not to the armed throng;  
And kings sat still with awful eye,  
As if they surely knew their Sovereign Lord was by.***

Men were looking out for the coming One, for the corn of earth was ripe for the reaper. Men were on the tiptoe of expectation and wondered when the promised Prince would arrive. Alas, they knew Him not when He appeared! After this fashion are things at the present moment with regard to the Second Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Of that day and of that hour knows no man," but it is known unto God and fixed in the roll of His eternal purposes. "Known unto God are all His works from the creation of the world," and especially those grand works which concern the Person of our adorable Lord Jesus.

He shall come as God has appointed—the vision of His Glory shall not tarry. He has given us suggestive hints as to that glorious appearing and He has plainly taught us to be looking for and listening unto the Day of the Lord. Among His last words are these, "Surely I come quickly"—these are words of consolation as well of warning. He bids us watch constantly for the coming of the Lord—that it overtake us not as a thief in the night. And He assures us that He will descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God. Therefore comfort one another with the glad tidings and whenever your hearts sicken because of abounding sin, hear with the ear of faith the voice of promise crying, "Behold, the Bridegroom comes." Rest assured that He comes who will, in the fullest and most manifest sense, finish transgression and make an end of sin—and bring in everlasting righteousness.

The advent of the Well-Beloved is the consolation of His mourning saints. Both at His first and second appearing the Lord not only comes to drive away the wicked as chaff, but also to comfort and exalt His elect—it is a day that shall burn as an oven and yet, to the redeemed, it will be the happiest day that ever dawned! The First Advent of our Lord is spoken of, in our text, as ordained to be before the 70 weeks were finished and the city should be destroyed. And so it was, even as the Prophet had spoken. I shall not occupy your time by attempting to fix the beginning and the end of the period intended by the 70 weeks and the seven weeks and three-score and two weeks. That is a deep study, requiring much research and learning, and I conceive that the discussion of such a subject would be of no great practical use to us this Sabbath morning.

You will be better nourished upon the Lord, Himself, than upon times and seasons. Suffice it to believe that Jesus Christ our Lord, the Messiah, came exactly as it was prophesied and remained on earth as it was foretold He should do. In the middle of the predestined week He was cut off, when He had completed three and a half years of saving ministry. And within another period of like length, the Gospel was preached throughout all nations and Messiah's peculiar relation to Israel was cut off. At another time it may afford you profitable contemplation if you consider the 490 years from the decree of the king for rebuilding to the overthrow of Jerusalem.

We will, at this present hour, survey the work of the Messiah—that is His Hebrew name, or of Christ, which is the Greek interpretation thereof. Let us survey the work of the Anointed. Secondly, let us inquire as to our participation in it. And then, thirdly, let us contemplate the consequences which follow upon us being sharers in it, or upon our *not* being participants in it. Oh for a measure of the anointing, that we may fitly meditate upon our great theme! Come, Holy Spirit and rest upon us!

I. First, let us survey the Messiah's work. According to my text, it divides itself into two grand works, which two works subdivide themselves, in each case, into three particulars. The first work of our Lord Jesus Christ is the overthrow of evil and it is thus described—“To finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity.” But our Lord's labor is not all spent upon pulling-down work! He comes to build up and His second work is the setting up of righteousness in the world, described, again, by three sentences—“To bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.”

The first work of the Messiah is the overthrow of evil. This overthrow of evil is described by three words. If I were to give you a literal translation from the Hebrew, I might read the passage thus—“To shut up the transgression, to seal up sin and to cover up iniquity.” According to learned men, those are the words which are here used and the three put together are a singularly complete description of the putting away of sin. First, it is shut up. It is, as it were, taken prisoner and confined in a cell. The door is fastened and it is held in durance—it is out of sight; held to a narrow range—unable to exercise the power it once possessed. In a word, it is “restrained”—so the margin of our Bibles reads it.

The Hebrew word signifies to hold back, to hold in, to arrest, to keep in prison, to shut in or shut up. Its dominion is finished, for sin, itself, is bound. Christ has led captivity captive. But it is not enough to shut up the vanquished tyrant, unless he is shut up forever and, therefore, lest there should be any possibility of his breaking loose, again, the next sentence is, “To seal up.” The uses of the seal are many, but here it is employed for certainty of custody. Just as when Daniel was thrown into the lions' den, the king sealed the stone with his own signet and with the signet of his lords. Or, better still, as when our Divine Master was laid in the grave, they rolled the stone to the mouth of the sepulcher and His enemies set a seal and a watch, lest His body should be stolen by His disciples.

In His case—

***“Vain the stone, the watch, the seal,  
Christ has burst the gates of Hell.”***

But sin cannot thus arise. It is imprisoned in the sepulcher of Jesus and it can never come forth, for the royal seal of the Immutable God is set upon the door. Thus is sin placed doubly out of sight—it is shut up and sealed up—as a document put into a case and then sealed. “Finished,” and, “made an end of,” are the two words used in our authorized version, and they give the essence of the meaning. To borrow a figure from current

events—Arabi, the Egyptian rebel, is shut up as our prisoner and his defeat is sealed, therefore his rebellion is finished and an end made of it. Even thus is it with transgression—our Lord has vanquished evil and certified the same under the hand and seal of the Omnipotent—and, therefore, we may with rapture hear Him say, “It is finished,” and also behold Him rise from the dead to seal our justification!

Yet, as if this might not suffice, the next term in the Hebrew is, “to cover up,” for the word to make reconciliation or expiation is usually, in the Hebrew, to cover over. “Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” Christ has come to cover sin, to atone for it and so to hide it. His glorious merits and substitutionary sufferings and death put away sin so completely that God, Himself, beholds it no more. He has blotted it out, cast it into the sea and removed it from us as far as the east is from the west! The two former sentences speak of finishing transgression and making an end of sin—and these expressions are full and complete—while this third one explains the means by which the work is done, namely, by an expiation which covers up every trace of sin.

Thus in the three, together, we have a picture of the utter extinction of sin, both as to its guilt and its power, yes, and its very existence! It is put into the dungeon and the door is shut; after this the door is sealed and then it is covered up, so that the place of sin's sepulcher cannot be seen anymore forever! Sin was, aforesaid, in God's sight, but through Christ Jesus we read, “You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people; You have covered all their sin; You have taken away all Your wrath.” Sin was in God's way till Christ shut it up and now it pushes itself no more into the sight of the Lord. Sin was always breaking loose till Jesus sealed it up, but now it cannot come forth to lay any accusation against the justified.

The three words might be put into one word by saying Christ has made a clean sweep of sin of every kind. Whatever may be its special development, whether it is transgression, which means the breaking of bounds. Or sin, which is any lack of conformity to the Law. Or iniquity—that is to say, inequity, or the lack of equity, a default in righteousness. In all forms in which it can be described—Christ has shut it up, sealed it up and covered it up by His atoning Sacrifice, once and for all! The depths have covered it. If it is searched for, it cannot be found! Our blessed Scapegoat has carried it away into the land of forgetfulness—it shall not be mentioned against us anymore forever. Those three words contain infinitely more of meaning than I have either space or ability to set forth.

Observe, dear Friends, that the terms for sin are left in an absolute form. It is said, “to finish transgression,” “to make an end of sins,” “to make reconciliation for iniquity.” Whose transgression is this? Whose sins are these? Whose iniquity is it? It is not said. There is no word employed to set out the persons for whom Atonement is made, as is done in verses like these—“Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it.” “I lay down My life for the sheep.” The mass of evil is left unlabeled so that *any* penitent sinner may look to the Messiah and find in Him the Remover of sin! What transgression is finished? Transgression of every kind! But what sins are made an end of? Sins of every sort—against Law and against

Gospel, against God and against men—sins past, sins present, sins to come! And what iniquity is expiated? Every form of iniquity, whatever falls short by omission, whatever goes beyond by commission!

Christ, in this passage, is spoken of in general terms as removing sins, transgressions and iniquities in the mass. In other places we read of the objects of His Substitution, but here all is left indefinite to encourage all! He gives us no catalog of offenses—for where should He write it? The very heavens could not hold the enumeration! He takes the whole, unformed, horrible, black, disgusting mass and this is what He does with it—He encloses it, fastens it up and buries it forever! In the words of our version, He finishes it, makes an end of it and makes expiation for it. The Messiah came to wipe out and utterly destroy sin and this is, and will be, the effect of His work! Put all the three sentences into one and this is the sum of them.

Indulge me for a few minutes while I take the sentences separately and press each cluster by itself. And first notice that it is said He came to finish the transgression. As some understand it, our Lord came, that in His death, transgression might reach its highest development and sign its own condemnation. Sin reached its finish, its ultimatum, its climax, in the murder of the Son of God! It could not proceed further—the course of malice could go no further. They had stoned the Prophets and killed everyone that was sent to them. But now He came and God said, “They will reverence My Son,” but they did not. On the other hand, they cried, “This is the heir! Let us kill Him and the inheritance shall be ours.” Sin finished itself when it brought forth the death of the Son of God. It could produce no riper fruit, for no supposable crime can exceed the putting to death of Jesus our Lord.

Now has sin finished *itself* and now has Jesus come to finish it. “Thus far,” He says, “you shall go, but no further: here in My wounds and death shall your proud waves be stopped.” Sin virtually committed suicide when it slew the Savior, for His death became its death! The kingdom of sin was overthrown in that day when it smote the Prince of Peace! Then was a period put to the dominion of evil and, to come back to the Hebrew, the Lord restrained transgression and Satan was bound with a great chain. “The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commands all men everywhere to repent.” Sin may no longer range unchecked! Sin is now arrested and held under warrant, restrained under the bonds of Law and, from the day of our Lord, by the preaching of the Gospel, sin has become more and more shut up as to its reigning power.

Some men have been altogether delivered from the rule of evil and other men, who remain its slaves, yet go not to such a pitch of outward riot as they would have done had not Christ appeared. Sin is being besieged! It skulks behind its earthworks. Its sorties are becoming fewer and less forcible. And though it is still powerful, the hour of its pride is passed, its head has received a deadly wound—the age has come in which the victory of truth and righteousness is guaranteed by the death of Jesus Christ our Lord! Your finis is written, O Transgression! Written by the pierced hands! Your huge volume has in it writing long enough and grievous enough, full

enough of blasphemy against God and of evil towards men, but now the Lord Jesus takes the pen from you and you shall write no more as you have done. The huge leviathan of evil has met its match and is placed under the power of the Avenger.

Thus says the Lord, "Behold, I will put My hook in your nose and My bridle in your lips, and I will turn you by the way by which you came." The Lord has set bounds to the transgression which aforesaid broke all bounds! Where sin abounded, Grace does much more abound! Sin is shut up that Grace may have liberty. This is one part of our Lord's great work—all Glory be unto His name—He has accomplished it with power and the power of the enemy is broken!

Now take the second sentence, which, in our version is, "To make an end of sin." Messiah has come to proclaim so free, so rich, so gracious a pardon to the sons of men that when they receive it, sin virtually ceases to be—it is made an end of. The man that is *in* Christ and has Christ for His covenant Head, is, this day so delivered from all sin that he may boldly ask the question, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" If Christ has made an end of sin, that is the end of it—the matter is ended and no more is to be said!

Down among the dead, men let sin lie, forever buried by the right hand of the conquering Savior. But the Hebrew has it, "to seal up sins." Now, I take it to mean just this. There are certain handwritings which are against us and they would be produced against us in court. But by order of the Judge, all these handwritings are sealed up and regarded as out of sight—no man dare break the seal and no man can read them unless the seal is broken—therefore they will never be brought against us. They have become virtually null and void. Everything that can be brought as an accusation against God's people is now sealed up and put out of the way, once and for all, never to be opened and laid to their charge before the living God!

Or, if you regard sin as a captive prisoner, you must now see that by Christ's death, the prison wherein sin lies is so sealed that the enemy can never come forth, again, in its ancient power. Sin could once sit on the highest mountain and look over the world and say, "All this is mine." And the embodiment of sin could come to Christ and say of all the kingdoms of the world, "All these will I give You," as though he claimed them all for his own. But it is not so today! The mountain of the Lord's house is, this day, exalted upon the top of the hills and though, as yet, all nations do not flow unto it, yet a glorious company comes streaming up to the Temple of the living God—and that company shall increase from day to day! As when a brooklet grows to a stream and the streamlet rises to a river, and the river swells till it rolls in fullest force into the shoreless main, so is it yet to be with the ever-growing Church of Jesus Christ, which, before long, shall carry all before it and cover the earth with blessing.

Evil, you cannot reign! Jesus has come and overcome you, Himself, and taught man to vanquish you! You cannot come, again, to the crown you once had, for the Seed of the woman has broken your head! He shall reign forever and ever and you shall die! Hallelujah! The coffin of sin is both

shut up and fastened down with the seal of Christ's victory! But now, the last expression is in English. He has come "to make reconciliation for iniquity," that is, to end the strife between God and man by a glorious reconciliation—a making, again, of peace between these two—so that God loves man and, as a consequence, man loves God. In the blessed Atonement of Christ, God and man meet at a chosen meeting place. Christ is Jehovah's darling and our delight. A slain Savior is well-pleasing to God and oh, how pleasing He is to a sinner who is deeply under a sense of sin! Here, here is that Mercy Seat sprinkled with blood where man may speak to God without fear—and where God does speak to man without wrath! Here Righteousness and Peace have met together! Mercy and Truth have kissed each other! Oh, glorious reconciliation which Christ has made by honoring the Law in His life and in His death!

Now, take the Hebrew for it, and read the sentence thus—to cover iniquity. Oh, what bliss this is! To think, dear Friends, that sin is now, once and for all, covered! Not as though it lay rankling there beneath some coverlet through which fire might burn, or lightning strike, but *Christ's* covering is such that, if you could heap Hell over sin, it were not so hidden! And if you could pile worlds upon it, were not so concealed! And if all Heaven bowed to overlay it, it were not so out of sight as when Jesus buried it deeper than the lowest depths, where no memory can remember it, or mind perceive it!—

***"Our guilt shall vanish quite away,  
Though black as Hell before,  
Shall be dissolved beneath the sea,  
And shall be found no more."***

This is what is to be done with the whole kingdom of evil, as well with the power of it and with the guilt of it. Dagon is to fall and to be broken—and the very stump of him is to be demolished. As when the darkness flies before the sun, not a trace of its blackness is left, so is sin to be utterly destroyed from the redeemed of the Lord! It is not merely the guilt of sin that is shut up and sealed and covered, but sin *itself*, its power, its dominion, its habit, its defilement—the dread that comes of it and the fear and the burning of heart which it engenders. All the foul birds of sin's filthy cage must fly away, never to return, chased away by the glorious work of Him who shall save His people from their sins! For this the Messiah was cut off, and this, by His death, is achieved—

***"O love! You bottomless abyss!  
My sins are swallowed up in thee;  
Covered is my unrighteousness,  
Nor spot of guilt remains on me.  
While Jesus' blood, through earth and skies,  
Mercy, free, boundless mercy cries!"***

I fail to describe this triumphant overthrow of sin and Satan. I have neither wisdom nor language answerable to such a theme. I invite you, now, for a few minutes to consider the second work, namely, the setting up of righteousness. This is set before us in three expressions—first, in the words, "to bring in everlasting righteousness." And what is that? Why, His own righteousness which is from everlasting to everlasting and will

never be taken away from those who have it and will never cease to be their beauty and their glorious Jesus! The work of Christ in His life and death is, by God, *imputed* to His people—indeed, it is theirs because they are one with Christ! He is the Lord, their righteousness, and they are the righteousness of God in Him. Saints are so righteous in Jesus Christ that they are more righteous than Adam was before he fell, for he had but a *creature* righteousness, but they have the righteousness of the Creator—Adam had a righteousness which he lost—but Believers have a righteousness which they can never lose, an *everlasting* righteousness!

Nor is that all the meaning of our text—those to whom God imputes righteousness, to them, also, He *imparts* righteousness. He makes them pure in heart. He changes their desires. He makes them love that which is right and just and good and so He gives them Grace to lead godly, sober, honest and holy lives! This righteousness shall not be crushed out of them, for the work of the Spirit shall continue until they shall become perfect and be meet to dwell with God in His Light. Happy are those spirits to whom Christ gives an everlasting righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of God and in it they shall shine forth as the sun! They are right and they shall be right! They are true and they shall never degenerate into falsehood! They are God's own children and they shall go on to develop the image of Christ, their elder Brother, till they shall be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing! This Christ came to do—He imputes and imparts righteousness and thus brings in everlasting righteousness as the foundation of His Kingdom.

Next, in order to the setting up of a Kingdom of righteousness, He is come that He may, “seal up vision and prophecy.” That is, by fulfilling all the visions and the prophecies of the Old Testament in Himself, He ends both prophecy and vision. He seals up visions and prophecies so that they shall no more be seen or spoken. They are closed and no man can add to them and, therefore—and that is the point to note—the Gospel is forever settled, to remain eternally the same! Christ has set up a Kingdom that shall never be moved. His Truth can never be changed by any novel revelation. If any man comes to you and says, “I am a Prophet!” bid him go and find believers among the foolish, for, to you, Jesus has sealed up prophecy and vision and there is to be no more of it. There is no *need* of it, because in Christ, God has spoken all He means to say concerning the way of salvation. Until such time as Christ Himself shall come, the canon is complete, and though there are many voices crying, “Lo, here!” and, “Lo, there!” and some so fascinating that they might deceive, if it were possible, the very elect, yet those whom Christ has chosen know the Shepherd's voice and, “a stranger they will not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers.”

Brothers and Sisters, there was always something better yet to come in all times till Christ arrived, but after the best, there comes none. A certain philosopher taught this; the next philosopher taught that and the next one contradicted this and that and taught another thing—while another master arose and contradicted all who went before. So man groped, as in the dark, for the wall, but now, the day has dawned and the true Light of

God shines, for Christ has appeared! This, then, is an essential part of the setting up of that which is good—namely, to settle truth on a fixed basis whereon we may stand steadfast and immovable. The candles are snuffed out because the day, itself, looks out from the windows of Heaven. Rejoice in this, Beloved! God makes you righteous in Christ and with Christ, and in order that you shall never be perplexed with change, He sets aside all other teachers, that Christ may be your All in All!

Then, as if this were not enough, and truly it would not be enough, He is also come to anoint the Most Holy, or the Holy of Holies, as you may read it. And what does this mean? Nothing material, for the Holy of Holies, the place into which the High Priest went of old, is demolished, and the veil is torn in two. The Most Holy place is now the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ! He was anointed that God might dwell in Him. Together with Christ, the Holy of Holies is now His Church and that Church was anointed or dedicated when the Holy Spirit fell at Pentecost, to be with us and to abide in us forever. That was a noble part of the setting up of the great Kingdom of Righteousness, when tongues of fire descended and sat upon each of the disciples and they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

This is Christ's work, for which He came and for which He ascended on high, to set up the Truth of God, to set up righteousness and to make it everlasting by the dwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Church of God in the midst of the sons of men. Thus you see, in six ways, which condense themselves into two, our Lord set about His lordly enterprise. Heaven rings with the praises of the Messiah who came to destroy the work of sin and to set up the Kingdom of Righteousness in the midst of the world!

**II.** Let us now inquire as to our participation in these two works. I will put a few questions as briefly as I can, and I pray God, the Holy Spirit, that every one of us may honestly answer them. First, dear Brothers and Sisters, Christ has come into the world to do all this good work, but has He done it for us? "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." What for? "That whoever believes in Him might not perish." There is a *general* aspect to the Atonement, but there is quite as surely a *special* objective in it. God loved the world and, therefore, He gave His Son. But to what end did He give His Son? Here is the answer, "That whoever believes in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life."

There was a special eye to *Believers*. Come, then, have you believed? The first question that is to help you to answer that inquiry is this—Is your sin shut up as to its power? "Sin shall not have dominion over you" if Christ is in you. How is it between your soul and evil? Is there war, or peace? Once you loved sin—you could not have enough of it. Is it so now? Do you still delight in evil? For if you do, the love of God is not in you! Can you still put forth your hand to iniquity as you once did? Then do not pretend that Christ has done anything for you! If you are a Believer, your sin may not be absolutely dead, but it is shut up for dead—it is held fast in the condemned cell. It may still breathe, but it is crucified with Christ!

How it tugs to get its hands loose from the nails! How it struggles to get its feet down from the tree! But it cannot, for He that nailed it there knew

how to drive nails and how to fasten the offender to the tree. Do you begin to grow weary of iniquity? Is it distasteful and unpleasant to you? And, when looking over the day, you perceive where you have spoken unadvisedly or acted hastily, or in any other way soiled your character—do you feel as if you would gladly wash out every spot with tears? If it is so, Christ has begun with you—He has come to shut up your sin and to end its reign—it shall no more have dominion over you. It may be in you, but it shall not be on the throne! It may threaten you, but it shall not command you! It may grieve you, but it shall not destroy you! You are under another Master—you serve the Lord Christ. Judge for yourself how this matter fares with you.

The next question arising out of the text is, Is your sin sealed up as to its condemning power? Have you ever felt the power of the Holy Spirit in your soul, saying to you, “Go in peace; your sins, which are many, are all forgiven you”? Have you clutched that promise, “He that believes in Him is not condemned”? Have you believed in Jesus? Has that blessed Word of God, “There is therefore now no condemnation,” breathed a deep calm over your spirit? Some of you do not know what I mean, but others of you do. Oh, what bliss, what a Heaven it is to know, “I am washed in the blood of the Lamb! I am delivered, clean delivered from every sin—past, present and to come—as to any possibility of its being laid to my charge! Christ has put my sins into a bag, sealed them up, hurled that bag into the sea and flung them out of existence! They are gone, never to be found again, ever!”

He has made an end of sin. Come, dear Hearer, do you know anything about this? If you do not, it is the one thing you need to know and, until you know it, you will never have any rest to your spirit, but you will be tossed to and fro as upon a raging sea. “There is no peace, says my God, to the wicked.” There is no peace to any of us till Christ has made an end of our sin! How is it with your hearts? And next, is your sin covered as to its appearance before God? Has the Lord Jesus Christ made such an expiation for your sin that it no longer glares in the Presence of the Most High, but you can come unto God without dread? Can you hopefully say, “Lord God, You see no sin in me, for You have covered me with the righteousness of Christ and washed me in His blood”? Did you ever feel the sweetness of that? It is rapture! I can remember times when I have been driven to doubt whether it could be true, it seemed too good—and then again, when my faith has revived, I have said—“Good as it is, it is true, for it is like God to do these great marvels and to put away the sins of His people and cover them once and for all.”

Oh, then there has been a joy within my spirit not at all like the joy of harvest, or the joy of marriage, or the joy of a first-born child in the house. No! It is a joy like the bliss of angels, deep, unspeakable, mysterious, Divine! Have you ever felt it? You will feel it constantly if Christ comes to dwell with you! You will, then, be assured in your heart that He has made an end of your sin. Further, let me question you about the next point. Has the Lord Jesus Christ made you righteous? Do you Glory in His blood and righteousness and do you now seek after that which is pure and holy? “Be

not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap." If we continue in sin, we shall perish in sin. He is saved who comes out from evil and seeks to live honestly, righteously, soberly after the manner of the godly and the saintly. Is it so with you? Is there a great and deep change in your spirit, so that you now love those good things which once you despised and ridiculed in others? Oh, if you cannot answer my poor questions, how will you stand before the Judgment Seat of God when He shall test you as with fire?

Furthermore, are the prophecies and visions sealed up as to you? Are they fulfilled in you? When God declares that He will wash us and make us whiter than snow, is it so with you? When He declares that He will cleanse our blood, which has not yet been cleansed, is it so with you? When He says, "A new heart, also, will I give them, and a right spirit will I put within them: and I will write My Law upon their hearts"—is it so with you? Are you fishing about after empty dreams and fancies, or have you laid hold upon the old prophecies and the ancient visions and discovered the substance of them to be deeply worked in your very heart?

Nor is this all—are you anointed to be most holy to the Lord? Are you set apart that you may serve Him? Has the Holy Spirit come upon you, giving you a desire to do good? Have you a wish to rescue the perishing, a longing to bring the wandering sheep back to the great Shepherd's fold? Is the Spirit of God so upon you, today, that you can truly say, "I am not my own; I am bought with a price"? Jesus, the Messiah, came to do all these things and if He has not done them to you, then He has not come to you—you are still a stranger, still far off from Him! Oh, may the Lord make you desperately unhappy till you come to Jesus! May you never know what quiet means till you find it at the pierced feet! From this hour may you breathe sighs and may every pulse be a new agony of spirit, till, at last, you can say, "Yes, the Messiah was cut off, and cut off for me, and all that He came to do He did for me, and I am a sharer and a partaker in it all."

**III.** Lastly, we have but a brief interval in which to speak of the results of participating in all this. The results! I need a week to speak of them! They are, first of all, security. How can that man be lost whose transgression is finished and whose sin has ceased to be? What is there for him to dread on earth, in Heaven, or in Hell? If Christ has put away my sin, I cannot die! If Christ has washed away my guilt, I cannot be condemned! I am safe and may triumphantly sing—

***"More happy, but not more secure,  
The glorified spirits in Heaven!"***

Therefore, rejoice in this!

And now, inasmuch as you are secure, you are also reconciled to God and made to delight in Him. God is your Friend and you are one of the friends of God! Rejoice in that hallowed friendship and live in the assurance of it! Now you have the anointing, do not doubt it! Christ has made it yours by His death. The Spirit of the Lord rests upon you; you are fit for service; set about it without further question. The anointing is upon you; you are most holy to the Lord; so let your life be wholly consecrated. Your heart ought to be, and shall be, by the Spirit's power, as holy as that in-

nermost shrine into which no unauthorized foot ever intruded—into which only once in the year the High Priest went—and then not without blood. God dwells in you, and you in God! Oh, blessed consequences—you shall soon dwell with Him forever!

But now, suppose when I put the question, you had to shake your head and say, “No, it is not so with me”? Then hear these few sentences. If the Messiah has not done this for you, then your sin will be finished in another way—sin, when it is finished, brings forth death. An awful death awaits you—death unto God, purity and joy. Woe, woe, to you! Death, on the pale horse pursues you, and will overtake you soon! Then will one woe be past, but another will follow it. If Christ has never made an end of your sin, then mark this, your sin will soon make an end of you and all your hopes, your pleasure, your boasts and your peace will perish! Oh, terrible end of all that is hopeful within you! You shall be a desolation forever and forever!

Has Christ not reconciled you? Then mark this, your enmity will increase! There is no peace between God and you, now, but soon will the war begin in which He must conquer and you, never yielding, will continue forever more to hate God and to find in that hate your utmost torment, your fiercest Hell! Have you never had the righteousness of Christ brought in? Then mark this, your unrighteousness will last forever! One of these days God will say, “He that is unholy, let him be unholy, still: He that is filthy, let him be filthy, still.” That will be the most awful thing that can ever happen to you! You have heard of the fable of Medusa's head—whoever looked upon it, when it was held up, was turned to stone—and one day, Sinner, you shall look at Death—and it will petrify your character so that it shall be forever what it is when death came to you! Where death finds you, there *judgment* shall find you, and there *eternity* shall leave you! Oh, wretched Soul, to have nothing to do with the everlasting righteousness of Christ! Are not the prophecies fulfilled in you, the prophecies of mercy? Then listen! The prophecies of woe will be written large across your history. “The wicked shall be turned into Hell, with all the nations that forget God.” Beware, you that forget God, lest He tear you in pieces and there be none to save you!

I will not detain you with many such words of terror, but through the Old Testament they roll like peals of thunder, nor is the New Testament less stern towards him that goes on in his iniquity and will not turn to the Christ. Lastly, will you never be anointed to be most holy? Then remember, holiness and you will stand at a distance, forever—and to be far off from holiness must necessarily be to be far off from Heaven and happiness! Sin is misery. In it lies both the root and the fruit of eternal woe. Purity is paradise—to be right with God is to be right with yourself and all created things! But if you will not be holy, then you must, by force of your own choice, be forever tossed about upon the restless sea of wretchedness! God save you, Brothers and Sisters! God save you for Christ's sake! Amen.

# DANIEL'S BAND

## NO. 2256

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, MAY 15, 1892.**  
**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
**AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,**  
**ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 3, 1890.**

***“O Daniel, a man greatly beloved.”***  
***Daniel 10:11.***

IT did not do Daniel any harm to know that he was greatly beloved of God, or else he would not have received that information from Heaven. Some people are always afraid that if Christian people obtain full assurance and receive a sweet sense of Divine love, they will grow proud, and be carried away with conceit. Do not have any such fear for other people and especially do not be afraid of it for yourselves! I know of no greater blessing that can happen to any man and woman here than to be assured by the Spirit of God that they are greatly beloved of the Lord. Such knowledge might do some of us, who are Christians, the greatest conceivable good! Daniel was not injured by knowing that he was greatly beloved. It has often been said that Daniel is the John of the Old Testament and John is the Daniel of the New Testament. Those two men, Daniel and John, were choice saints. They rose to the greatest height of spiritual obedience and then to the greatest height of spiritual enjoyment.

The knowledge that we are greatly beloved of God, instead of doing us harm, will be a means of blessings in many ways. If you know, my dear Brothers and Sisters, for sure, that you are greatly beloved of God, you will become very humble. You will say, “How could God ever love *me*?—

***‘What was there in me to merit esteem,  
Or give the Creator delight?’***

I think a sense of God's love is even more humbling than a sense of our own sin! When the two are blended, they sink the soul very low, not in depression of spirit, but in its estimate of itself.

A sense of God's love will also excite in you great gratitude. “Oh,” you will say, “how can I repay the Lord for such an amazing favor?” You will be conscious that you can never repay Him, but you will begin working out all sorts of schemes and plans to try to show how much you value the love of God. You will bring out your alabaster box from its hiding place—you will willingly enough break it and pour the precious ointment upon the dear head of Him who has loved you so greatly. I am sure that a certainty of having the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit is one of the greatest promoters of holy gratitude—and holy gratitude is the

mother of obedience. When we feel how much we owe, then we seek to know the will of God and take a delight in doing it. Whatever He says to us, we are glad to do as a proof that we really are grateful for “love so amazing, so Divine.”

This will also consecrate us. I believe that to know certainly that you are greatly beloved of God will make you feel that you cannot live as others do. You cannot trifle with sin. He who lives in the heart of the King must be faithful to Him. If called to stand in God's immediate Presence as a courtier and a favorite, you must take care how you behave yourself and you will do so. “You are not your own; for you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.” In proportion as we are sure of His love, our love to Him will burn like coals of juniper which have a most vehement heat—and everything contrary to the will of God will be consumed in that blessed flame.

A sense of Divine love will also strengthen us. What is there that a man cannot do when he is in love, even, with one of his own race? But when he gets to be in love with *God* and knows of a certainty that he is greatly beloved of God—he would cut his way through a lane of devils—he would face an army of angels and defeat them all—for love is a conquering Grace. When faith is side by side with love, it—

***“Laughs at impossibilities,  
And says, ‘It shall be done,’”***

and love goes and does it, for there is nothing which the love of God will not enable us to do.

Moreover, this assurance of God's love will make us very courageous. If you are a man greatly beloved and you know it, you will be a brave man! Let me never come into collision with the sword of that man whom God greatly loves—he will cut me in halves! The love of God makes a hero of the man on whom it is fixed. He is in the thick of the fray. He defies sin, death and Hell. He will burn for Christ—he would be ready to burn a thousand times when once he was assured that he was the object of the peculiar love of God and, like Daniel, could be addressed as “a man greatly beloved.”

This will make a man glad. If we are greatly beloved of God, how can we be miserable and discontent? Oh, no! If you are a man greatly beloved, you will trip with light feet over the hills of sorrow. You will be glad in the Lord, even when you have much to depress and discourage you. You will begin the music of Heaven even here, for a sense of God's love in the soul sets all the bells of the heart ringing. He is the most glad man who has the greatest assurance that he is “a man greatly beloved.”

I have said all this as a preface to show you that you need not be afraid of knowing that God loves you. Some seem to think that a state of doubt is a state of discretion. It is a state of folly! Full assurance of the faithfulness and truthfulness of God is nothing but commonsense spiritualized! To believe a lie is folly, but to believe the Truth of God is wisdom. If you are a Believer in Christ, though the very least and weakest of Believers,

you are a man greatly beloved! Believe it and be not afraid to rejoice in it. It will have no influence over you but that which is sanctifying and health-giving!

Well, now, to help us think of Christ's great love to us, I am going to talk a little, first, about *the case of Daniel*, the man greatly beloved. Secondly, about the case of every Believer, *for every Believer is a man greatly beloved*. And thirdly, *about the case of some special saints*—Believers who are the elect out of the elect—the choicest of the choice ones of the Most High! Of these it may truly be said that they are men greatly beloved.

I. First, then, let us consider THE CASE OF DANIEL who was “a man greatly beloved.

Because Daniel was greatly beloved of God, *he was early tried and enabled to stand*. While he was yet a youth, he was carried into Babylon and there he refused to eat the king's meat, or to drink the king's wine. He put it to the test whether, if he fed on common food, he would not be healthier and better than if he defiled himself with the king's meat. Now, religion does not stand in meat and drink, but let me say a good deal of *irreligion* does—and it may become a very important point with some as to what they eat and what they drink. Daniel was tested early and because he was a man greatly beloved of God, he stood the test. He would not yield even in a small point to that which was evil. Young man, if God greatly loves you, He will give you an early decision and, very likely He will put you to an early test. If you are greatly loved, you will stand firm, even about so small a thing as what you eat and drink, or something that looks less important than that. You will say, “I cannot sin against God. I must stand fast, even in the smallest matter, in keeping the Law of the Lord my God.” If you are enabled to do that, you are a man greatly beloved!

Afterwards, Daniel *was greatly envied, but found faultless*. He was surrounded by envious enemies who could not bear that he should be promoted over them, though he deserved all the honor he received. So they met together and consulted how they could pull him down. They were obliged to make this confession, “We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the Law of his God.” O dear Friends, you are greatly beloved if, when your enemies meet to devise some scheme for your overthrow, they cannot say anything against you except what they base upon your religion! If, when they sift you through and through, their eager, evil eyes cannot detect a fault—and they are obliged to fall back upon abusing you for your godliness, calling it hypocrisy, or some other ugly name—you are a man or woman greatly beloved!

Further, Daniel *was delivered from great peril*. He was cast into the lions' den because he was a man greatly beloved of God. I think I see some shrink back and I hear them say, “We do not want to go into the lions' den.” They are poor creatures, but Daniel was *worth* putting in the lions' den—there was enough of him to be put there! Some men would be out of place among lions—indeed, *cats* would be more suitable companions for

them! They are such insignificant beings that they would be more at home among mice! Lion's dens would not be at all in their line. They would imitate Solomon's slothful man and say, "There is a lion outside, I shall be slain in the streets." There is not enough manhood in them to bring them into close quarters with the king of beasts!

Even among our hearers there are many poor feeble creatures. A clever man preaches false doctrine and they say, "Very good. Was it not well put?" Oh, yes! It is all alike good to some of you who cannot discern between the true and the false! But Daniel could distinguish between good and evil and, therefore, he was thrust into the lion's den. It was, however, a den out of which he was delivered. The lions could not eat him—God loved him too well. The Lord preserved Daniel and He will preserve you, dear Friend, if you belong to "Daniel's band." It is one thing to *sing*—

***"Dare to be a Daniel,  
Dare to stand alone,"***

but it is quite another thing to *be* a Daniel and dare to stand alone when you are at the mouth of the lions den! If you are like Daniel, you will have no cause for fear even then. If your trial should be like going into a den of lions, if you are a man greatly beloved of God, you will come out again. No lion shall destroy you—you are perfectly safe. The love of God is like a wall of fire round about you.

Once more, Daniel was a man greatly beloved and, therefore, *he had revelations from God*. Do not open your eyes with wonder and say, "I wish that I had all the revelations that Daniel had." Listen to what he says—"I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me." And again—"As for me, Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me; but I kept the matter in my heart." The revelations he received actually made him ill! "I, Daniel, fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it." He whom God loves will see things that will astound him! He will see that which will almost kill him! He will see that which will make him faint and sick well near unto death!

When one said, "You cannot see God and live," another answered, "Then let me see him if I die." So those who are greatly beloved say, "Let me see visions of God whatever it may cost me. Let me have communion with Him even though it should break my heart and crush me in the dust. Though it should fill me with sorrow and make me unfit for my daily business, yet manifest Yourself to me, my Lord, as You do not unto the world!" Even men greatly beloved, when they deal closely with God, have to find out that they are but dust and ashes in His sight. They have to fall down before the Presence of His glorious majesty, as the beloved John did when he fell at Christ's feet as dead.

I will make only one more remark upon Daniel's case and that is this—*he stood in his lot*. Because he was a man greatly beloved, he had this promise with which to close his marvelous book, "Go you your way till the

end: for you shall rest, and stand in your lot at the end of the days." He was a man greatly beloved, but he does not understand all that God has revealed—and he is to go his way and rest quite satisfied that whether he understood it or not, it would work him no harm, for when the end came, he would have his place and his portion—and he would be with his Lord forever! The next time you get to studying some prophecy of Scripture which you cannot make out, do not be troubled, but hear the voice of God saying, "Go your way. Wait awhile. It will all be plain, by-and-by. God is with you. There remains a rest for you, a crown that no head but yours can wear, a harp that no fingers but yours can play upon, and you shall stand in your lot at the end of the days."

Thus I have briefly described the case of Daniel.

**II.** In the second place, I am going to speak OF THE CASE OF EVERY BELIEVER who is also greatly beloved of God. I must be very brief because of the communion service which is to follow.

Every Believer has been *called out from others*. My Brothers and Sisters, look at the hole of the pit from which you were rescued! Like Abraham, you have been called out from your family, and from your father's house. Possibly, you have not one godly relative. Many here are the only ones of their kith and kin that ever knew the Lord so far as they know of, or can remember. Behold in this the Sovereign, electing Love of God. Are you not a man greatly beloved? Even if you have come of a godly stock, yet you have seen others who seemed to be nearest to the Kingdom and yet have been cast out from it. Admire the Grace of God which has called you, and your father, and your grandfather, and your brother and sister, and your wife, and maybe children, too! Oh, be grateful, and bless the name of the Lord! But, "who makes you to differ from another?" Who but God, the Giver of all Grace, has made you to differ from the ungodly around you? Therefore, adore Him for His matchless mercy, His distinguishing Grace.

Remember, too, that if you have been called out from a sinful world and transformed into a child of God, this is the token that you have been *chosen from the beginning*. God loved you long before He began to deal with you in the way of Grace. Before you were born and before this world was made, Christ died for you. God loved you with an everlasting love—

***"Before the daystar knew its place,  
Or planets ran their round,"***

your name was in His Book—and your image was on the heart of Christ, whose delights were with the sons of men! Remember His Words by the Prophet, Jeremiah, "I have loved you with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you." Feed on that precious Truth of God! Inwardly digest it—let it enter into your very soul. He has loved me with an everlasting love, then, surely, I may claim the title of "a man greatly beloved."

Remember, too, that in the fullness of time, you were *redeemed with the precious blood of Christ*. Your God took upon Himself your nature and on the Cross He bore your sins in His own body on the tree. The chastise-

ment of your peace was upon Him and with His stripes you are healed. The blood mark is now on you—you are one for whom He died in that special way which secures effectual salvation to you! He loved His Church and gave Himself for it—and this is the song of that Church in Heaven, “You 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 earth.” If you have been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus, verily, I say to you, you are “a man greatly beloved.”

You have also been *pardoned and put among the Lord's children*. Remember your sin for a moment. Dare you remember it? Have you remembered it? Then forget it, for God has blotted it out! He has cast all your sins behind His back. The depths have covered them—there is not one of them left. They sank like lead in the mighty waves of oblivion and they shall never arise to condemn you! You are forgiven! Perhaps you were a drunk, a swearer, disobedient to parents, or unchaste. But whatever your sin, the blood of Jesus has cleansed you and you are whiter than the snow—and He has covered you with the robe of His perfect righteousness and you are “accepted in the Beloved.” Are you not a man greatly beloved?

I remember one who came creeping to the Savior's feet. It was myself, black as night, condemned in my own conscience and expecting to be driven to the place where hope could never come! I came to Christ wearing the weeds of mourning, but, in a moment, when I looked to Jesus, He put on me the garments of salvation! He took away my sin and placed a fair crown upon my head—and set my feet upon a rock—and established my goings. Blessed be His name! If there is a man in the world who can sing—

**“Oh, ‘twas love, ‘twas wondrous love,  
The love of God to me!  
It brought my Savior from above,  
To die on Calvary.”**

I am that man! And you can sing it, too, dear Friend, can't you? I mean if you have been forgiven your trespasses for Christ's sake. I feel sure that your heart is now speaking, even if your tongue is silent, and it says, “Indeed, as a pardoned man, I *am* greatly beloved.”

Since the Lord forgave your sin, you have been a praying man and God has *heard your prayers*. From the horns of the unicorns has He delivered you! Out of the depths of the sea you have cried and He has rescued you, like Jonah. With the Psalmist, you can say, “Verily, God has heard me. He has attended to the voice of my prayer.” Are you not greatly beloved? As our dear Friend, Dr. Taylor, said in prayer this morning, we have a Mercy Seat to which we can always go. Not only have we gone to it in the past, but we may go to it whenever we need. We have the *entree*' of the King's palace at will. Are we not men greatly beloved?

Beside that, remember that the Lord has *upheld you* until now. In your pilgrim path, how many times have your feet almost slipped? How often have you been tempted? Ah, worse than that, how often have you yielded

to temptation? Yet here you are, your character not ruined, your soul not lost, your face towards Jerusalem and the enemy's foot is not on your neck—and it will never be, glory be to the name of the Lord! When I think of all our experience in the way in which the Lord has led us, I can truly say of all His people that they are men and women greatly beloved!

Now, tonight you are invited to *feast with Christ and His Church*—not to come and be dogs under the table—but to sit with Him at the royal banquet, with His banner of love waving over you! You are invited to be His companions here, His comrades at His feet. Oh, what a festival is this sacred supper! Haman thought himself honored when he was invited to his king's banquet—but what shall *we* say who are bid to come to this high festival?—

***“What food luxurious loads the board,  
When at the table sits the Lord!  
The wine how rich, the bread how sweet,  
When Jesus deigns the guests to meet!”***

Only one thing more will I say under this head, but the story is so marvelous that we may be forever telling it and yet it will never be all told! The love of Christ to some of us has been so wonderful that when we once begin the theme, we seem to forget all about time and wish there were no fleeting hours to bid us end our story! Eternity itself will not be too long for telling “the old, old story, of Jesus and His love.”

But, what I was going to say, is this—*we shall soon be with Him*. Some of us sit here heavy at heart and there are wrinkles on our brow. And there is a weariness in the frame which makes the wheels of life drag heavy. Beloved, it is but the twinkling of an eye, so brief is life, and we shall be with Him where He is and shall behold His Glory! Do you ever try to realize the greatness of that love that will take you to be with Christ, to dwell with Him and to share His Glory forever? Can you not put the incorruptible crown on your head tonight in fancy—no—in *faith*? Can you, even now, begin to wave the palm of victory and strike the harp of everlasting praise? Do you feel as if you could, even now, join the sacred songsters above and sing the heavenly hymn, the hallelujah chorus of the ages yet to be? As surely as we are in Christ, tonight, we shall be with Christ, by-and-by. Oh, men and women, greatly beloved, to have such a future as this before you ought to make your Heaven begin below!

**III.** Time fails me, so I must speak of THE CASE OF SPECIAL SAINTS—those who are, in a peculiar sense, men and women greatly beloved.

There are some men who are, as I said at the beginning of my discourse, elect out of the elect. Remember that Christ had 70 choice men—His disciples—but then He had 12 choicer men, His Apostles. And He had three of these who were with Him when the others were not—and out of these three He had one John—“that disciple whom Jesus loved.” His love is so sweet, that while I would be grateful to be even outside the seventy, so long as I might be among the 500 brethren who saw Him after He rose from the dead, yet I would then have the ambition to get in among the

seventy—not for the honor of it, but for the love it would bring! I would like to be one of the eleven for the same reason. I would be glad to be one of the three and I would, above measure, be thankful if I might be that one whom Jesus loved. Have you not the same holy aspiration?

Well, now, let me tell you that if you would be among the choicer spirits, greatly beloved of God, you must be *men of spotless character*. Christ loves great sinners and even saints that fall and stain their garments He will not cast away. But you will never enjoy the fullness of Christ's love unless you keep your garments unspotted from the world. You cannot find a fault in Daniel and if you want to live on earth so as to be in Heaven while you are here—and to drink the wine of Christ's love to the bottom of the chalice, even the spiced wine of His pomegranate—you must watch every step and observe every word, for our Lord is very jealous and half a word of evil will grieve Him! If you would walk in the Light of God as He is in the Light and have constant fellowship with God, I beseech you, be you perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect and follow after unsullied holiness. The pure in heart shall see God! Oh, that we might, everyone, have this purity! It is those who have not defiled their garments who shall walk with Christ in white!

The next point is that men who are greatly beloved are men of decision. When Daniel had the lions' den in prospect, because of his faithfulness to His God, "He went into the house; and his window being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." There was no compromising in Daniel's case! If you want to be greatly beloved, do not attempt any compromise with sin! Have nothing to do with policy, craft and holding with the true and the false at the same time. If God is to use you in His service, you must be like the tribe of Levi, separate from your Brothers—and you must always be ready to stand up bravely for God and for His eternal Truth at any cost. It is my earnest desire that we may have in this Church many men and women of this kind who will be, as Mr. Moody puts it, out and out for Christ!

Next, if you would be men greatly beloved of God beyond all the rest of His people on whom special shining of His face shall come, you must be *much in communion with Him*. Daniel fasted and prayed and communed with God with cries and tears—and God came and revealed Himself to him. He was greatly beloved, for he lived *near* to God. He was no far-off follower of his Lord. He dwelt in the full blaze of the Sun of Righteousness!

If a man is to be greatly beloved of God, he must *live above the world* as Daniel did. Daniel became a prince, a governor, a man of substance and position, but when Belshazzar promised to clothe him with scarlet and to put a gold chain about his neck if he could read and interpret the writings on the wall, he said to the king, "Let your gifts be to yourself, and give your rewards to another." Daniel did not want them! When he became great in the land, he walked with God as he had done when he was poor. It is a dangerous thing for some people to be made much of in this

world—their hands soon get turned and they begin to think too much of themselves. He who thinks that he is somebody is nobody—and he whose head swims because of his elevation will soon have it broken because of his tumbling down from his lofty position. Daniel was a man greatly beloved and God showed him His great love by setting him in high places and keeping him there in safety.

Once more, men who are greatly beloved by the Lord *live wholly for God and for God's people*. You see nothing of selfishness about Daniel. He neither seeks to be great nor to be rich. He loves his own people, Israel. He pleads with God for the seed of Abraham. He is patriotic. He loves Jehovah and he pleads with Him for God's own people. Now, if you want to be greatly beloved, give yourself up to the service of God and His Church—

***“You that are men, now serve Him,  
Against unnumbered foes.  
Your courage rise with danger,  
And strength to strength oppose.”***

No man need wish to be born in a time more suitable for heavenly chivalry than this. To stand alone for God in such an evil age as this is a great honor. I pray that you may be able to avail yourselves of your privileges. How few care to swim against the current!

A strong stream is running in opposition to the Truth of God. Many say that the Bible is not half Inspired. Many are turning away from Christ, refusing to acknowledge His Deity, and some blasphemously speak of His precious blood as a thing of the shambles. O Sirs! If somebody does not stand out today for the cause of God and His Truth, what is to become of the nominal Church and of a guilty world? If you are loyal to Christ, show it! If you love Him and His Infallible Word, prove it! Then shall you hear Him say to you, also, “O man greatly beloved, go you your way till the end is: for you shall rest, and stand in your lot at the end of the days.” God grant it for Jesus' sake! Amen.

***Portion of Scripture Read before Sermon—1 John 4:9-21.  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—810, 808, 735.***

**EXPOSITION BY CHARLES H. SPURGEON  
1 JOHN 4:9-21**

**Verse 9.** *In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.* There is love in our creation. There is love in Providence. But most of all there is love in the gift of Christ for our redemption! The Apostle, here, seems to say, “Now that I have found the great secret of God's love to us, here is the clearest evidence of Divine Love that ever was or ever can be manifested toward the sons of men.”

**10.** *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the Propitiation for our sins.* In us there was no love—there

was a hatred of God and goodness. The enmity was not on God's side toward us, but on our side toward Him. "He loved us and sent His Son." The gift of Christ, the necessary Propitiation for our sins, was all of love on God's part. Justice demanded the Propitiation, but Love applied it. God could not be just if He pardoned sin without Atonement—and the greatness of the love is seen in the fact that it moved the Father to give His Son to an ignominious death that He might pardon sinners and yet be just.

**11.** *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought, also, to love one another.* Here we have a fact and an argument. We ought to love. We ought to love after God's fashion, not because men loved us. Nor because they deserve anything at our hands. We are too apt to look at the worthiness of those whom we help, but our God is gracious to the unthankful and to the evil. He makes His sun to rise and rain to fall for the unjust as well as for the righteous. Therefore we ought to love the unlovely and the unloving. And just as God has a special love for His own people, we who believe in Him ought to have a peculiar affection for all who are His.

**12.** *No man has seen God at any time.* We do not need to see Him to love Him. Love knows how good He is, though she has not beheld Him. Blessed are they who have not seen God, yet who love Him with heart, mind and strength.

**12.** *If we love one another, God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us.* He is not far to seek. If you love one another, God is in you. He dwells in you—He is your nearest and dearest Friend—the Author of all other love. The Grace of Love comes from the God of Love.

**13.** *Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.* And His Spirit is the Spirit of Love. Wherever it comes, it makes man love his fellow man and seek his good. And if you have that love in your heart, it came from God, and you dwell in God.

**14.** *And we have seen.* Yes, there is something that we *have* seen. John writes for himself and his fellow Apostles and he says, "No man has seen God at any time," but—

**14.** *We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.* John saw Him live and saw Him die—and saw Him when He had risen from the dead—and saw Him as He ascended. So he speaks to the matter of eyesight and bears testimony that though we have not seen God, we have, in the person of the representative Apostles, seen the Son of God who lived and labored and died for us.

**15.** *Whoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God.* Let Christ be God to you and you are saved. If, in very deed, and of a truth, you take Him to be the Son of God and consequently rest your eternal hopes on Him, God dwells in you, and you dwell in God.

**16.** *And we have known and believed the love that God has to us.* How far is this true of all of you? How many here can join with the beloved Apostle and say, "We have known and believed the love that God has to us"? We know it! We have felt it! We are under its power! We still know it—it remains a matter of faith to us—we believe it. We have a double hold

of it. "We know," we are not agnostics. "We believe," we are not unbelievers.

**16.** *God is Love; and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him.* This is not mere benevolence—there are many benevolent people who still do not dwell in love. They wish well to their fellow men, but not to all. They are full of indignation at certain men for the wrong that they have done them. John's words teach us that there is a way of living in which you are in accord with God and with all mankind—you have passed out of the region of enmity into the realm of love. When you have come there, by the Grace of God, then God dwells in you and you dwell in Him.

**17.** *Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have a boldness in the Day of Judgement.* That is a wonderful expression, "boldness in the Day of Judgment." According to some, the saints will not be in the Day of Judgment. Then, what is the use of "boldness in the Day of Judgment"? As I read my Bible, we shall *all* be there, and we shall all give an account unto God. I shall be glad to be there, to be judged for the deeds done in my body—not that I hope to be saved by them—but because I shall have a perfect answer to all accusations on account of my sin. "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." If I am a Believer in Christ—

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

**17.** *Because as He is, so are we in this world.* Happy Christians, who can say that! If you live among men as Christ lived among men. If you are a savior to them in your measure. If you love them. If you try to exhibit the lovely traits of Character that were in Christ, happy are you!

**18.** *There is no fear in love. When a man loves with a perfect love, he escapes from bondage. But perfect love casts out fear because fear has torment. He that fears is not made perfect in love.* There is a loving, holy fear which is never cast out. Filial fear grows as love grows. That sacred dread, that solemn awe of God we must always cultivate. But we are not afraid of Him. Dear Heart, God is your best Friend, your choicest love—

***"Yes, my own God is He,"***

you can say, and you have no fear of Him now. You long to approach Him. Though He is a consuming fire, you know that He will only consume what you need to have consumed and will purify you, and make your gold to shine more brightly because the consumable alloy is gone from it! He will not consume *you*, but only that which would work for your hurt if it were left within you. Refining Fire, go through my heart! Consume as You will! I long to have sin consumed that I may be like my God. Say you not, too, my Brothers and Sisters?

**19.** *We love Him because He first loved us.* The reason for our love is found in Free Grace. God first loved us and now we must love Him—we

cannot help it. It sometimes seems too much for a poor sinner to talk about loving God. If an ant or a snail were to say that it loved a queen, you would think it strange that it should look so high for an object of affection. But there is no distance between an insect and a man compared with the distance between man and God! Yet love does fling a flying bridge from our manhood up to His Godhead. "We love Him because He first loved us." If He could come down to us, we can go up to Him! If His love could come down to such unworthy creatures as we are, then our poor love can find wings with which to mount up to Him!

**20.** *If a man says, I love God.* Not, "if a man loves God," but, if a man says, "I love God." It is a blessed thing to be able to say, "I love God," when God, Himself, can bear witness to the truth of our statement! But the Apostle says, *If a man says, I love God—*

**20.** *And hates his brother, he is a liar.* It is very rude of you, John, to call people liars! But it is not John's rough nature that uses such strong language—it is his *gentle* nature. When a loving disposition turns its face against evil, it turns against it with great vehemence of holy indignation. You can never judge a man's character by his books. Curiously enough, Mr. Romaine, of St. Anne's Church, Blackfriars, wrote the most loving books that could be—yet he was a man of very strong temper, indeed! Mr. Toplady wrote some of the sharpest things that were ever said about Arminians, but he was the most loving and gentle young man that ever breathed! St. John, full of love and tenderness, hits terribly hard when he comes across a lie. He was so fond of love, that he cannot have it played with, or mocked or mimicked. "If a man says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar."

**21.** *For he that loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this Commandment have we from Him, That he who loves God love his brother also.* This is that "new Commandment" which our Lord gave to His Apostles and, through them, to His whole Church. "That you love one another as I have loved you." John was, in a special sense, "that disciple whom Jesus loved." It was meet, therefore, that he should be the Apostle to be inspired by the Holy Spirit to bring "this Commandment" to the remembrance of any who had forgotten it. "This Commandment have we from Him, That he who loves God love his brother also." God help us to do so, of His great Grace! Amen.

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

# OUR LORD'S HUMANITY A SWEET SOURCE OF COMFORT NO. 1295

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

***"Then there came again and touched me one like the  
appearance of a man, and he strengthened me."  
Daniel 10:18.***

WE are not able, as yet, to bear the full revelation of Divine things. If any intellect had been strong enough, if any heart had been pure enough to see the exceeding glory of the Covenant angel, surely Daniel possessed such a head and heart. But even he fell upon his face and was cast into a dead swoon, for he was unable to bear the sight of the man clothed in linen, whose "body was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning." We ought to be thankful that our God has revealed no more. The Word of God is as excellent in its darkness as in its brightness. Had it unveiled more, its discoveries would have been no more beneficial—perhaps they had been less profitable. As it is, there is far more within this Book than you and I have seen as yet, and we need not wish that more had been written. If we entertain such a desire, our loving Lord may silence us with the words, "I have many things to show unto you, but you cannot bear them now."

It appears from our text that, when weighed down under a sense of the Divine Presence, the readiest method of consolation is found in the touch of a certain sublime, mysterious, human hand. I know it is very usual to say that the personage who appeared to Daniel was the angel, Gabriel, but I cannot bring myself to believe that he is the angel of this chapter. Surely this glorious Being was that uncreated Messenger of the Covenant who, though not born into our nature in Daniel's day, yet took upon Himself the similitude of a man for a time, as He had done before, when on special occasions He appeared to others of the saints before His actual Incarnation!

Even if we grant that an *angel* was the person who touched Daniel, still the truth which I wish to bring out will be none the less clear, namely, that even if an *angel* should wish to comfort us, he must assume a visible *human* form and he must lay upon us a sympathetic hand like our own so that there shall be, at any rate, "the appearance of a man," or otherwise we shall not be strengthened. If this is granted as true, I shall not insist upon the text immediately referring to Christ, but I shed the general principle and say this—comfort is best brought to men by a *man* and if we are to be strengthened, the touch of "one like the appearance of a *man*" is needed.

Therefore we may, without difficulty, rise to the reflection that it is always to us the richest and highest comfort, as Believers in Christ, that the Lord Jesus is a Man and when He strengthens us, it is full often by laying His human hand upon us. He reveals His kinship with us and our spirit is

consoled and strengthened by a sense of His union with us. My one objective is, by the Spirit's aid, to draw water from the ancient well of our Lord's *humanity*. The Son of God is also the Son of Man. We, none of us, doubt His Deity and, therefore, we shall be able to spend all our time in this sermon in musing upon His Manhood and the joys contained in that Truth of God.

Jesus is God. But Jesus was born, Jesus lived, Jesus died, Jesus rose again and Jesus is in Heaven, *as a Man*. He is God and Man in one Person, but there is no confusion of Natures. He is neither a deified man nor a humanized God. His Godhead is altogether Godhead and His Manhood altogether manhood. We must not divide the Person, nor confuse the natures. He is as truly Man as if He were not God and as truly God as if He had never assumed the nature of man. It is of His Manhood that we are now about to speak. We shall not attempt to prove it, but shall simply endeavor to show how the touch of the hand of Jesus, the Man, strengthens us.

I. And, first, dear Friends, does it not cheer us WHEN WE LABOR UNDER A SENSE OF LONELINESS? If we are true to Him, we are strangers and sojourners with Him, as all our fathers were. Before His Cross we find ourselves to be strangers in this land, even as He was, for as the world knew Him not, so it knows us not, and as it placed Him outside the camp, so, also, does it make aliens of us. It is sweet to feel, when walking the separated path, "I am a stranger with You"—a stranger in the world as You are, an exile as You were. In such solitude the Manhood of Jesus is a delicious cordial!

Some feel alone because *they are the only ones of their house who serve the Lord*. How you wish it were otherwise! It is your daily prayer that all your kindred may be followers of Christ, but they are not so. Perhaps they openly oppose you and make your life unhappy through their hard speeches. Well, there is a Friend that sticks closer than a brother! There is a Brother who will hear what you have to say, no, who knows all that is in your heart before you utter it! He is the antitype of Joseph and He knows what it is to be separated from His Brethren. Of all that ever lived He was the loneliest, by far, and therefore He sympathizes with the forsaken ones.

*The child of God, as he grows in Grace, becomes more lonely* under certain aspects, just as the higher mountains have fewer familiarities, till Mont Blanc speaks to no equal in his awful height, but communes only with himself. They that serve God much and well—and draw near to His innermost Presence—in that proportion draw away from men, as to deriving comfort from them. But, oh, there are no heights to which Jesus has not risen, no attainments which He has not surpassed! That glorious Man is with you—with you in the singleness of heart with which you serve your God! He is with you in the perfect consecration which the Holy Spirit has given you, with you in the intimate fellowship of your soul with the Eternal Father! In your highest flight of ecstasy there is still a Man at your right hand, saying, "Fear not, for I am with you: be not dismayed, for I am your God."

It falls to the lot of some Christians to stand alone *in their contention for the faith*. Perhaps there is made known to them what has not been re-

vealed to others, or which, being revealed, others have refused to see—or seeing have been afraid to declare. In such cases true-hearted men find themselves standing very much alone, at least for a time. They have a treasure which others do not prize and they are bound to show it, for to this end was the treasure placed in their earthen vessel. God has not committed it to them for themselves, alone, but He has put them in trust with the Gospel for the good of others and they must speak it out. If, when they do so, they hear no sympathetic answer, but are met in the spirit of controversy and unkind rebuke, it is blessed for them to know that “the faithful and true Witness” is the champion of every honest testimony.

He stood alone as our atoning Sacrifice and into that loneliness we never intrude, but *in all other work He is our companion*, even He who is called, “the Man Christ Jesus,” and, therefore, we shall be cheered by His Presence if we find ourselves without earthly helpers. Oh, if we had our choice between having an angel to always live in our house and to know our secrets, or to have the Man Christ Jesus to be our constant Friend, we should not deliberate in our choice but choose our Lord's company at once! An angel would often afflict us—we would be afraid to confess our littleness to him. We would fear that he would think them meanness. His unsuffering nature we would suspect of contempt—and we would be ill at ease in his presence. But such a feeling as that does not cross our mind when we have to deal with One who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities!

We know our Lord to be true Man and, therefore, we speak to Him with familiarity and make Him our heart's dearest companion. Lonely One, take care that you have no secrets apart from Jesus! *Love* your loneliness rather than seek to escape from it, if it brings you nearer to Him! You will do well to be always ready for Christian fellowship, yes, and to *seek* it—but do not live on it—for fellowship with Jesus is sweeter than fellowship with saints! I know that fellowship with saints is poor stuff if it come not through fellowship with the saints' Master. When communion comes from *His* hands and we come to the feast in *His* company, then every Brother and Sister who sits at the table adds to our enjoyment.

But if we approach the table to see *them* and forget *Him*, then everybody adds to our discomfort and forms another veil to hide the Lord. Cling to the Christ of the Garden and the Cross, and find, O lonely One, your sweetest joy in the thought that He is a Man such as you are. Sing with me those sweet lines—

***“When gathering clouds around I view,  
And days are dark and friends are few,  
On Him I lean, who not in vain  
Experienced every human pain.  
He sees my needs, allays my fears,  
And counts and treasures up my tears.”***

**II.** How sweet it is to feel the touch of the humanity of Christ WHEN WE ARE HUMBLLED IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD. I know not, Brethren, whether you are often favored to behold the shining of the Divine Glory and to feel the warmth of it in your own soul. This I know—if you are, you find it a wearing and breaking joy. If we had more of it, it might be a destroying delight, for “even our God is a consuming fire,” and when we

come nearest to Him and best understand that He is Love, the glory of that love overcomes us! We cannot eat much honey, neither can we endure much sensible enjoyment of the Divine Glory—I mean much *comparatively*, for, of course, it is much to us, but it is not much compared with what He could reveal if we were able to endure it.

Have you ever felt what it is to be as if you were *not*—to see your comeliness turned into corruption, your excellency all despoiled and yourself not only lying low in the Presence of God, but being as if you had no being at all—as if you had no separate existence in the Presence of such wondrous majesty, such awe-inspiring love? You feel no dread, far from it! And no unhappiness, but the very reverse—you, yourself, seem gone, and God is All in All. A blessed extinction of *self* makes room for Infinite Love! There is not one Covenant blessing but what, if we understood it, would have this humbling effect upon us!

Every gift which God bestows upon His chosen, if rightly understood and truly grasped, would make us say with Abraham, “I that am but dust and ashes,” or make us sit down with David and exclaim, “Why this to *me*? Is this the manner of man, O Lord God?” Now, at such times of self-annihilation, it is strengthening to the mind, which is almost ready to expire beneath the load of heavenly Glory, to feel the *touch of that hand* and to perceive that He who is our God is also very near. It is bliss to me, to perceive that the Creator has become one with the creature, for Jesus Christ was born at Bethlehem. Jesus ate, drank, slept, wept, bled and died—and now He sits at the right hand of the Father! And so, notwithstanding the awe which crushes me, I see an infinite condescension—no, I perceive a near kinship which draws me close to God. Himself, so that I say, “My Father,” and with the next breath, “My Brother, my Friend, my Husband, my Best-Beloved.”

I wonder what we should have done if we had known so much of God and had not known Christ! I suppose I am speaking paradoxically and saying what I should not say, for we never could have known God, except in Jesus Christ, in such a way as we do know Him. But if such a thing had been possible, it must have been destructive to us. But now, God in Jesus Christ, how blessed! God *out* of Christ, we know nothing of, nor need we. Luther used to say, “I will have nothing to do with an absolute God.” Beware of attempting to deal with God apart from the Mediator, for no man comes unto the Father but through His Son, Christ Jesus. Thus have we felt the touch of the human hand strengthening us when we have fallen prostrate under a deep sense of the Glory of God.

**III.** Thirdly, Brothers and Sisters, and here, perhaps, you Sisters take precedence over us—IN SORROW—oh, how blessed it is to feel the touch of the man's hand! Bodily pain is the portion of many of God's people. They are seldom long without it. Weakness, constant weakness, keeps many of God's precious ones tied to the bedchamber or to the house and often the beloved means of Grace are taken from them because of their inability to come up to the assembly of God's saints. Others endure the affliction of poverty—with all their economy and industry, they find it difficult to provide things honest in the sight of all men.

Some true Christians are naturally of a somber temperament and, to them, even summer weather has a wintry aspect. The Lord has allotted to each one of His children a cross to carry and His loving wisdom led Him to do so. Those who are, for the most part, without trial, are usually the weakest in the Church of God. They are usually the least spiritual, the least instructed in experimental truth and altogether the least knowledgeable in Divine things. We have our sorrows, but have we not found, by actual experience, that the choicest consolation for sorrow is the fact that Jesus Christ knows all about it and is with us in it!

How often has that verse run through my soul like a trumpet note to urge me onward when otherwise I should have retreated from the battle?—

***“In every pang that rends the heart,  
The Man of Sorrows had a part.  
With boldness, therefore, at the Throne  
Let us make all our sorrows known.”***

There is no abyss of grief into which Jesus has not descended! Sickness of body and pangs of soul, bereavement, poverty, scorn, slander, desertion, treachery—He knows all these things! Malice, Envy, Contempt and deadly Hate all shot their fiery darts against Him. He has sounded the deeps of the ocean of sorrow. Did He not say that He was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death? And did not the sweat of blood which covered His face show how terrible were the inward agonies through which His soul was passing? Prince of Sorrow are You, O Jesus! Emperor in the realm of woe, are You, O Christ! You could say far more truly than the Prophet of old, “I am the Man that has seen affliction.”

Now, Brothers and Sisters, our bitter cup is sweetened, for His dear lips have touched the brim! No, He has drained it to its dregs! Now, Brethren, our hard sorrow is softened because it is only a piece from that loaf of which He ate the most, Himself. Well may we be satisfied to go through the valley of tears, for it is “the King’s vale” and all along it we can track His footprints. We know them, for they show the marks of the nails! They are the footprints of the Crucified! Joined with us in every grief and woe, He is always at our side when our hearts are heavy. He carried up to Heaven the same human heart which was pierced below—and there He remembers Calvary and all the griefs He suffered on our behalf. He still sympathizes with us.

I delight in that thought of one of our hymn writers, where he says—

***“Yet even after death His heart  
For us, its tribute poured.”***

After our Lord was dead, His heart yielded blood and water for our sakes, so that after death He was still in sympathy with us. Jesus still gives His heart to His people! Glory be to His name! Who among you will refuse to shoulder your cross, now? Did you lay it down just now and say, “I can carry it no longer. I must give up in despair”? Why, He carries the heavier end for you! Put your shoulder to the burden which He consecrates by His fellowship. It will grow light when you think that He once carried it!

When Alexander’s troops were on long marches, that which cheered them was that Alexander always walked as far as they. If they were very thirsty in the broiling sun and if any water was to be found, of course they

brought it first to Alexander. Should they not, first, consider their king? But he nobly put the cooling draught on one side and said, "as long as a sick man needs water, Alexander will go without." This made each warrior strong, for his king fared as he fared! Let this strengthen us tonight. Jesus Christ puts His hand upon us and says, "Fear not. I am with you in your sorrow. My heart is as your heart, therefore be of good cheer."

**IV.** I will not dwell long on any one thought, but leave you to dilate upon it. The fact that Jesus Christ is a Man such as we are, should greatly comfort us in ALL OUR STRUGGLES. It seems hard, this battle of life, this "contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the many"—this fighting against sin, this contention against inbred corruption, this warring against spiritual wickedness in high places—and we are apt to think sometimes, "Can we ever win? Is not the battle too difficult?"

In such moments look at yonder Man who sits upon the Throne of God! He is the typical Man, the representative to us of what manhood should be, no, of what, through His Grace, it is! He wrestled hard, as hard as you do, but He won the victory! You are tempted. Does that cause you doubt? He was "tempted in all points like as we are." Yet He did not sin. Are you distressed by the contentions of godless men? "Consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest you be weary and faint in your minds." The struggle is not so hard with you as it was with Him. You have an easier battle to fight and you have the promise that, as your days, your strength shall be.

Now, as He overcame, finding strength enough for His conflict, He is to you a living prophecy of what you shall do through Him. Yes, Brothers and Sisters, you shall trample sin beneath your feet, you shall take the strongholds of the adversary and Grace shall reign within your heart! The world, the flesh and the devil, that trinity of evils, shall be overcome by you! You shall be a conqueror, no, listen—"More than a conqueror through Him that loved you."—

***"As surely as He overcame,  
And triumphed once for you,  
So surely you that love His name,  
Shall triumph in Him, too."***

"Did a man ever do that?" asked a bold spirit concerning some renowned achievement, "for if one man did it, another man shall." It was a brave speech! But let us apply it to Christ for a moment. Did He, a Man, live in the midst of this world amid fierce temptations—and did He come out of that scorching furnace with not so much as the smell of fire upon Him? Then the eternal God can work the same in other men and we may believe, no, we may be *confident* that the victory shall be unto us through the blood of the Lamb. Be of good courage, O sons of men, for the Son of Man has won the victory! Throw not away your confidence. Let not your swords be laid aside. Jesus, Jesus the representative Man, has conquered!

And, therefore, those who are in Him, "strengthened with all might by His Spirit in the inner man," shall conquer also! Herein is comfort.

**V.** Further, Brothers and Sisters, in the fifth place, what a blessed thing it has been to look at the Manhood of Jesus Christ AT TIMES WHEN WE HAVE BEEN DECEIVED IN OUR BRETHERN. Our natural tendency

to idolatry tempts us to confide in man. Among religious people there always has been a tendency, much to be deplored, to lean a good deal upon men of eminence—upon ministers, leaders and men of experience. We get a great deal of good from them, blessed be God, and, therefore, we conceive a high opinion of them as, indeed, we may rightly do if we attribute all that is praiseworthy to the God who gave it.

But every now and then we pass beyond the proper confidence which a younger brother may place in an elder and we pin our *faith* to the man's sleeve and make our hope, in a measure, dependent upon his sincerity. This is the peculiar sin of young Christians, but I have sometimes met with it in simple-hearted persons, even in extreme old age. The "dear minister," the "venerable man of God"—they have looked far too much to him. Alas, there has come a discovery that man is only man and that some men are not saints though they talk in a saintly manner! There has been the explosion of a profession, the total casting down of an idol and the breaking of it to pieces—and at such times the faith of many has been grievously staggered—even those who are somewhat more established have, nevertheless, received a grievous blow.

We have seen Judas again, and Demas, and Hymenaeus, and Philetus, and old Ahitophel rising from the dead and we have been filled with grief. At such times it is most cheering to remember that there is one Man who will never deceive us! There is One who has not uttered a promise which He will not fulfill, nor won from us a confidence which He will not more than justify! It is such a blessed thing to see *Jesus* standing there—honesty, integrity, uprightness, Righteousness Incarnate, truth His very Nature with no sinister motives or desires to make Him subtle for His own gain, but altogether disinterested—living for the glory of God and the good of His people.

To get back into His bosom, again, and to nestle there and feel—"Child, here is a heart that is ever warm with true love. You are safe here"—this is rest, indeed! To get back to Jesus and say, "Now am I neither of Paul, nor of Apollos, nor of Cephas, but of Christ." To hear the news of religious strife in this denomination and that and, amidst the clashing elements of different ecclesiastical parties, to say, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity" and, clinging to Jesus, to feel, "But *this* is not vanity, *this* is reality, *this* is truth!" Oh, to stay with Jesus, Brothers and Sisters!—never to stir away from Him and to feel that the truth which you can trust, the integrity on which you can rely is embodied in the Man, Christ Jesus!

Is not man the meanest thing in all creation? Do you not feel him to be so when he deceives you? But, then, when you look at Jesus, how manhood rises in your esteem! After all, He is capable of something grand and glorious! And you bless the Lord Jesus who has, by the sublime perfection of His Character, redeemed our nature from its frightful degradation!

**VI.** Again, I hope I shall not weary you. Surely I may continue to draw out the silken threads of such a subject. Children of God will find the doctrine of Christ's Humanity to be wonderfully comfortable to them IN SEASONS OF DOUBT. Many of you are free from grievous doubts and I would be the last to sow them in your minds. I love Cowper's picture of the poor

woman with her pillow and bobbins who only knew her Bible, true, and left all the philosophies in the world to those who cared for them.

But there is a class of disciples like Thomas who think much and are apt to doubt much. They do not love doubts—they hate them, yet their doubts often go very deep and undermine the most precious doctrines. The men are really steadfast in the faith, but it costs them many exercises and painful questions. They ask, “How is this?” And, “Why is that?” Perhaps they have more brains than heart. I suppose many of us get into that condition and, do you know, to me a sight of my Lord is my great security—a sheet anchor which has held me fast in times of skepticism and doubt. I cannot doubt when I see *Him!* When I turn over the Bible and read of His Character, I find it impossible to be a disbeliever! If any *man* invented the Character of Christ, I will worship him—He *must* be Divine to have created such perfection!

It seems to me that if the life of Jesus were not a fact, the very fiction would be a creation demanding perfect holiness in the inventor. Who but a perfectly holy being could have conceived a Character like that of our Lord and Master? Every other character has its flaw. Man may be likened to a statue I once saw in Cambridge, which I think is in Trinity College library now—a statue of Byron. I remember looking at it from one point of view and the gentleman who showed it to me said, “There, Sir, there is the poet!” Yes, and a noble face it is, full of high thought, rare imagination. You admire the man.

“Come round to this point,” said my conductor, “for there is the man who dared defy the Deity.” You could see at once the semi-maniac Byron, lost to all pure and devout emotion. The artist had sketched the duplicate man, the true Byron, a man both great and wicked! Now, if some artist, able to exhibit the whole truth could thus set you forth in marble, your friends might go to ever so many points and say, “Beautiful! Beautiful! Admirable! Commendable! Lovely!” and so on. But when they came to some one point (and some of us may be very thankful that people do not get to that point) they would exclaim, “Alas,” and they would not like to say much more. They would feel the conviction that things are not altogether what they seem to be and that flaws are discoverable in those they most admire.

It is not so with Jesus. Survey Him, before and behind, on the right and on the left. Come upon Him at midnight. Look at Him in midday. Watch Him as a Child, see Him as a Man. Look at Him alone. Behold Him in company. See Him in His pomp as He rides through Jerusalem. See Him in His shame as they hound Him to His death. From every point He is perfect, absolutely perfect! You cannot improve Him, you cannot hint at a fault in Him! This is, to candid minds, a solid establishment, rendering it hard to be a doubter. And it becomes to Believers, who love their Lord and Master, a blessed chain which holds them fast so that they cannot give up the Truth of God they have received, for they have not followed cunningly devised fables.

If Peter and James and John, when they saw their Lord transfigured, were convinced, so are we, also, when we view His human life on earth, for His whole career is the transfiguration of humanity—a wonderful dis-

play of how poor human nature's garments can be made whiter than any fuller can make them—how the brightness of manhood can excel the glory of the sun at noonday! This consoles us amidst the battle of doubtful thought.

**VII.** Further, dear Brothers and Sisters, how blessedly the touch of our Redeemer's human hand COMFORTS US IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH. Unless the Lord comes, "It is appointed unto all men, once, to die." In the presence of death and the grave, when we really get to look at them, there is hardly one among us who does not begin to ask himself, "Is it all right?" Must we die? We shrink back—we cannot bear it. "Shall I rise again? If, after my skin, worms devour this body, shall I, in my flesh, see God? Does it seem likely? Is it possible? Can these dry bones live?"

We have read the burial service many times and heard it read over our friends. We have thought that we believed in the Resurrection, but when it comes to *ourselves*, and we are about to die and sickness tells upon us, then we ask the question over again, "Shall we rise? And is it true? Is it *really* true?" Often and often have I put myself through my paces over that question and this is where I always land—I know that the Man, Christ Jesus, rose from the dead. I am sure of that. How do I know it? No fact in human history was ever better attested or even so well attested as this—that Jesus, who was crucified, did truly rise from the dead.

The witnesses are so many. Read Paul's summing up of the evidence in Corinthians. He shows that sometimes Christ was seen by one disciple alone, then by 12 and, on one occasion, at any rate, by 500 witnesses at once. Jesus showed Himself alive by indisputable proofs—we are sure that He rose from the dead. Well, then, I know that *I* shall, too, for the Apostle, by inspiration, has put the two things together—"If Christ rose not, then is there no resurrection of the dead. But if Christ rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" One man has broken from the prison of the grave and, therefore, so will all who are like He!

Brothers and Sisters, in the gaze of mortality we shall escape from this city, for our Samson rose in the morning and took away the gates, posts, bars and all, and carried them to the top of the hill! The gates of the grave are open—pass through, you redeemed of the Lord! He has rent away the bars of the sepulcher, it is a dungeon no longer! The tomb is now a bed-chamber where you shall sleep a little while, till your body shall be prepared for the Lord's embrace—

***"What, though our inbred sins require  
Our flesh to see the dust,  
Yet as the Lord our Savior rose,  
So all His followers must."***

**VIII.** Once more. Children of God, the Manhood of Christ ought to be a great comfort to you WHEN YOU ARE SEEKING TO DO GOOD AMONG YOUR FELLOW MEN. This is an awful world, this world of human beings. If you ride along the main streets, it looks to be a very respectable city. But just go down the side streets! And from these, turn into the courts and alleys. Enter Jack Ketch, or Tiger Bay. Visit those regions where the means of livelihood are sin, where drunkenness is the chief delight, where debauchery has ceased to be pleasure and has become an occupation—

where every villainy is transacted unblushingly. Oh, God! When we think of what humanity is, even where Christianity keeps it within bounds, and then think of what it is when left to itself to bow down before blocks of wood and stone, and offer orgies of vice as the adoration of God, we might justly say, "Oh, it is a foul thing! Let it alone! It scarcely deserves pity."

If we could but entertain the comfortable notions of the Corinthian Brethren and believe that the world is not to be converted, how relaxed we might be! We could sit down and care no more for this poor earth, because the Lord Jesus is coming and the thing will end—and there is nothing for us to do but to pull here and there a man off the sinking ship, for the kingdoms of this world are never to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ—and He is never to have dominion from sea to sea. At any rate, not by the ordinary method of the proclamation of the Gospel—and we may as well go to bed and enjoy ourselves, for effort is needless where success is hopeless.

So they tell us, and if I could believe them, I could sleep more soundly at nights. But I believe that the world is to be converted to God and that here, on this battleground, and by the same weapons with which the fight began, the conflict will be fought out to the glorious end! And I believe sin shall be trodden down by the Lord's people, who will win the victory through His blood! Still, look at fallen human nature. Whitefield used to say that it was half beast and half devil. He was very near the mark, but I question whether both beast and devil are not slandered by being compared with man when he is left to himself!

Fallen man is a horrible creature and each one of us may see a specimen in his own natural heart. But, oh, Brothers and Sisters, let us gird up the loins of our minds and be encouraged! Let us look beyond the Fall and see what humanity once was and what it may yet become! Jesus took human Nature upon Him and thereby did it the highest honor—an honor which has more than rolled away its reproach. Though free from sin, yet His Nature was human. And in assuming such a Nature, Jesus showed the value which He set by our race. He thought it worth His while to live, to suffer, to bleed, to *die* for such poor things as we have been speaking of. He thought it worth His while to preach to a woman who had had five husbands and was still living in sin.

He thought it worth His while to permit His feet to be washed by a woman who had been a sinner. Worth His while to mix with tax collectors and sinners—the common vulgar people of the great cities, for He was a physician—and He had come to heal the sick. Never let us give way, for a solitary moment, to the proud feeling that anybody is below us, or that any human being is so mean that he is not worth looking after—and so bad that it is really of no use to hope to benefit him. Have I not heard it insinuated with regard to fallen women, "Oh, it is very melancholy work to have to do with them and probably it would be better to let them alone"?

"And these children in the streets," say some, "these waifs and strays—would it not be better to let those eminent Christian dignitaries, the parochial authorities, instruct them in the poorhouse? Would it not be better to let the grosser evils alone? They are so hideous! Drunkenness, poverty, uncleanness—they so abound in this great city that one runs great risks

and undergoes much pollution in coming near them." Very superior beings, sometimes, talk in this fashion. I mean, rather to say, that *conceited* coxcombs thus speak! Is there one being on the face of the earth so degraded that you and I might not have been *more* degraded, still, if the Lord's Grace had been withheld? Does there live on the face of the earth one incarnation of wickedness that can possibly excel what *we* might have been if exposed to the same influences and denied the restraints of love?

How, then, can we talk of sinners as being beneath *us*? Jesus Christ stoops, indeed, but for *you and me* it is almost impossible to stoop, for we are already down so low that we are near to the very lowest—and there is no great stoop possible on our part. This always cheers me. If my Master would give me a house full of convicts who had been imprisoned many times and given over as hopeless, I should feel great confidence in preaching the Gospel to them, because I should think, "Now, I am in the very place in which my Master would have chosen to place *His* pulpit." Did He not come to save us, who are convicts under the Law of God? And, if He has done that, let us never despair of the worst of felons! Never despair of a creature for whom Jesus died! Never despair of a creature, the likes of which you may see by myriads before the eternal Throne, singing, "We have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." City missionary, Bible woman, Brother, Sister, you who work among the lowest of the low—let the Master's hand touch you and give you strength!

Now, I have done when I have said a few inviting words to those here present who do not know much of the Redeemer and have not yet believed in Him. Do you feel yourselves guilty before God? Do you wish for mercy? Come, then, and come *NOW*, for Jesus Christ, a Man like yourselves, invites you! Remember, you cannot go to God without a Mediator, but you may go to *Christ* without a mediator and you may go just as you are. You need no introduction to Jesus! I know that you can go and tell another man like yourself your sins, for some are so foolish to do so. They confess their sins to the priests, as Judas did, but you know Judas then went and hanged himself, which was a very likely thing to do after such a confession.

But if you will go and tell your sins to Jesus, who is a Man, and something more than a Man, He will hear your story and it will not pollute His ear. He will listen to it and He will do more—He will effectually absolve you. Have you not felt, now, that you have grown up to be big fellows, that you wished you were boys again, so that you could go at night and tell mother all that you had done wrong during the day, so that mother might kiss you and you would go to bed feeling that everything was right again? Well, there is no mortal to whom you can go for such forgiveness, now, but the Lord Jesus Christ—who will be to you all that your mother was when you were a child.

Go and tell Him all about it and ask Him to wash you in His blood and cover you with His Righteousness—and He will forgive you as freely as your own kind mother would have done! Jesus Christ will feel for you, for He knows all your temptations and weaknesses. If there is any sort of excuse to be made for you, He will make it. He did that for His murderers when He said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." For

that which cannot be extenuated at all, He has something a great deal better than an excuse—namely, His own atoning Sacrifice. He will tell you, “Simply trust Me and I will save you.”

Do not be afraid to come and tell Him all about your case. He will not spurn you! Did He ever spurn a sinner, yet? The dogs eat the crumbs under His table and He never drives them away. Dog of a sinner, you may come to His feet and He will make something better than a dog of you! But you tell me, “The Man, Jesus, is in Heaven.” So much the better, for if He were here on earth in this Tabernacle, then He would not be over in Seven Dials and Golden Lane and over in North and East London, or away there in Scotland and Ireland, or across the seas! But, being in Heaven, He is within equal reach of us all, wherever we may be! And whoever darts a thought after Him, or a wish towards Him—above all, whoever *trusts* Him—shall find in Him eternal life!

Sinner, you have not to deal with an absolute God! You have to deal with God *in* Jesus, the Man! Come, then, to Him, for He has come to you. The Ladder, Christ Jesus, you know, has its foot on earth and its top in Heaven. The higher we ascend, the more we shall delight to think of the Glory of Christ. But our *first* business is to think of the foot of the Ladder and I want you, tonight, to know that its foot stands on earth, *just in front of you*. Jesus was such as you are—not sinful, that He could not be—but in all else like you. He was poor and suffering as you are. Now, put your foot on the first rung of the Ladder, His Manhood and His bloody sacrifice upon the Cross.

Trust that and you shall climb till you ascend where the full Deity of the Incarnate Savior blazes forth! And you shall rejoice in His Second Advent and all the splendors of His future reign. Tonight you may leave those higher things alone. Begin at the *bottom* of the Ladder and commence to climb! The Lord help you! The Lord bless you! May He lay His hand on you at this moment, poor Sinner! That will melt your heart! That will cheer your spirit! That will give you life from the dead! May He do it for His name's sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Daniel 10.  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—820, 260, 761.**

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# THE MAN GREATLY BELOVED

## NO. 1089

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 5, 1873,  
BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto you, be strong, yes, be strong.”  
Daniel 10:19.***

I ANTICIPATE an objection to my preaching from this text and using it in reference to any persons in this congregation. “The words were spoken to Daniel and we are not Daniels”—that is probably the shape which the objection will take in certain minds. And my reply is, If we are not Daniels, at least we should desire to be and we should remember that there are possibilities of our being such. In many parts of Daniel's character we can, by Divine Grace, tread in his steps. Daniel is not set up far above us as one who cannot be imitated—he is an example whom it should be our joy to follow.

“But,” cries one, “we shall never reach to Daniel's height of Grace.” I pray God we may. Under all dispensations there have been men of the class to which Daniel belongs. The antediluvian period produced an Enoch who “walked with God and was not, for God took him,” and he, like Daniel, prophesied concerning the coming of the Lord. In the Patriarchal period there was an Abraham who is called “the friend of God,” with whom the Lord communed in a most peculiar manner. In the later days, under the Law, was there not a David, “a man after God's own heart”? And though his character was more faulty, yet still his nearness of fellowship with God, as we read of it in the Psalms, puts him in the same category.

If you tell me that all these, and many more whom I might mention, belong to the olden times and to the days of miracles, and so forth, I would remind you that nowadays the child of God, under the Gospel, has privileges which were unknown to the greatest Believers in former dispensations! Even John the Baptist, of whom it was said that none born of woman was greater than he—it is said, also, he was less than the least in the kingdom of Heaven. With the clearer light and richer indwelling of the Holy Spirit, instead of being inferior to Enoch, or Abraham, or David, or Daniel, we ought to excel all these!

And, further, I would also remind you that the New Testament dispensation produced a John—and is there a nearer facsimile of Daniel anywhere than John? The two, though so very different in positions and in circumstances, were in their disposition, in their walk with God, in their familiarity with the Most High, and in the extraordinary visions of the future with which they were indulged, so much akin that I might say that Daniel was the John of the Prophets and that John was the Daniel of the

Evangelists! Now, if there is one John produced under the Gospel, why not another? If two, why not 2,000 or twenty thousand?

“And why may I not be one of them?” each Christian may ask. The Spirit of God is not stinted. The dew from Heaven is not exhausted because it fell on Daniel’s branch and rested on John’s leaf. You may have it, my Brother, and under its fertilizing influence you may bud and blossom—and from every blossom shed around you the fragrance of fellowship with God! Moreover, if I waive the question of our imitating Daniel I would add that from another consideration I feel justified in using my text most freely—for every true Christian is, in some sense—and that a very deep and true sense, too, a “man greatly beloved.”

Though there are differences in the manifestation of the love of God, so that we may say there are elect ones out of the elect, yet all the elect are “greatly beloved.” There are choice spirits among the chosen, such as the 70 who were selected from the disciples, the 12 out of the 70, the three—Peter, James and John—out of the 12, and John out of the three. Election rises out of itself again and again, ascending like a pyramid. Yet, for all that, the common disciples, at the base of the pyramid, are “greatly beloved,” loved with an infinite love. The weakest babes in Grace are as truly loved as those who have come to the fullness of the stature of men in Christ Jesus.

There are delicious spots where the sun’s light seems to rest most constantly, yet the sun of God’s love shines on all the field which He has chosen. The goodly land owned the superior excellency of its Carmel and Sharon, yet from Dan to Beersheba, every acre was blessed of the Lord. Every heir of Heaven is purchased with the same blood, written in the same roll of life, called by the same Spirit, preserved by the same Divine power and is ripened under the same spiritual influences for the eternal Glory—surely, then, every Believer is “beloved,” and “greatly beloved,” too! Great love has been shown in the salvation of each one of us and in our preservation to this day.

Therefore, if none of us should be bold enough to hope that the expression of the text could be applied to us in any peculiar and eminent sense, yet our faith, without presumption, dares to know that we are men greatly beloved, seeing we have been saved by the Sovereign Grace of God and made near to God by the blood of Jesus Christ. We shall, however, expect every Christian, as he recognizes the great love which he has enjoyed, to recognize, also, the great *obligations* which spring out of it. This is but common honesty—if we eat the bread of children, we must render the obedience of sons.

Now let us proceed to the words themselves. In them I see, first, a choice title, “O man, greatly beloved.” Secondly, a common infirmity very gently rebuked—“fear not.” And then, thirdly, certain very gracious consolations given to meet that infirmity—“peace be unto you, be strong, yes, be strong.”

**I.** To begin then, the text glitters with a CHOICE TITLE. Daniel is said to be a “man greatly beloved,” or as some read it, “a man of desires”—a

desirable man towards God whom God desired to commune with—in whose society the Lord delighted. He was a “man greatly beloved.” Now the great love of God to Daniel is very conspicuously seen in his character. I shall not describe his character as the reason why God loved him, far from it, but I shall mention his character as being the effect of God’s great love to him.

God loved him greatly and therefore He made him this and that. The first token of the Lord’s great love to Daniel which we shall consider was this—God gave him early *piety*. From his very youth Daniel feared God. We do not know the time at which he was brought fully to *know* the Lord, but it must have been in his boyhood, for while he was yet a stripling we find him playing the man for the Lord God of his fathers. It is true his early days were spent in captivity. He was of the royal house of Judah and he was carried away to Babylon. But there is something significant in the fact that he was carried captive at the same time that the holy vessels were taken from the temple of Jerusalem. What if I say that he was, himself, one of the holy vessels? For he was, indeed, a vessel fit for the Master’s use and he and the golden vessels of the house of the Lord were in captivity together, yet still under the Divine care, so that they should not be profaned to unholy use.

My dear Friends, no one can ever overestimate the great privilege of being brought to God in childhood or youth! If it were only to be saved from the injury which a course of sin brings upon the mind. If it were only to escape from the regrets for the past which will arise when the conscience is in later days purged from sin. If it were only to have saved those precious hours of the early morning of life and to have used them in the Master’s cause. If it were only for those three reasons—and they are but part of a great cluster—they are something for which eternally to bless the special love of God!

I appeal to those who have been brought to love the Lord in riper days and those especially who have come to know him in old age. Beloved Brothers and Sisters, you love the Lord who has called you to Himself, but have you not often said in your heart, “would to God I had known Him like Timothy, at my mother’s knee”? And is it not at this time the dearest desire of your soul, that your children should not delay a decision for God so long as you did, but that they should cast in their lot with the people of God while yet the ruddy hue of youth is on their cheeks? I know I speak your very hearts. You, therefore, are witnesses to the fact that early piety is a choice blessing and he who has received it may think that he hears an angel say to him this morning, “O man, greatly beloved, when you were a child the Lord delighted in you.”

But, secondly, the great love of God to Daniel appeared in his early and thorough nonconformity to the world. He was placed in circumstances of peculiar peril, removed from every godly association, taken away from every sacred influence of holy hearth or gracious guardianship. He was carried into an idolatrous country and trained in an idolatrous court for a superstitious pursuit. Everything was done that could be done to make

the young Hebrew forget the God of his fathers. His very name was changed as well as those of the three right worthy companions of his captivity. They had grand names in the Hebrew, each one significant of some gracious Truth of God, but they were changed into mere Babylonian titles that they might forget that they were Jews and forget the name of God Himself!

Everywhere around them they saw idolatry, lust, and crime. There was nothing when they went abroad or when they stayed at home but what would suggest to them the abominations of the heathen. Yet here it was that while yet a mere lad, "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself." The meat and wine that would be brought to Daniel would not have been of the kind that should have been eaten or drunk by an Israelite. The meat might have been defiled with blood or killed by strangling, in violation of the legal precept—and frequently the meat eaten by the Babylonians would be the flesh of an unclean animal.

The wine, also, would probably have been dedicated to the false gods by a libation of a part of it, and the meat would have been offered to idols—therefore Daniel determined to go too far rather than not far enough—and would not defile himself with the king's meat, nor the king's wine at all. It is always safest if you are at war with a deadly enemy to have a very high wall between you and him. There will be no fault in its being too high if he aims at destroying you. Any division which we establish between us and sin will never be too broad or too deep. Daniel, with surprising decision, determined that he would not defile himself with the king's meat.

Now, this was rather a strong position for a child to take up—a mere school-boy shall I call him?—for he was then at the college of the sooth-sayers, being taught in the wisdom of the Chaldeans. He was but a scholar and yet upon this he was very resolute. Being resolute he was not imprudent—he did not court persecution, but he went to work with that gentle courtesy which is always so becoming a companion of firmness. The "Suaviviter in modo" should always go with the "Fortiter in re." Gentle manners are a fit robe for firm principles. We read, therefore, that Daniel "requested of the prince of the eunuchs, that he might not defile himself."

Now, "God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs." So that after expressing a fear that he might be injured in health by not eating the food provided, he allowed him to make a trial of it. The trial of a diet of vegetables and water turned out most satisfactorily. Daniel and his friends were found to be both better in health and stronger in mind than the rest of the young students in the college. Was it not a grand thing for this young hero to have taken such a stand? We may hope that he who begins well will go on well—but, oh, abhor, young Christian, all faltering at the beginning, all bargaining with the world, all trying to parley with evil, all attempting to see how near you can go to sin! If you are not at the outset thorough for God, I fear you never will be.

Christians ought to grow in Grace, but I am sorry to say that with many of them they go from weakness to weakness. And all, I fear, because there is not a sound beginning. Every builder will tell you the necessity of having the foundation laid well. Let the foundation of your religion be decision, resolution, sincerity, and thoroughness. Your half-and-half Christian makes a fine pretense at godliness, builds very rapidly and daubs with his untempered mortar only to secure a fall. But may God make us deep Christians, those who know what they know and mean what they mean—and mean for God and for His Truth to be decided by His help.

Daniel was a man greatly beloved because even early he was distinguished for his nonconformity to the world. In later life we find another sweet result of God's love in his courageous trust in God. He was called on two occasions, at any rate, in his life, to exhibit the utmost conceivable courage. Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed a dream. Daniel had before interpreted a dream for him and therefore on this occasion he obtained admittance to the king. He heard the king's dream, but the interpretation of it was one which foretold the most grievous ill to the tyrant! How should he tell him the dreadful tidings? Only let the monarch lift his finger and Daniel's head would roll upon the floor!

All the empire of Babylon was under the absolute sway of the despot, Nebuchadnezzar, and yet Daniel did not hesitate to tell him that he would be insane and that his hair would grow like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws—and that he would be driven from the abodes of men! I think I see him, with fearless manner and voice, bidding the monarch break his sins by righteousness and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, that his tranquility might be lengthened.

Now, in *these* days, it needs no great courage to speak the Truth of God because no sudden death awaits the boldest messenger of Christ. We live in days of liberty in which we may believe what we please and say almost what we will, but it needed heroic courage, then, to come like a Nathan, saying, "You are the man," not to a David, with Grace in his heart, but to one who had no fear of God before him—a Nebuchadnezzar who thought himself a God! And that was a brave deed on that dread night, when Daniel stood up in the presence of Belshazzar and all his court—while the princes and lords of the different provinces were gathered together—and there interpreted the handwriting on the wall. Remember, he was surrounded by a soldiery who could, in a moment, have put him to death.

And he stood before a young and proud monarch, licentious and imperious, who would make no account of human blood. And Daniel had to say to him, "You are weighed in the balances and found wanting; your kingdom is given to the Medes and Persians." It needed no small spirit to be able to be the stern interpreter of a monarch's final doom! When he had been young he had faced Nebuchadnezzar, and when he had grown gray with years, with the same calm and brave spirit he faced Belshazzar and rebuked him for his sins and for his proud defiance of the Lord God of Israel. He was a man greatly beloved to be such a lion as he was in the midst of all his foes.

Coupled with this, as another evidence of God's love to him, was his wonderful endurance of prosperity. If I have already said that early piety is a great proof of God's peculiar affection to a man, I think I may say that the power to endure popular esteem, success in life, wealth and rank is also a very special and peculiar token of the Divine favor. He was but a youth at the time when he went to Nebuchadnezzar and told him his dream and the interpretation. I suppose he was about 17 years of age when he sat in the king's gate and was the head of all the king's wise men in Babylon! Scarcely that number of years had rolled over his head when Ezekiel spoke of him as being well-known as the wisest man of his time.

Addressing the King of Tyre, Ezekiel said, "Are you wiser than Daniel?" Now, for a young man to be elevated to that position, we all know, or think we do, the dangers that must surround him. Even a man that has experience does not always find the lofty places of power furnish easy foothold for him—but for the young and inexperienced man to stand there he must be a man greatly beloved of God. And then remember that through 43 years or more of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Daniel was one of the great men of the kingdom! All through the reign of Belshazzar, on through the time of Darius the Mede we still find Daniel one of the greatest men in the Government.

Belshazzar had made him the third man in the kingdom, there being, I suppose, at that time two kings and, therefore, he could not be made the second—but he was made the next to the kings in all the empire. Yet never do you see him betraying any sense of his own greatness. His book is singularly free from any desire to set forth himself. Have not you often wondered where he was when the three holy children were put into the burning fiery furnace? I think if I had had the writing of the book of Daniel I should have wished to insert a verse or two to explain where I was. But Daniel is so forgetful of himself he does not exculpate himself or try to avert suspicion and leaves it open to us to think whatever we like.

We may be sure he was acting nobly, but he does not try to make us think so. He is nothing, the service of his people and of his God—this it was which absorbed all his thoughts. O, it is noble to see a man lifted up into the high places of wealth and position—made to wear a crown and scarlet robe—and yet, for all that, walking humbly with his God and fulfilling his duty without a flaw, even as those do who have not such high things to try them! I read this week of a vessel at sea which was overtaken by a storm and a mountainous wave, a very alp of water, went right over it, putting out the engine fires at once and sweeping away the wheel and the steering house, so that the vessel lay like a log in the trough of the sea.

Now many a man has been like that—a great mass of wealth and prosperity has come upon him, put out the fires of his former zeal, taken away all the steerage of his soul—and he has lain like a log tossed up and down between the waves of worldliness and pride and has become a total wreck. But Daniel was a man greatly beloved, for God set him on his high place and made his feet like hind's feet. A further instance of God's great love to

him comes out in his firmness under trial. There will come to most men some special time in which they will be tested and it happened to Daniel in his old age. There were those who could not bear that he should always be in the front in political affairs and they plotted against him—but they found nothing against him except concerning his God.

They obtained a decree that none should pray during 40 days except to the king. But Daniel cared little for decrees—it was his custom, three times a day, to bow before his God with his window opened towards that dear country which still he loved, though he had been an exile from it these many years. And he, with that stern simple-heartedness which was so prominent in him, went to pray at the time he would have prayed if there had been no decree. He did not alter the window—neither to the putting of it up nor the putting of it down—and as he had been accustomed to do before, he bowed his knees and prayed.

The lion's den was nothing to him—his duty was all and if the way of duty lay through the jaws of wild beasts, Daniel pursued it, still. And you know the result and how God vindicated His servant. Truly, I might have said, when he was thrown into the pit where the lions were raging, that the martyr was a man greatly beloved! And all confess that fact when they see him honored by Darius, brought up alive out of the pit where God had sent His angel to preserve him—then all who saw him confessed that he was a man greatly beloved! Let me add that here we ought not to forget that God's Grace and love shone conspicuously in making Daniel a man of such continuous devotion. Every day witnessed his constant regularity in prayer. Not that he was a Pharisee and thought that one time was better than another, but because he probably felt what most of us have—that if we have not a time for prayer we may neglect it altogether.

Three times a day, whatever might occur—notwithstanding the immense pressure of business upon the statesman's mind—three times a day he cried unto his God! And then he had his special times. Three weeks we find him spending in prayer and fasting. The top of his house witnessed to his regular devotions, but his special pleadings were by the lonely willows of the brook where he cried and wrestled with his God. And we find that as the result of this he was favored with manifestations from on high which he would never have received had his devotion been less regular or continued. It is no small token of God's love to a man if the man lives in the spirit of prayer—if he delights himself in prayer and if year after year prayer has not become a monotony to him. It is by God's Grace if prayer is real to him, yes, and if he so much hungers after more of it that he devotes lengthened seasons to its more intense exercise. If God privileges him to become mighty in prayer, then is he a man greatly beloved.

Power in prayer is one of the most Divine of the Lord's gracious gifts. I could mention here, today, the name of one, a name well known to you, of one whose prayers God has heard these many years and helped him to feed thousands of orphans and send forth scores of missionaries. Whenever we think of him, we think of him as a man greatly beloved. And

whenever I look upon a man who is powerful in prayer, who, by supplication, brings down blessings on his own family and the Church and his neighborhood, I know that there is to be found a man who is, indeed, greatly beloved.

I think that I have shown you that the outward signs of God's love to Daniel were such as many of us have enjoyed, in a measure, and may enjoy still more, for there are some here who were saved in youth—some who early began to be decided for God. There are some here who have been brave for Christ and have not denied the faith—who have sustained prosperity and have endured trial, too—and who have, by Divine Grace, been taught to plead with God. Perhaps they will not recognize themselves, but we may be able to recognize them and call them men greatly beloved. In one word, there was one crowning token of God's love to Daniel and that is the perfect consistency of his life.

Daniel seems to me to be as nearly as possible a perfect character. If anyone should ask me for what peculiar virtue I count him to be famous, I should hardly know how to reply. There is a combination in his character of all the excellencies. Neither do I think I could discover anything in which he was deficient. Sinner he was, doubtless, before the eyes of God—but he is faultless towards man. His was a well-balanced character. There is an equilibrium maintained between the different Graces, even as in John's character, which is also exceedingly beautiful. There is, perhaps, a touch of loveliness about the character of John—a tender softness that we do not find in Daniel. There is somewhat more of the lion in the Prophet and of the lamb in the Apostle, but still they are, each of them, perfect after his kind.

All through Daniel's life you do not find a flaw—there is no breakdown anywhere. There was a great occasion in which he might have broken down, but God helped him through it. There he was, a business man for a long lifetime, a man bearing the burden of State and yet never once any accusation could be brought against him of any wrongdoing. A man of large transactions will usually be chargeable with something or other of wrong performed through his subordinates, even if he, himself, should be strictly upright. But here was a man rendered by Grace so upright and so correct in all that he did that nothing could be, even by his enemies, brought against him except concerning his religion! A great mark of Grace was this—an ensign of piety far too rare.

Many are Christians and will, we hope, creep into Heaven, but, alas! alas! Alas—the less said about their inconsistencies the better! It is a special mark of a man greatly beloved, when he is consistent from the beginning to the end through the Grace of God.

**II.** But my time will fail me and therefore I must hasten, in the second place, to notice that Daniel became the subject of a COMMON INFIRMITY. He was full of fear on one occasion and therefore an angel said to him, "Fear not." I am glad of this, because it teaches us that even the best of men may be subject to very great fears! I was pleased to read in our lesson, just now, of Daniel on his face and of Daniel dumb and so on, for it

shows that he was touched with our infirmities and that great as God made him, he was nothing in himself and owed all his greatness to the Grace of God.

Those fears on the part of Daniel were not the result of personal trial just then. They came to him, indeed, when he had been highly honored by revelations from God. But his fears sprang from a sight of his Lord and from a sense of his own unworthiness! Just a word on that. You may be a man greatly beloved and, therefore, you may have a clearer sight of the Lord Jesus than other men have—and for that very reason you may feel a greater shame and confusion of face whenever you think of yourself. Remember how Daniel says concerning himself, “There remained no strength in me, my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.”

O Beloved, if the Lord ever favors you with much love and with nearness of access to Himself, you must expect the other side of it—that is to say, you must feel your own *nothingness*, baseness, unworthiness—and while you feel that I do not wonder that you almost wish you had never been born and feel as if the sooner this life was ended the better—feel as if you were unfit to do anything for God’s people, unfit even to bear Christ’s name! And yet, all the while you may be a man greatly beloved and may be eminently blessed.

Look at Job—when he is covered all over with sores he justifies himself in some measure—but the moment he sees his God what does he say? “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes see You; therefore I abhor myself.” It is sure to be so—great love from God will make you have great humbleness of soul and lay you low in the dust. Do I address a Brother who has been finding out, lately, more of the deformity of his own heart than he ever did before? Did he come up here this morning crying, “Alas! Woe’s me?” No, dear Brother, not, “woe’s you,” but, “O man greatly beloved.” Though you have found this out through a sight of your Lord, yet fear not, this is a blessing to you and not a curse!

Perhaps, too, Daniel’s great fears had been awakened by the disclosures that had been made to him of the history of the nations and especially of his own people. He had a peculiar anxiety for his own people. Did you ever get into that state and begin to look upon the world and upon the country and upon the Church—and then fall into a fit of trembling? I do assure you it is wonderfully easy to put on the garb of Jeremy, the weeping Prophet. If you look abroad even on this little island of ours, you see mischief everywhere coming to the front and error prevailing—and the cause of the Truth of God seems to be like a tempest-tossed ship—almost a wreck. Truly one might find plenty of room for weeping and lamentation!

And if we look at the world at large and see how infidelity spreads, “Woe is me!” we may well say. Yes, Daniel had seen the history of the world for a long period to come—therefore he was full of fear. And are you full of fear, too? Well, it is a part of the lot of men whom God greatly loves that they should bear the troubles of the times—that they should be like Christ on the behalf of their age—and should bear the sins of men upon their

hearts and plead concerning them before the living God. I think, too, that Daniel's sorrow was occasioned, partly, by the repetition of those words to him—"The vision is true, but the time appointed is long." It seemed to come over and over to Daniel. "The time is long." I do not know any trouble that presses more heavily on my heart than that.

It seems to be a dreadful long while since God has worked a miracle—such a while since the Church has had any great thing done in the midst of her. Christianity only holds under its power a miserable minority of mankind—the number of evangelical Christians in the world is a contemptible fraction as compared with the mass of idolaters and Muslims, Catholics and the like. The true Churches do not seem to be growing and meanwhile the challenges of the infidel come to us and we do not seem to have the pluck to reply to them as they ought to be replied to. One thousand and eight hundred years and more have gone by—and no progress or scarcely any!

O Lord, how long! How long! How long! How long! And yet Jehovah is the Lord. Yes He is the only God and He could, in a moment, enlighten the darkness of mankind. And His Spirit could raise up men who should flash like flames of fire amidst the midnight of the times. Why does He tarry? This is the cry which the Church universally sends up wherever she lives near to God. And if any here have been favored to be beloved of God, I am sure this will weigh upon them, "How long Lord, how long? Why do You tarry?"

III. Now we close, in the third place, by noticing THE CONSOLATIONS which the angel brought to Daniel and which, in proportion as we are greatly beloved and the subject of like fears, he brings to us. He said to him first, "Peace be unto you." So he says to every one of the beloved here—"Peace be unto you. Why are you fretting, worrying, tossed up and down in your mind? Peace be unto you." Let peace be yours first because you are "greatly beloved." Whatever is happening or not happening, you are greatly beloved. The Lord loved you before the earth was. He redeemed you with the blood of His own Son. He has called you into fellowship with Jesus—Peace! You are beloved—does not that give you peace? "Hush, my Babe," says the mother, "lie still and slumber." And the sweetest hush in all her lullaby is the mention of her own love. So, dear child of God, be still, be calm! You are beloved of Heaven!

And next, fear not, peace be unto you, God is still ruling—He ruled the world before you were born and accomplished all His will—He will rule it when you are dead and He will fulfill His own decrees. Why do you worry yourself? What use can your fretting serve? You are on board a vessel which you could not steer even if the great Captain put you at the helm, of which you could not so much as reef a sail, yet you worry as if you were captain and helmsman! O be quiet! God is Master—do you think that all this din and hurry-burly that is abroad means that God has left His Throne? No, man, His coursers rush furiously on and His chariot is the storm—but there is a bit between their jaws and He holds fast the reins—

and guides them as He wills! Jehovah is still Master—believe it! Peace be unto you—be not afraid!

And whereas you are disturbed about the length of time—with what do you measure? With your own age of 70 years, or with days and weeks—do you measure so? Have you ever seen the measuring line of the Eternal and do you know that if this world were to last through millions of millions of years, yet it would be but a speck between the two eternities that should precede and follow? God's life is not made up of ticks of the clock! He can wait, He can wait. He can let generations of wicked men follow one another, yes, He could for 10,000 years 10,000 times told, permit the devil to trail his chain around the world and yet at the end be more than conqueror, and the more glorious a conqueror because of the length of the battle!

It is a child's fight that lasts but for an hour, but vast is the conflict of nations when they struggle with each other from year to year—when a campaign does but open the war, when another campaign does but kindle the strife and a third does but inflame the passions—and another brings forth all the fury of the combatants and only far on at the close comes the grand crash which ends all! Shall the wars of God be less in length than the battles of men? You have seen but one campaign, or perhaps but the first flight of the artillery which commences the fight—you have not seen the crossing of the bayonet that may yet be to come—for time of tribulation such as the world has never seen is yet in reserve. But rest you sure of this—it is all short to Him with whom a thousand years is as one day—and one day as a thousand years! Come down from the measuring place, child, come down! It is *God* that weighs and measures. Leave that alone and sit down at His feet and be still. Be still! It is all well! It shall surely end well. God is still Master!

Then he adds “be strong,” as if these fears of Daniel made him weak and as if it was important that he should be strong. Now, if there is any importance in us at all, and there is not much, certainly anything that we can do in our present place will require of us all our strength. And since our fears decidedly weaken us, for all practical purposes they should be shaken off. Therefore the angel says twice, “Be strong, yes, be strong.” And, Beloved, we ought to be strong in faith, for God deserves it. He has given us promises of our own security, of His own ultimate conquest and the triumph of His own cause—and God has never lied. Why, then, should we doubt Him? They that trust in Him have never been confounded. He deserves that we should rely upon Him and if things grew blacker—and the times were worse and true religion were almost crushed out and lived only in one solitary man's heart—*that* man ought yet to believe that God would be conqueror, yet, and have no doubts, for why should even *he* distrust the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Infallible, the Immutable and true!

O Brothers and Sisters, while you have this ground and foothold for your strength, remember your work demands all your strength! How can you pray with these doubts about you? How will you teach others while

you are doubting yourself? How can you perform your service when sighs come from you? Soul, sweet Soul, is that what should stream from the worker for the Lord God of Israel? Be strong, then! Fall before the Lord in earnest prayer and ask Him to take away your fretfulness and make you, as you are greatly beloved, to be strong. Remember, Beloved, specially those of you who are at all prominent, that others will take their cue from you and if you speak with bated breath, with trembling language, others will be weak, too. Therefore, fear not—be strong, yes, be strong.

And remember, there is no cause for alarm. Have you not lived long enough to see that always when men have judged that things went worst they have been going best? There is an undercurrent which the eyes see not which is often stronger than the upper flow. And besides, if it were not so, have you never seen it, have not your fathers told you, that the darkest part of the night is that which precedes the dawning day? Have you never perceived that when true religion, either in your own soul or in the world, seems to have gone back that suddenly it makes a leap again? There will come waves upon the beach and each one will seem stronger than its fellow—but then there will follow one that sucks them all back and you might think the sea was retiring from its strength—yet the flood tide is coming in, coming even while that wave recedes so far.

All is working for progress, though there may seem to be a delay here and there. The stream rushes on like a mighty Niagara and you are there by the shore in a little eddy, revolving round and round in a tiny vortex. And you say the stream is rushing in the wrong direction—it has made no progress—“I am weary with this circular motion.” Ah, but you have never been in the broad current, or if your eyes have gazed upon it, it has been dazed with the sight of its breadth and length and you have not understood it! The Lord reigns! The Lord God Omnipotent reigns and Jesus sits at His side, while Truth, like His angel, follows at His heels, still mighty! The zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall yet perform His Word!

And the Spirit that for a while has hidden His great might and concealed Himself in the secret chambers of His Church shall come forth and the day shall be in which the Lord’s Truth shall be declared among the people with power! Even with such power that the world shall bow before it and the song shall go up unto the Lord God Almighty—and He shall be worshipped from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same! O you virgin souls that have followed the Lamb up to now where ever He goes, follow Him still! Keep your garments unspotted from the world! Be rigidly faithful to the Truth of God and conscience. You are men greatly beloved, let not your spirits fail you. Let no man’s heart fail him because of Goliath that stalks before us! He is but a creature and will fade and die. Fear not, peace be unto you, be strong, yes, be strong! The Lord strengthen you. Amen.

### **PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Daniel 10.**

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

# KNOWLEDGE COMMENDED

## NO. 609

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 15, 1865,  
BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“But the people that know their God shall be strong and do exploits.  
And they that understand among the people shall instruct many.”  
Daniel 11:32, 33.***

THE uninspired book of the Maccabees is perhaps the best interpreter of this passage in Daniel. The Prophet, we think, refers to the great persecution under Antiochus, when the followers of Judas Maccabees, knowing their God and keeping close to Him amidst general defection, refused to bow before the idols of Syria. These were strong, by God's Divine Grace, and did great exploits—wonders of valor we read of in the history of Judas and his brethren, and wonders of heroic suffering never surpassed are recounted of the mother and sons and those other martyrs who, under tortures of the most amazing kind, held fast their faith even to the end. In that age there were some who were stoned, who were sawn asunder, who felt the violence of fire and yet were not separated from their God by all that the foe could do.

We have a lesson to learn from the text before us, and we therefore leave the historical references and proceed to enter into the teaching of the text. It appears that the people who did all this were a knowing people and an understanding people. Those by whom the exploits were performed were not ignorant, but a people who knew their God. Those who helped to keep up the light of Israel in the midst of the thick darkness were not uninstructed, but were a people who understood.

Our subject this morning is knowledge, and especially the knowledge of the things of God. The matter is very urgent and important at this season when we are receiving so many young converts into the Church—many of whom need much teaching in the things of God. It lies heavily on my heart that it is my bounden duty to urge these young ones, since they know the elements of the Christian faith, to strive with diligence to learn more and more of the higher Truths of God. And if they have received some insight into the wondrous revelation of Divine love, I must urge them to press forward till they comprehend with all saints what are the heights and depths and know the love of Christ which passes knowledge.

The question is often put to us in a very general and vague manner, “Is knowledge a good thing or not?” We are expected to give an answer promptly and without reserve. And if we do so we shall very likely be caught in a trap. “Knowledge—is it a good thing in itself or not?” That depends upon several things. You might as well ask me whether air is a good thing. Why, of course, speaking loosely, it is! But then there is much bad air in old wells and cellars and so on, which will destroy life—and

therefore you cannot expect me to say at once, if I know you are trying to trick me—either “Yes,” or “No.”

Air is a good thing as a general rule of thumb. The lungs require it, man must have it—it is a good thing. So is knowledge. Knowledge heaves the intellectual lungs—it is a good thing. But then there is noxious knowledge, which it were infinitely better for us never to receive, just as there is pestilential air. Is food a good thing? Yes. But if you are alluding to the decayed meat which was seized in the market, or to adulterated drinks, I am not in such a hurry to answer you. I want to know what sort of food you are alluding to. Food, in the abstract, is a good thing, but not food universally—for putrid meats will engender disease and bring on ten thousand maladies and destroy the life which food is meant to sustain.

So is it with knowledge. It is the food of the mind. And yet there is a knowledge which is deadly, poisonous, infectious, full of all manner of mischief and they who know nothing of it are wise. Is water a good thing? Again I answer, “Yes,” in the abstract. So many watery particles are absolutely necessary to the building up and sustenance of the human frame that every thirsty man knows that water is good. Yet there is bad water. There have been poisoned wells—water stagnates and becomes putrid and injurious to life—water is good taken abstractedly. And there is a knowledge which, like stagnant or poisoned water, may destroy the soul. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil stood in Paradise—mark that—but it ruined Paradise, mark that, too!

A man may know much and he may still stand in his integrity—but the chances are that while men are what they are, there will be a serpent in the tree of knowledge, seeking the ruin of souls. If you want to judge concerning the good or evil of knowledge, you must ask yourself, What is its source? To have one’s lips touched with a live coal is a choice blessing if the seraph brings that coal from off the altar of God. But there are tongues which are set on fire in Hell—and who desires to feel such accursed flame? You must know from where the coal comes before you may consent that it shall touch your lips.

Knowledge may be tested by considering its *character*. Some knowledge is like the light of the moon—clear, cold, barren, if not injurious to health. But heavenly knowledge is fructifying, healthful and genial, chasing away disease like the warm rays of the sun. You may make knowledge good or evil by the way in which you use it. If it is a torch, you may carry it with you to kindle the flame of Tophet’s fire, or, on the other hand, by that Heaven-lit torch you may, through Divine Grace, find your way to the gates of Paradise! Judge knowledge, therefore, with discretion and while you seek it as in the abstract an eminently good thing, yet be not in haste to plunge yourself into every abyss to find its bottom, nor into every burning crater to fathom its depth. I know enough of poison without drinking it and enough of sin without running into it.

This much by way of introduction—we come now to the text. Here we have knowledge of a peculiar kind referred to. Then its happy influence—it makes men strong to do great exploits. Next, we shall consider the means of its attainment. Fourthly, just a hint as to its danger. And fifthly, the

duty of spreading it, contained in the thirty-third verse, “They that understand among the people shall instruct many.”

**I.** First, then, there is A SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE REFERRED TO—“The people that know their God.” To know God is the highest and best form of knowledge. But what can we know of God? Nothing but what He has been pleased to reveal to us. He has revealed something of Himself in the Book of Nature and much more in the Book of Revelation. And He has been pleased to cast a vivid light upon the Book of Revelation by manifesting Himself unto His people as He does not unto the world.

Those who know the Lord should believe in the unity of His Essence and Subsistence. “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord.” There should be no mistaken notions here—the unity of the Godhead is fundamental and mistakes here are fatal. We should know the Lord in the plurality of His Persons. God said, “Let Us make man in our own image.” Let not man be content until he knows something of the “Us” from whom his being was derived. Endeavor to know the Father. Bury your head in His bosom in deep repentance and confess that you are not worthy to be called His son. Receive the kiss of His love. Let the ring which is the token of His eternal faithfulness be on your finger. Sit at His table and let your heart make merry in His Grace.

Seek to know much of the Son of God who is the brightness of His Father’s Glory and the express image of His Person and yet in unspeakable condescension of Grace became Man for our sakes. Know Him in the singular complexity of His Nature—eternal God and yet suffering, finite Man. Follow Him as He walks the waters with the tread of Deity and as He sits upon the well in the weariness of humanity. Be not satisfied unless you know something of Jesus Christ as your Friend, your Brother, your Husband, your All.

Forget not the Holy Spirit—endeavor to get as clear a view as you can of His Nature and Character, His attributes and His works. Behold that Spirit of the Lord who first of all moved upon chaos and brought forth order—who now visits the chaos of your soul and makes order there. Behold Him as the Lord and giver of spiritual life, the Illuminator, the Instructor, the Comforter and the Sanctifier. Behold Him as, like holy unction, He descends upon the head of Jesus and then afterwards rests upon you who are as the skirts of His garments. Get a clear idea, then, of the Trinity in Unity. Do not reason about it. Do not try to understand it—remember, it is not your duty to *comprehend*, but to *apprehend* such Truths of God as these—you are to *believe*, rather than to reason.

One God in the Trinity of His Persons. Let us know Him and worship Him. Remember that those who do not now this, very seldom know much else about Divine things. It is a very remarkable fact that when the doctrine of the Trinity is given up, the other doctrines of the evangelical system are pretty sure to be cast to the winds. This doctrine of the Trinity in Unity seems to be the place of standing or falling with public teachers and private Believers. Let us study to be well instructed in the Divine attributes and ask for Grace to know them all. Be not like those who dream of a God who is all love, and nothing else. These persons talk in maudlin sen-

tences, as if they believed in an effeminate God who winks at sin and is utterly destitute of one single atom of integrity or holiness.

Believe God to be what He most certainly is—a God terrible as well as benevolent who will by no means spare the guilty—and yet passes by transgression, iniquity and sin. See God in the suffering body and soul of Christ Jesus upon Calvary and you will understand how He is severely just in punishing sin in Him upon whom sin was made to meet and yet supremely gracious in providing such a way of escape for guilty souls! Do not be content with a maimed and distorted view of God's attributes! Feel Him to be Omnipresent—let it be your delight to know that you have not to call upon Him as one who is afar off, but ever near at hand. Recognize Him as Omnipotent—know that there is nothing which He cannot do and therefore doubt Him not.

Forget not His absolute Sovereignty, but meekly submit to it. The failure of many men in their ideas about God is that they imagine Him to be *subject* to Law instead of being the Source and Fountain of all Law. They arraign His actions at their bar and forget His terrible reply! “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?” They have not heard the solemn voice, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”

Although to perfection you cannot find out God, yet do not worship Him as did the Athenians under the title of “The Unknown God.” Endeavor to understand how Love unbounded meets with Justice unlimited and Sovereignty without control—how “holiness becomes His house,” and yet how tender-hearted affection towards His creatures ever dwells in Him. Do not worship ignorantly! Whatever else you do not know, do know the Character of your God. “They that know Your name will put their trust in You.”

Then labor to know God in His actions. Study well the past. Do not be ignorant of the great work of creation! If you have the skill, look at that creation in the light of modern science so far as that light is really derived from facts and not from conjectures. Pry into God's great works in Providence—begin your pilgrimage of study at the gates of Eden and travel onward to the present time. Float safely in your meditations with Noah in the ark! Study the wonderful justice of God in thus sweeping away the race of men. I have not time to linger on any one particular spot this morning—if I might, I should have selected the Red Sea.

Remember what Jehovah did at the Red Sea and by the brooks of Arnon! Tell how He made bare His arm and swept away His foes! Take Miriam's timbrel and sing unto the Lord who triumphed gloriously! Or, if that contents you not, remember Og and Sihon, or exult over Sisera in Deborah's song—“Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song: arise, Barak and lead your captivity captive, you son of Abinoam.” Think of the deeds of God in later times when He smote Sennacherib and laid His hosts dead at midnight. Tell how He brought forth his People from the

land of captivity with rejoicing and built up the walls of Jerusalem once more.

Let, especially, the actions of God concerning Christ be very dear to you. Fly back to the eternal Council—you will not be intruding if your faith can enter that great council chamber of eternity. Think of the Covenant, the Suretyship, the provision, the Almighty decree! See Jesus Christ coming forth from the bosom of the Father, amid the song of angels, to hang upon a woman's breast. Trace the history of your Incarnate God—make the life of Christ be with you a household study—know every corner of it. Never let a question be asked of the youngest of you, concerning the life of Jesus, which you cannot answer!

The rhetorician studies the classics. The old Roman orators were familiar with Demosthenes and the Greek poets—so let the Christian make the life of Jesus his first study and with every single passage in it let him be familiar. Know the Savior from the weakness of the cradle to the triumph of His ascension, when, leading captivity captive, He mounted the Father's Throne to reign forever. If you have mastered all this, seek to know something of the teaching of the Spirit of God concerning the plan of salvation. Do not be content to be saved in the dark—try to find out how it is that you are saved. You are on a Rock—but look at the Rock and understand why it is a Rock and how you came to be standing on it.

I believe that very much of current Arminianism is simply ignorance of Gospel doctrine. And if people began to study their Bibles and to take the Word of God as they find it, they must inevitably, if Believers, rise up to rejoice in the Doctrines of Grace. Bolingbroke was far gone in infidelity and yet when he met Mr. Whitfield one morning, he said to him, "Sir, if the Bible is true, Calvinistic doctrines such as you preach are most certainly taught in it. And though I neither receive the Bible nor Calvinistic doctrines—if you want to have these doctrines proved from the Bible at any time—my pen is very much at your service. I am persuaded it is so."

Dear Friends, I would not have you merely unite with the Christian Church and say, "Yes, I believe in Christ," but I want you—and here I speak to you who are lately added to the Church—I want you to know where this great scheme began! I want you to know how it is that the blood of Christ takes away sins. To know the fact is very precious, but to understand the *reason* of that fact is so comforting, so establishing, so every way to be desired that I would have you study much the Word of God till you get a clear view of the whole scheme. I want you to understand the reasons from election onward to final perseverance and from final perseverance to the second advent—the resurrection and the glories which shall follow—world without end!

I have thus brought out what I think is the idea of the text about the people knowing their God. But we must not overlook that little word "their"—"They that know *their* God." It is not, "they that know God," but, "*their* God." To know anything of Him aright, you must get a firm hold of God—He must be *your* God. "There is no praying," said one old man who used to be much in prayer, "till you come to a close grip." There must be a blessed familiarity with God! You must know Him to be yours because He

gave Himself to you in the Eternal Covenant—yours because He has promised Himself to you in His Word—yours because you take Him by an act of simple faith.

You must know He is yours because you, every day, put yourself beneath His guidance and desire to be a soldier under His command. Yours to have and to hold through life, in death and in eternity, because He has laid hold of you and will hold you even to the end. “The people that know their God.” Ah, that is one of the choicest things a human tongue can ever say, “My God! My God!” Ah, Thomas, you learned a great lesson when, with your hand in Jesus’ side you could say not only, “Lord, God,” but “My Lord and *my* God!” O, may you all be among the people who know their God!

**II. THE HAPPY INFLUENCE OF THIS KIND OF KNOWLEDGE** next requires our notice. The text shows that it strengthens, gives courage, energy, vigor, resolution, daring, success. They who know their God are strong and do exploits. The Romish church thinks a great deal of implicit faith—of the faith which cannot apprehend what it believes. Now we agree with Romanists in this—that we are to believe what we cannot *comprehend*—but we do not agree with them in the other—that we are to believe what we cannot *apprehend*. You remember the faith of the coal miner? “What do you believe?” “I believe what the church believes.” “But what does the church believe?” “Oh, the church believes as I believe.” “Well, but what do you and the church believe?” “Why, we both believe the same thing.”

Now Romanists may set great store by that kind of faith and they go the right way to induce it very often by denying the Bible to the common people or by neglecting education so that the masses are unable to read the Word when they can get it. If you say, “You believe as I believe and I believe as you believe and we both believe the same thing,” I tell you that you are no credit to your teacher, and the sooner you give up your faith the better! A man cannot believe what he does not apprehend. He may say, “I am prepared to believe it when I do apprehend it,” but as to believing what he has never been told, it is quite impossible.

If there are any dogmas of Mother Church which I have not heard of, I do not believe them and if I stand up and say I do, I am talking nonsense! If I say I am prepared to believe when I shall have been told, that may be—but I cannot *already* believe them—for belief must be parallel with apprehension! A man must *apprehend* a thing or he cannot believe it. Knowledge strengthens the spiritual man because, in the first place, it is that on which faith has to feed. Where there is faith, knowledge is a great gain. This will be clear to all of you who read attentively your Bible, because the words, “to know,” and, “to believe,” are frequently used in Scripture almost synonymously.

If you turn to the tenth chapter of St. John’s Gospel you will find at the thirty-eighth verse that the Savior said, “But if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me and I in Him.” And then in the first Epistle of St. John, in the second chapter, at the third verse, we have an expression which is tanta-

mount to the one I have already referred to. "And hereby we do know that we know Him if we keep His commandments." We are sure of our faith and of our knowledge by walking in *obedience* to Him.

The source from which Christian faith comes proves the importance of knowledge. How does faith come to the Christian? By sitting still and looking at fifty or a hundred wax candles? By admirably gazing upon a impassive Madonna at the corner of the street? By hearing language which I cannot comprehend repeated by men in a peculiar dress? Never, according to Scripture! How then? "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." There is the whole history of faith—the Word of God gives the teaching which blesses us with knowledge and then comes faith. The sight of the eye, religious awe, impressions of dread, emotions of wonder—these do not give faith—but hearing something which I can apprehend is the means of my believing!

Believers are constantly spoken of in the Scriptures as being people who are enlightened and taught of the Lord. They are said to "have an unction from the Holy One," and it is the Spirit's peculiar office to lead them into all Truths of God and all this for the increase and the fostering of their faith. They are not kept in darkness that they may believe, but put into the light that they may believe! Here is the difference between the religion of Christ and the religion of antichrist.

Moreover, there is provided in the Church of God an agency which proves that knowledge is to be the food of faith. To what end is the ministry ordained but this—"For the edification of the saints." Are we not called teachers? That preacher who does nothing but excite the people—who teaches nothing and declares no definite doctrine—had better lay aside his office and take to some honest employment where he may do no more mischief. *Teaching* is what we need—a true minister is a *teacher* to his people, a *steward* of God bringing forth things, "both new and old." You see, then, that if knowledge is under God the Holy Spirit, truly the food of faith, then in order to be strong—since faith is the very sinew of human strength—we must get much knowledge of the things of God. The people who know their God shall be strong in faith and shall do great exploits.

Think again, dear Friends, of the influence of faith upon all the other Graces of God. Love is the sweetest of all—but how can I love till knowledge gives me a view of Christ? Knowledge opens the door and then through that door I see my Savior. Or I may use another expression—knowledge takes the portrait of Christ and when I see that portrait, then I love Him. I cannot love a Christ I do not know, at least, in some degree! And if I know nothing about the excellencies of Christ—what He has done for me and what He is doing now—I cannot love Him! In Christ's case to know is to love and the more I know the more I shall love.

Look at hope again. How can I hope for a thing if I do not know of its existence? Hope may be the telescope, but then, till I get knowledge of something in front of the glass, I can see nothing whatever. Knowledge takes away the impediment, and then when I look through the optic glass I can see the glory to be revealed. But I cannot hope for that of which I know nothing whatever! I must know there is a Heaven, or I cannot hope

for it. Then, take patience. How shall I have patience unless I have heard, as James says, of the patience of Job? Unless I know something of the sympathy of Christ and understand the good which is to come out of the correction which my heavenly Father gives me?

Knowledge gives me reasons for patience. I cannot stop on this point, but there is no one single grace of the Christian which, under God, will not be fostered and brought to perfection by holy knowledge. Knowledge becomes, then, of the highest importance. Again, from the connection of the text, it appears that many were led astray in the days of Antiochus. "Such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that know their God shall be strong," and so on. It seems, then, that to *know* God is a means of steadfastness.

Who are the people that are greatly troubled by new systems of philosophy and infidelity which are constantly springing up? Why, the people who do not know their God! Certain young folks say to me, "O Sir, I have read a new book—there is a great discovery made about development. Animals were not created separately, but grew out of one another by degrees of gradual improvement." Go and ask your grandmother about it! And what does she say as she takes off her spectacles? "Why," she says, "I was reading 'There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts.'"

Say to her, "Do you not feel alarmed about your faith?" "No," she says, "if they were to discover fifty thousand things, it would not trouble me for, 'I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.'" You think she is a simpleton, perhaps—she might far more properly think you the same! Every now and then there comes up a heresy—some woman turns "prophetess" and raves! Or some lunatic gets the idea that God has inspired him and there are always fools ready to follow any impostor. Who are those that go after them? Those who do not know God! Those who do know Him, say—

***"Should all the forms that men devise  
Assault my faith with treacherous art,  
I'd call them vanity and lies,  
And bind the Gospel to my heart."***

Brethren, if a truly godly minister has for six or seven years been teaching a people and he gives them the good, solid Truth of God and they receive it and understand it, I should not like to see the wolf come in! I do not believe he would do much mischief—for many strong men will be found to slay the intruder! But if there is a ministry which only consists of preaching up moral duties and creating the titillation of excitement, then, if the wolf comes, he may just glut himself with the blood of professors—for there is no strength in them to resist him! We want sound doctrine to give us stability. May God grant that we may be rooted and grounded in Christ, and that we may know the things which are revealed to us of God!

Only once more and then we leave the second point. Knowledge will clearly be seen by you to be a great means for enabling you to do great exploits if you think of its bearing upon usefulness. A Christian without knowledge, for instance, is an admirable man in the holiness of his life.

But to what other end, to what other purpose can you put him? He must not enter the pulpit—if he is already there, he had better retire. He must not be a Church officer. It would be foolish to choose the feeblest among us to be our leaders! He is scarcely of any use in the Sunday school class—he may manage to hear the children read and to wile away the time—but if he were a true Christian instructor, he would open up the Scriptures and explain them.

Do not, any of you, feel grieved at what I am saying? I am speaking to those who have been lately converted! You are Believers—I am rejoicing in it—rejoicing that you are converted, however little your knowledge. But I want you to feel dissatisfied with your ignorance and to seek, in order to your usefulness, to know the ground and the reason for the things you believe and to understand, as far as you can, the deep things of God. Do not be content to be always children—you will never be men unless you are children first! Do not be content to be stunted in your understanding, but ask to grow in Divine Grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, for the sake of your own usefulness.

**III.** We come, in the third place, TO NOTICE HOW THIS KNOWLEDGE MAY BE OBTAINED. Time has fled and therefore we will not enlarge, but just give the outline. Search the Scriptures! Do not merely read them—search them! Look at the parallel passages—collate them—try to get the meaning of the Spirit upon any one Truth by looking at all the texts which refer to it. Read the Bible consecutively—do not merely read a verse here and there—that is not fair. You would never know anything about John Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress if you opened it every morning and read six lines in any part and then shut it up again—you must read it all through if you want to know anything about it.

Get those books—say Mark or John. Read Mark right through from beginning to end. Do not stop with two or three verses, or a chapter—but try to know what Mark is aiming at. It is not fair to Paul to take his Epistle to the Romans and read one chapter—we are obliged to do it in *public service*—but if you want to get at Paul’s meaning, read the whole Epistle through as you would another letter. Read the Bible in a common-sense way. Do not read it on your knees, as I have known some people do—it is an awkward posture—get into an easy chair and read it in comfort.

Pray after you have read it as much as you like but do not make a penance of what ought to be a pleasure. And when you are reading it, if you come to a knotty point, do not skip it. You all have some Christian friend who knows more than you do—go to him and try to get the thing explained. Above all, when you have read any passage and understand it, act it out and ask the Spirit of God to burn the meaning into your conscience till it is written on the fleshy tables of your heart.

Next, use good helps to your Bible. I do not know better helps for the common mass of people than, “The Confession of Faith,” or the little Catechism. With the little Catechism and texts of Scripture, any Believer, however ignorant, can, in a very short time, get a good view of the things of God. I believe that the Westminster Assembly’s Shorter Catechism has more divinity in it than nine out of ten of the modern printings. And if any

person would know and understand that, he need not be afraid but what he will be able to give a reason for the hope that is in him, provided the hope is in him.

Next, be sure to attend a teaching ministry. Do not be always after sweets. Do not be running after prophesying and novelties. Try to see the whole range of Scripture. Believe in Calvinism—but if there is a single Truth of God which only the Arminians hold, believe that, too. Do not put your feet into Chinese shoes to be squeezed after the current fashion into an orthodox shape! Be willing to have a broad understanding—receive anything which God has revealed and be content to take the whole of God’s Truth, whether you can make it into a system or not.

Then I should say, if you want to understand much, be much in prayer. Prayer cuts many a Gordian knot. Be much in communion with God. You cannot know God at a distance. Get close to Him—come to Him in the name of Jesus Christ—come very close to Him. The other night, in prayer, I remember, by mistake, quoting an old Scripture—that we might weep, like the priests, “between the porch and the altar”—and I was corrected by a Brother for it. He said, “We do not want to stand between the porch and the altar, because, in prayer, the proper place for a Christian is *beyond* the altar. The sacrifice is *finished* and we are to go through the court of the priests and enter into the Most Holy Place—into that which is within the veil, where our Forerunner entered for us.”

Endeavor, therefore, to get a good view of the *types* of Scripture. When you have made a mistake about them, be willing to be corrected, but try to understand the types by getting the substance in your own experience—that is the best way of knowing them. And, remember, there is one school to which you can all go—where you will all learn. Our Savior says, “If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it is of God or not.” Practical holiness is a grammar school in which we may learn the Doctrines of Grace.

**IV.** And now I want to say ONE WORD BY WAY OF CAUTION and it shall be scarcely more than a word. Remember that knowledge of itself—with all its excellencies and virtues when God blesses it—has a danger in it to you. “Knowledge,” says the Apostle, “puffs up.” So it does. You may get proud of what you know and then God forgive you and deliver you from it! And, moreover, you may get so positive about what you know that you may have made up your mind never to know any more.

I know some of that kind—they know everything—every doctrine which is brought forward that they have not received already must be rejected because they have made up their minds that they have the whole of revelation by heart. They have “meted out Heaven with the span and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure,” and think they know wisdom to perfection. Do not get into that state. Your knowledge may even make you haughty to the people of God. You may look down with contempt on some who do not know so much as you and yet they may have twice your holiness and be doing more service to God. Knowledge is, after all, but a *talent* and Divine Grace is always better than gifts.

Try to get Divine Grace to make the gift right, and as you grow in knowledge which may prove to be the sails, humility will prove an admirable ballast. To this end I ask the help of the Holy Spirit, that what you know may be rightly known, for then it will not exalt you, but make you lie at the foot of the Cross. O that God might thus teach and thus instruct us all!

**V.** And now to close—here is THE DUTY OF SPREADING THIS KNOWLEDGE WHEN WE HAVE IT. “They that understand among the people shall instruct many.” It is a prophecy which is fulfilled, but it is also a suggestion of a duty which we have to carry out. Are we instructing many, those of us who know the Lord? “Well,” says one, “I am. I am endeavoring to do my best in the Sunday school, in the catechumen class and so on.” God speed you, dear Friend! God speed you in your good work! God speed you a thousand-fold more than you have yet learned to ask or even think! But there must be some here who are not teaching others.

Of course our business is to begin with teaching our own children. When the services used to be in the morning and afternoon in the olden times, the evening was generally spent with the children in teaching and catechizing. I do not think we in London could go back to the old plan. But I am not sure that the present one is an improvement, whether the children might not learn much more if the parents did give the Sunday evening constantly to their instruction. At any rate, no mother, no father—especially no mother—should suffer a Sunday to pass over her head, if she knows the things of God, without having her little ones around her and teaching them what she herself knows.

The Sunday school teacher does well, but he cannot relieve parents from the responsibility of teaching their own children. Others might take a wider range. Might you not get up Bible-readings at your house? If God has taught you a Truth which others do not know, could you not find others in your neighborhood who might be willing to come to your house and understand the things of God from you or someone else? If they will not come, have you not the instinct to get at them some other way? Cannot you so weave the common events of life into a means of Christian instruction that you are truly “all things to all men”?

Put in words edgewise, so as to instruct casual visitors. We have not a system of class meetings as among our Wesleyan friends. It would be a great mercy if we had something like they had. And it would be a good thing if the elders of this Church would constantly look after the younger ones. Get seven, eight, or nine to meet you as a class. Get a textbook and study it by the light of the Word of God. We have some admirable teachers here, but I believe we have some who might teach a great deal more, who are not doing it. Some of you are living at a distance—your work cannot be very well carried on in connection with this place. What does that matter?

I would as soon you taught elsewhere! So long as you are working for God, it does not matter whether it is here or there. If you are Christian people belonging to this Church, your first duty is here. But if from any

other circumstance you cannot throw in your strength with us, why, do it elsewhere! If you want to go elsewhere, of course we are sorry to lose you, but, we say, go, by all means, if you can serve God better! If you feel you must attend our ministry because it suits your mind, then come among us and aid our efforts to do good. Do, at any rate, teach what God has told you!

If God has lit your candle, try to shine and let other candles be lit by you. I have said much on this point and I close with this remark—there are some here who cannot be exhorted to learn and know much of God because they have not yet begun to know themselves. They do not know this simple Truth of God—“That Christ came into the world to save sinners.” They know it from theory, but that is of very little use. May they know it in their heart by saying, “Jesus, I am a sinner! Since You came to save sinners, I give myself to You. O save me! I trust You to save me.”

God bring you to this state and when you have received Christ, then endeavor, as much as lies in you—

***“To teach to sinners round,  
What a dear Savior you have found.”***

May the Master bless these words, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307